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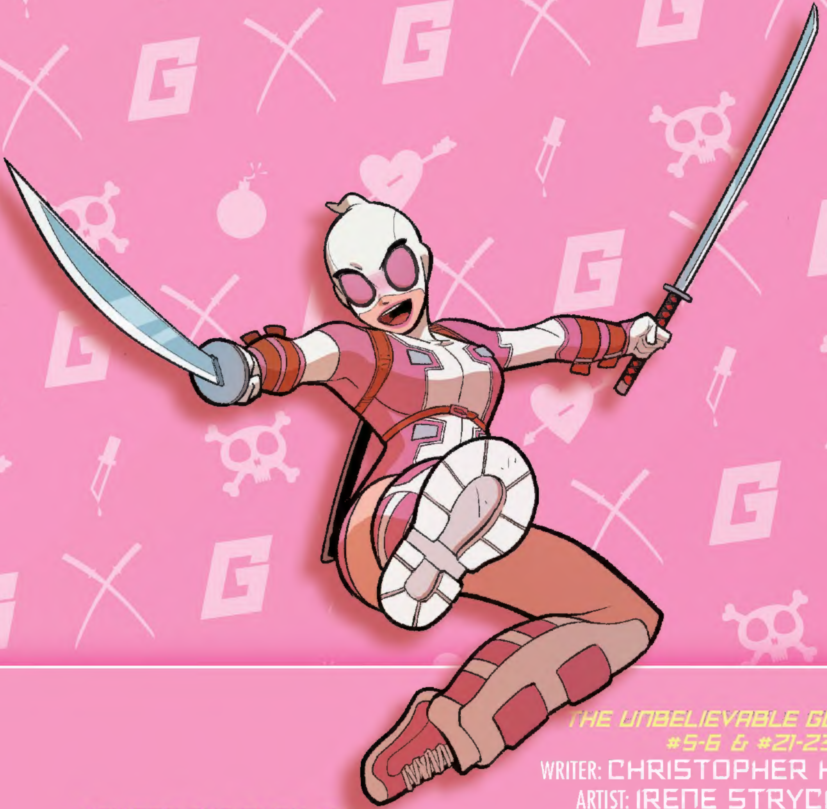
GWENPOOL

MARVEL

GWENPOOL



HOWARD THE DUCK #1-3

WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: DANILO S. BEYRUTH
COLOR ARTIST: TAMRA BONVILLAIN
LETTERER: VC's TRAVIS LANHAM
COVER ART: DANILO S. BEYRUTH
& TAMRA BONVILLAIN

GWENPOOL SPECIAL #1

WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: GURIHIRU
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: KRIS ANKA

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1

WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTISTS: DANILO S. BEYRUTH (PROLOGUE)
& GURIHIRU (MAIN STORY)
COLOR ARTISTS: TAMRA BONVILLAIN (PROLOGUE)
& GURIHIRU (MAIN STORY)
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: GURIHIRU

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #2-4, #7-10, #12, #16-20 & #24-25

WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: GURIHIRU
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: STACEY LEE (#2-4, #8, #10);
HELEN CHEN (#7); DAVID LOPEZ (#9);
GISÈLE LAGACÉ & TAMRA BONVILLAIN (#12);
GURIHIRU (#16-20, #24-25)

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #5-6 & #21-23

WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: IRENE STRYCHALSKI
COLOR ARTIST: RACHELLE ROSENBERG
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: STACEY LEE (#5-6);
PAULINA GANUCHEAU (#21);
GURIHIRU (#22-23)

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #11 & #14-15

WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: MYISHA HAYNES
COLOR ARTIST: RACHELLE ROSENBERG
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: ELSA CHARRETIER
& TAMRA BONVILLAIN (#11);
PAULINA GANUCHEAU (#14-15)

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #13

WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTISTS: ALTI FIRMANSYAH
WITH GURIHIRU
COLOR ARTISTS: RACHELLE ROSENBERG
WITH GURIHIRU
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: GISELE LAGACE
& MATT YACKEY

ROCKET RACCOON AND GROOT #8-10

WRITER: NICK KOCHER
PENCILER: MICHAEL WALSH
INKERS: MICHAEL WALSH
WITH JOHN HIXSON (#10)
COLOR ARTIST: MICHAEL GARLAND
LETTERER: JEFF ECKLEBERRY
COVER ART: DAVID LOPEZ

GWENPOOL

GWENPOOL HOLIDAY SPECIAL: MERRY MIX-UP

"GWENPOOL'S UNBELIEVABLE CHRISTMAS"

WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: MYISHA HAYNES
COLOR ARTIST: RACHELLE ROSENBERG
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES

"I SAW SPIDEY KISSING GALACTUS, THE BRINGER OF GIFTS"

WRITER: RYAN NORTH
ARTIST: NATHAN STOCKMAN
COLOR ARTIST: JIM CAMPBELL
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES

"THE WAR ON PANTSGIVING!"

WRITER: KARLA PACHECO
ARTIST: OSCAR BAZALDUA
COLOR ARTIST: ANDRES MOSSA
LETTERER: VC's TRAVIS LANHAM

"HAPPY HYDRA HOLIDAYS"

WRITER: NICK KOCHER
ARTIST: BRUNO OLIVEIRA
COLOR ARTIST: RACHELLE ROSENBERG
LETTERER: VC's TRAVIS LANHAM

COVER ART: SALVA ESPIN

CHAMPIONS #5

WRITER: MARK WAID
PENCILER: HUMBERTO RAMOS
INKER: VICTOR OLAZABA
COLOR ARTIST: EDGAR DELGADO
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: HUMBERTO RAMOS
& EDGAR DELGADO

SECRET EMPIRE: BRAVE NEW WORLD #1

WRITER: NICK KOCHER
ARTIST: TANA FORD
COLOR ARTIST: RACHELLE ROSENBERG
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: PAULO SIQUEIRA
& MARCIO MENYZ

WEST COAST AVENGERS #1-10

WRITER: KELLY THOMPSON
ARTISTS: STEFANO CASELLI (#1-4),
DANIELE DI NICUOLO (#5-7),
GANG HYUK LIM (#8-9) & MOY R. (#10)
COLOR ARTISTS: TRÍONA FARRELL (#1-7, #9-10)
& GANG HYUK LIM (#8)
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: STEFANO CASELLI
& NOLAN WOODARD (#1-6);
EDUARD PETROVICH (#7-8);
GANG HYUK LIM (#9-10)

SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN #7-8

WRITER: CHRISTOS GAGE
PENCILER: LAN MEDINA
INKER: CAM SMITH
COLOR ARTISTS: ANDY TROY
WITH ERICK ARCINIEGA (#8)
LETTERERS: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA (#7)
& TRAVIS LANHAM (#8)
COVER ART: MIKE HAWTHORNE
WITH BRIAN REBER (#7)
& MORRY HOLLOWELL (#8)

GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #1-5
WRITER: LEAH WILLIAMS
WRITER, #4 PAGE 2:
CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: DAVID BALDEÓN
COLOR ARTISTS: JESUS ABURTOV
WITH GURU-eFX (#5)
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: TERRY DODSON
& RACHEL DODSON (#1-4);
ELENA STRIKES &
JUDITH STEPHENS (#5)

EDGE OF VENOMVERSE #2
WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: IRENE STRYCHALSKI
COLOR ARTIST: JAVA TARTAGLIA
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: FRANCESCO MATTINA

NOT BRAND ECHH #14
WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTIST: GURIHIRU
LETTERER: VC's CLAYTON COWLES
COVER ART: DAVID NAKAYAMA

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SPECIAL THANKS TO MAREK SKUPINSKI

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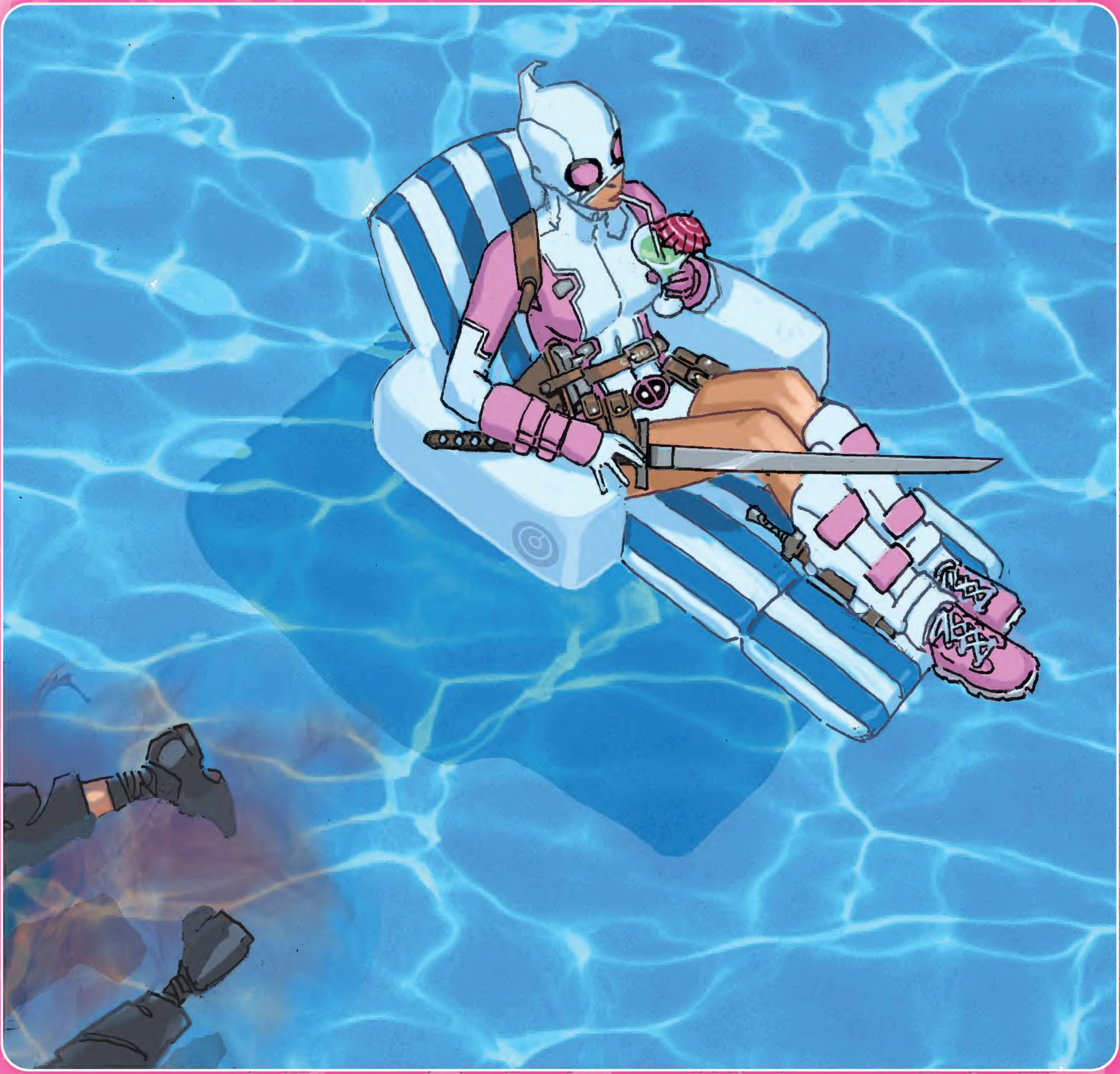
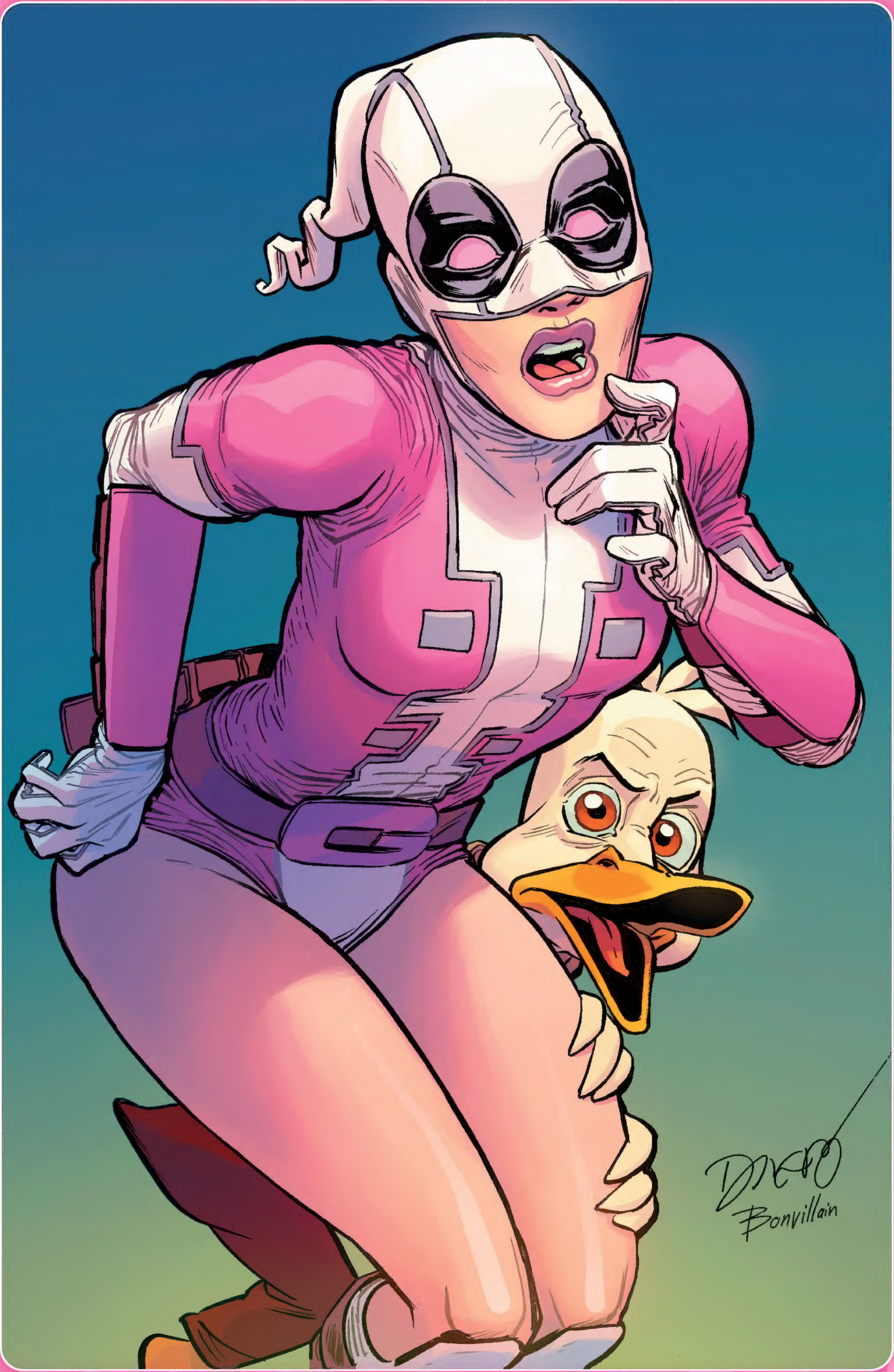
BEHOLD – THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF GWENPOOL! THAT'S RIGHT, OUR PINK-CLAD HERO DEBUTED RIGHT HERE, ON CHRIS BACHALO'S VARIANT COVER FOR DEADPOOL'S SECRET SECRET WARS #2.

THE COVER WAS JUST ONE OF A SET OF TWENTY THEMED VARIANTS, CELEBRATING THE RECENT DEBUT OF SPIDER-GWEN BY COMBINING GWEN STACY WITH OTHER MARVEL CHARACTERS. BUT UNLIKE OTHER MASH-UPS LIKE CAPGWEN AMERICA, THE INGWENIBLE HULK OR GWOOT, SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENED. MARVEL FANS TOOK NOTICE OF GWENPOOL. THE IDEA CAPTURED THEIR INTEREST. THEY WANTED MORE! AND MARVEL LISTENED...



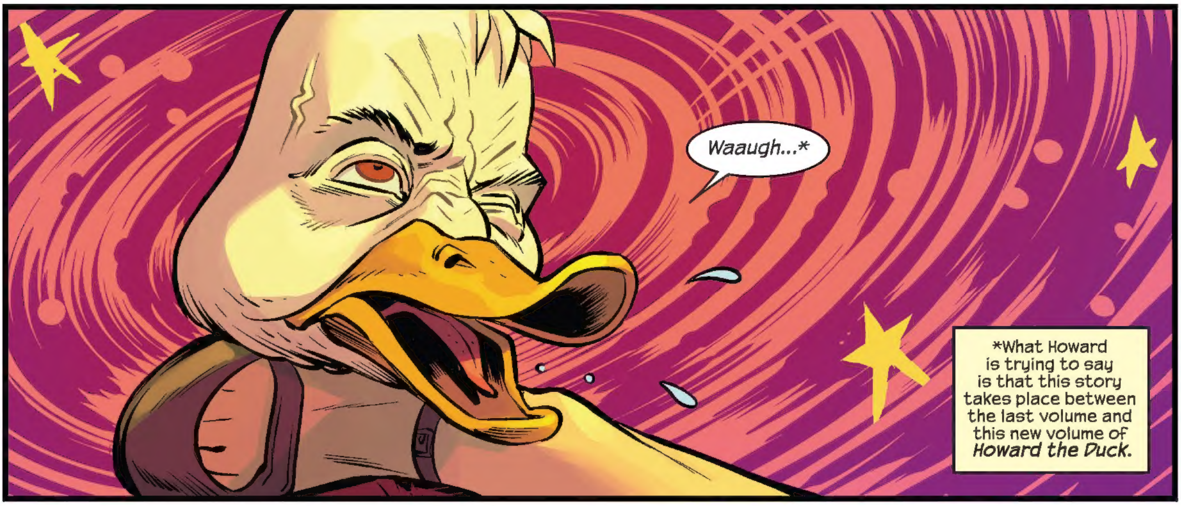
GWENPOOL (NOW TOTALLY UNRELATED TO GWEN STACY) MADE HER "ON-PANEL" DEBUT JUST A FEW MONTHS LATER IN A BACKUP SERIAL IN HOWARD THE DUCK #1-3, ARMED WITH A MANIC PERSONALITY AND A TRULY UNIQUE CONCEPT. THIS ADVENTURE WAS FOLLOWED BY A SHORT HOLIDAY STORY – AND WHEN BOTH WERE WELL-RECEIVED, GWENPOOL GRADUATED TO HER OWN ONGOING SERIES!

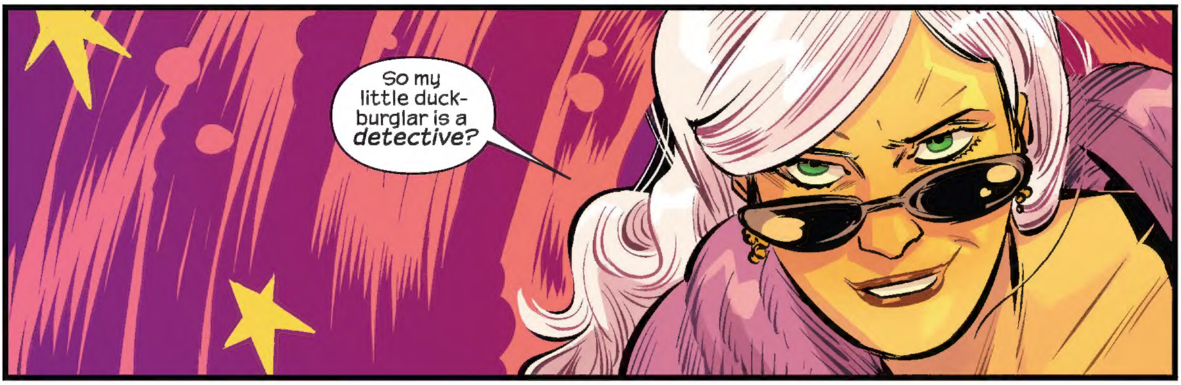
THE HOWARD THE DUCK AND GWENPOOL SPECIAL STORIES WERE COLLECTED AND REPRINTED AS THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #0 – WHICH YOU CAN EXPERIENCE JUST BY TURNING THE PAGE.

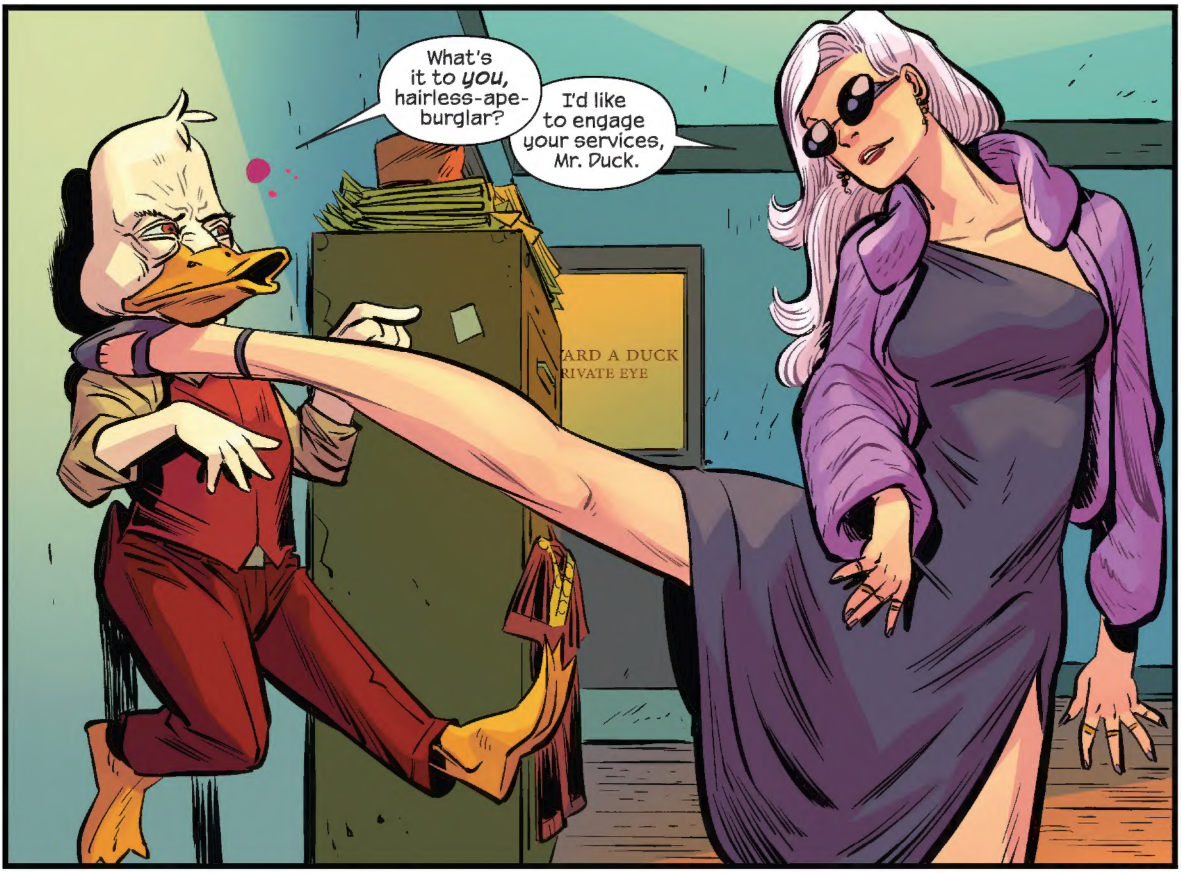

Bonvillain

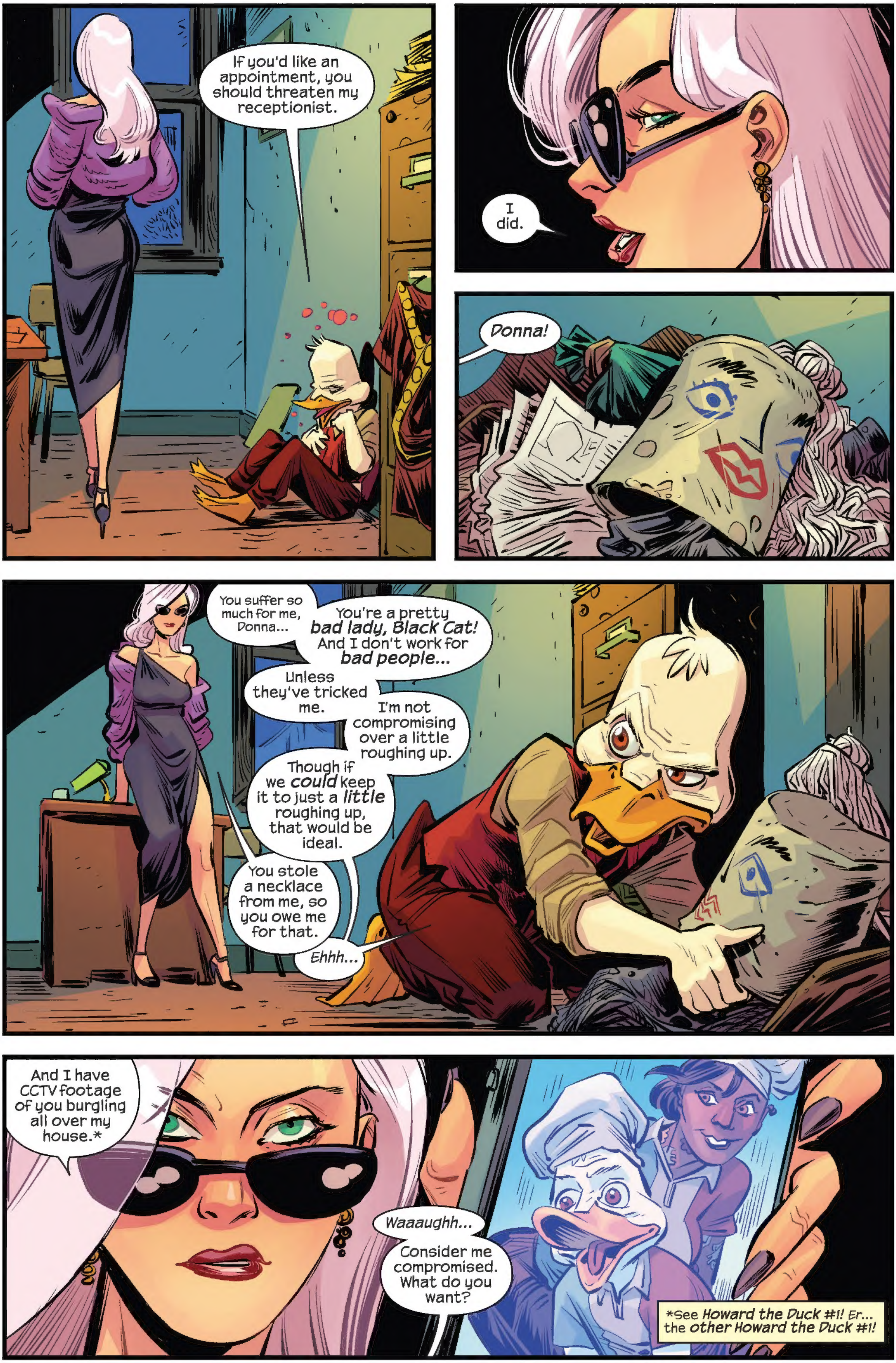
HOWARD THE DUCK #1-3

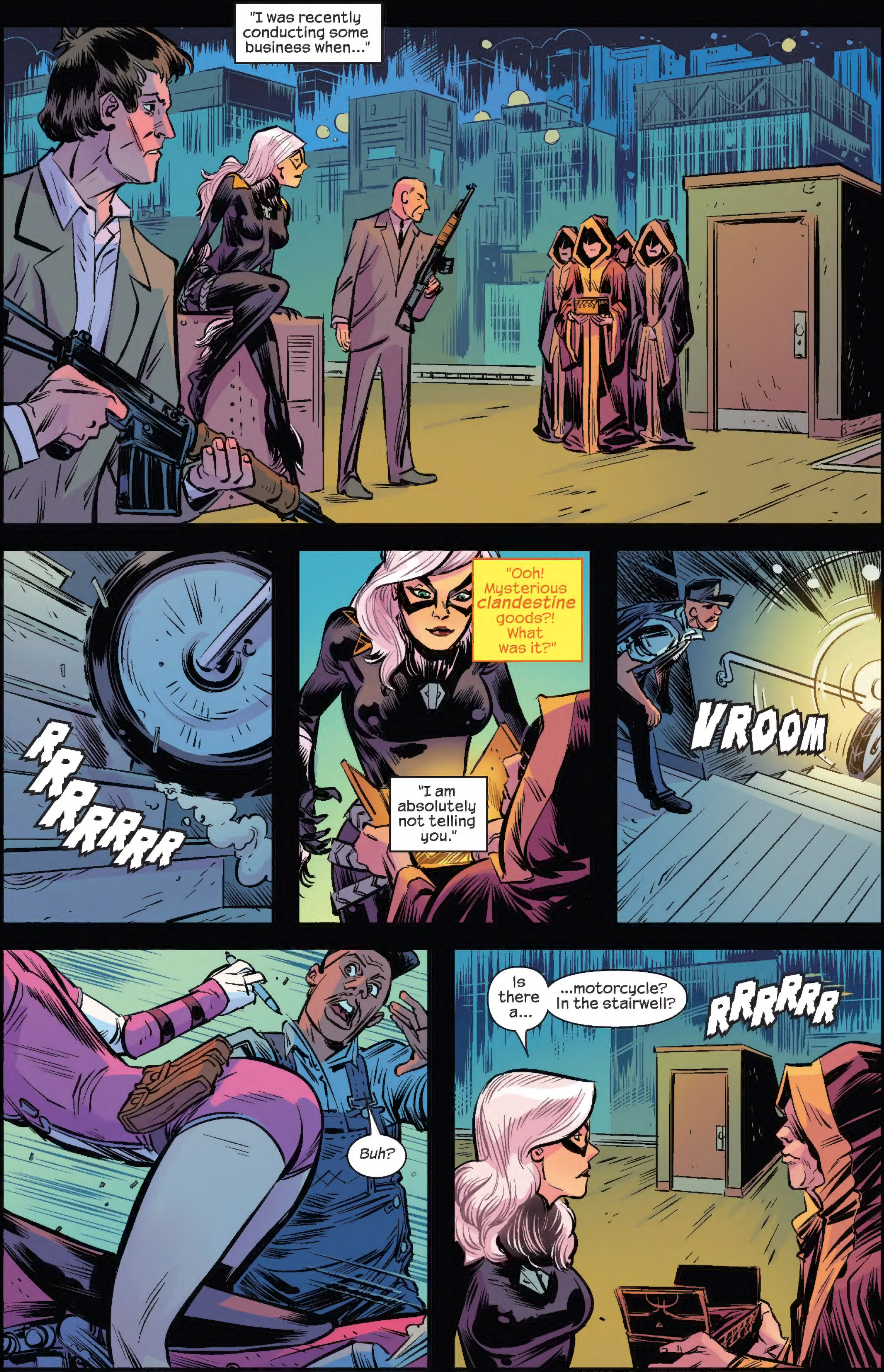
"MS. POOLE IF YOU'RE NASTY"

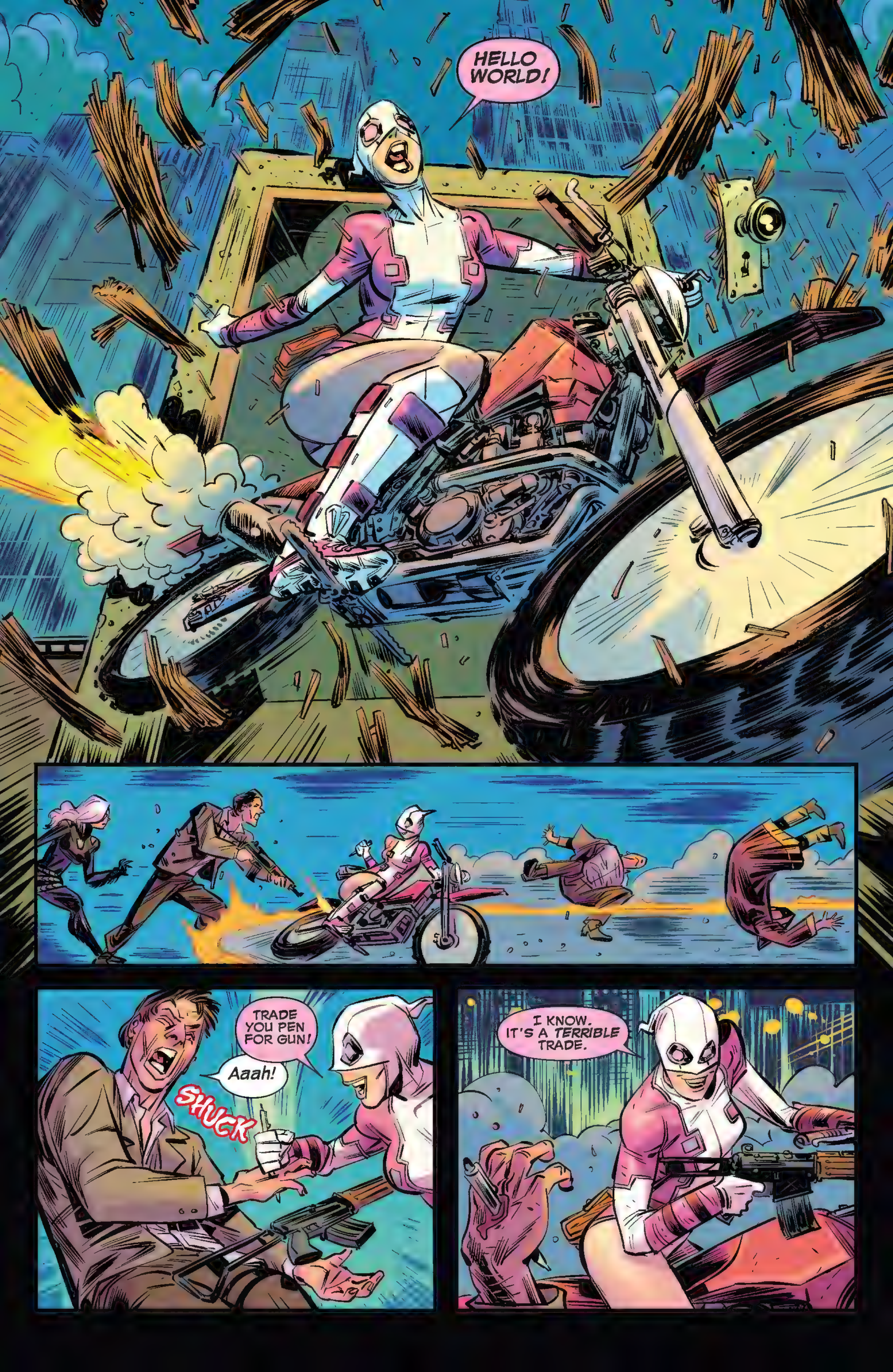

Waaugh...*
*What Howard is trying to say is that this story takes place between the last volume and this new volume of *Howard the Duck.*

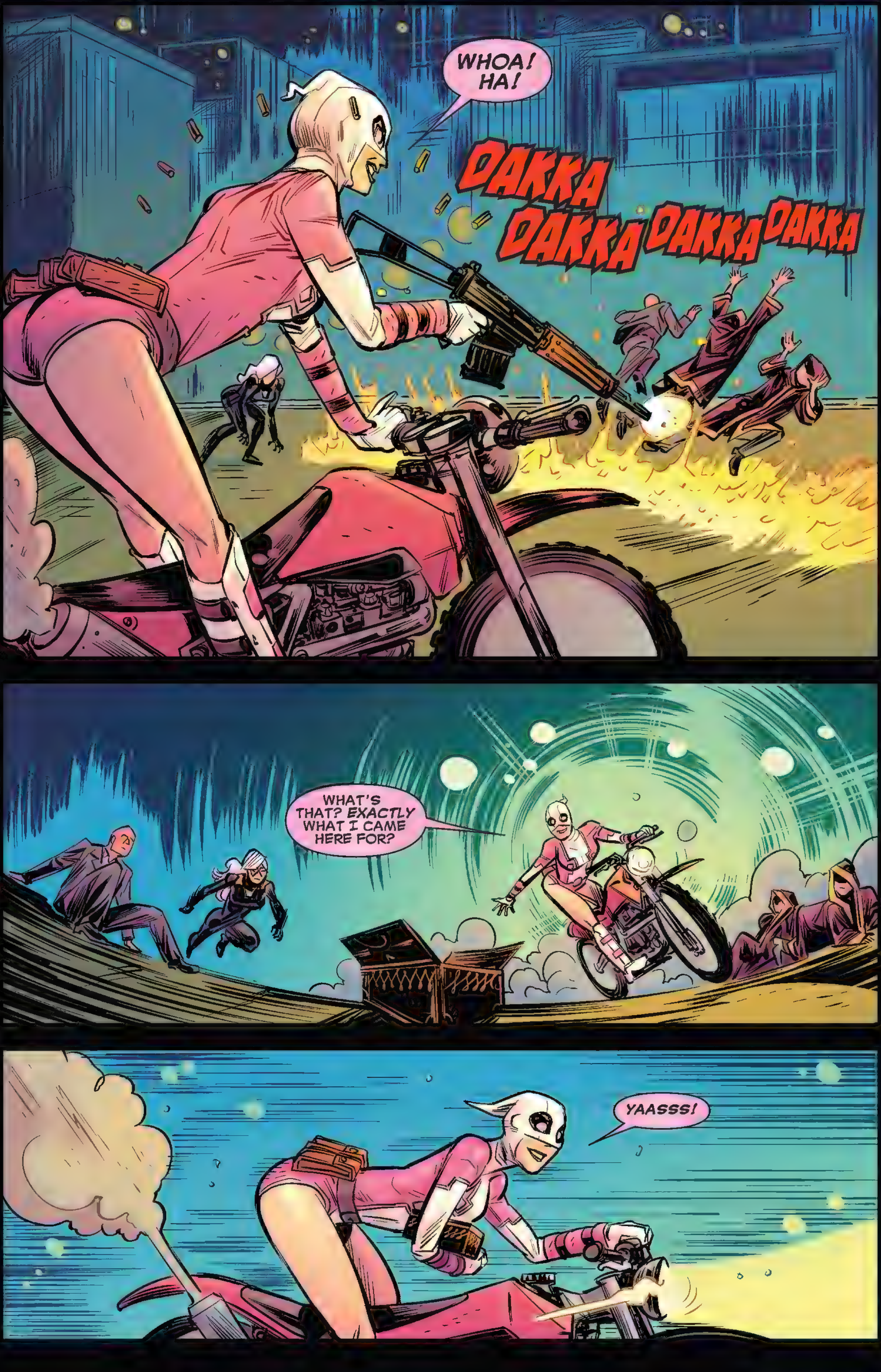

So my little duck-burglar is a *detective?*

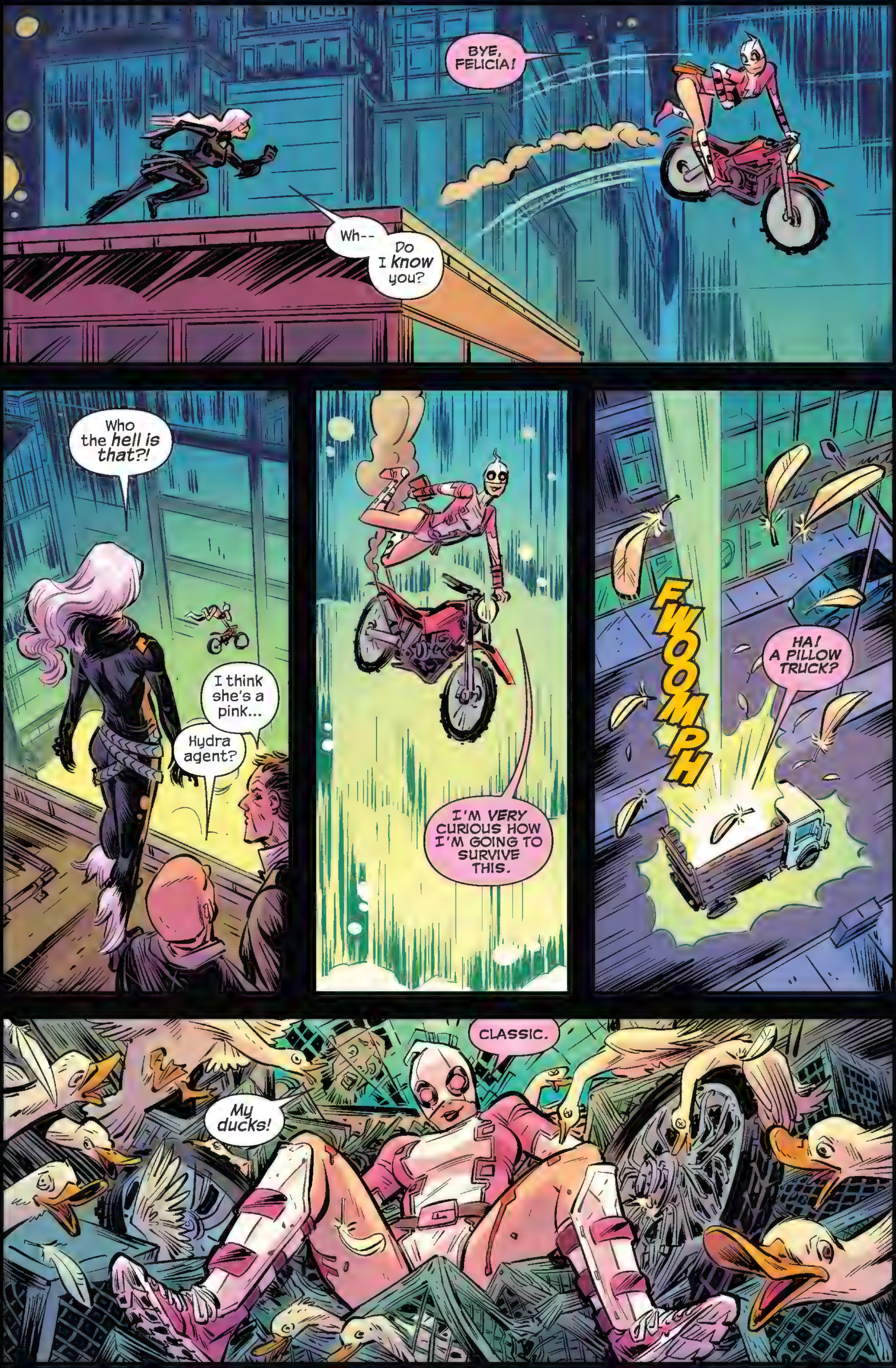

What's it to *you,* hairless-ape-burglar?
I'd like to engage your services, Mr. Duck.
ARD A DUCK
RIVATE EYE

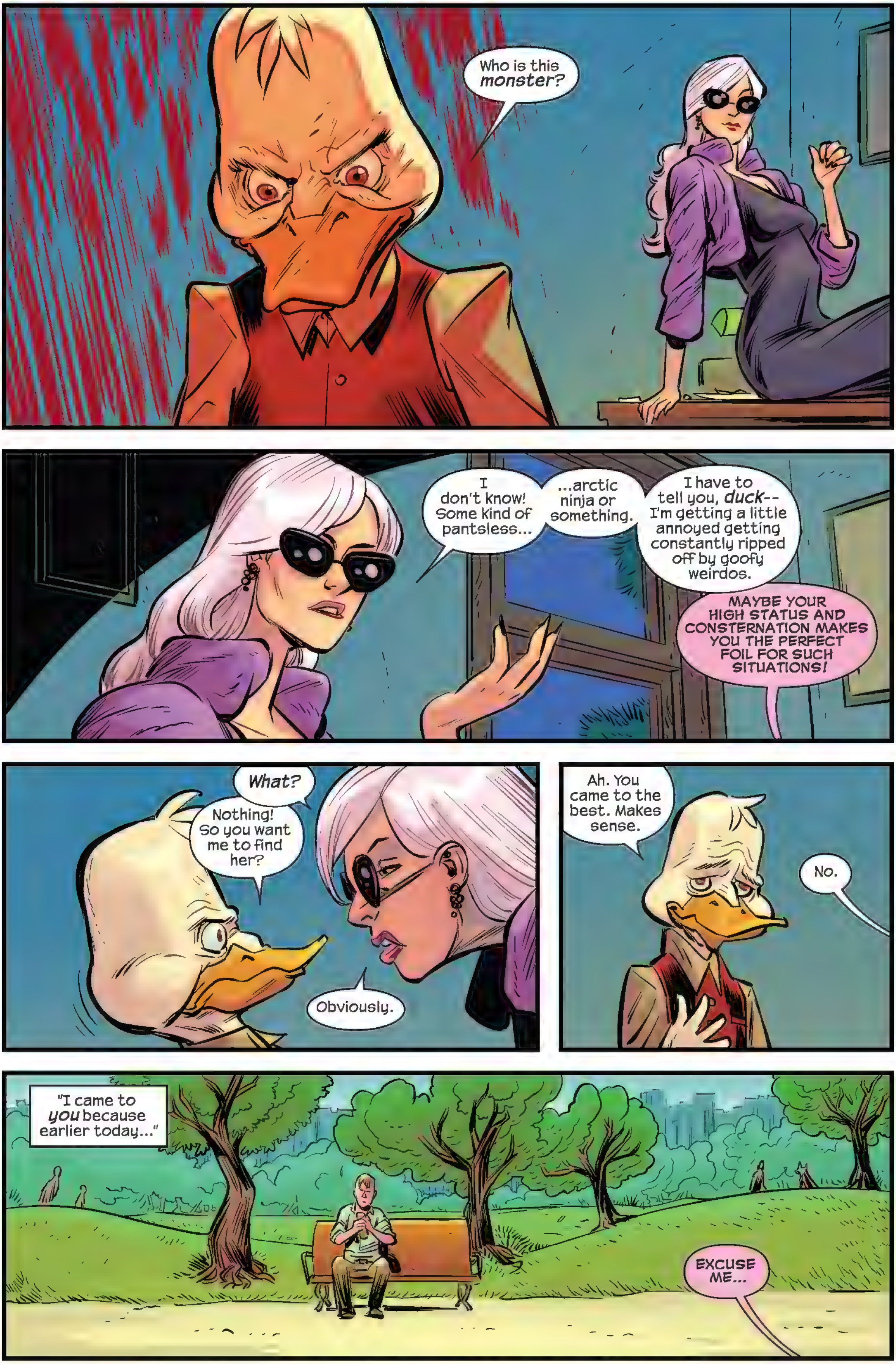

If you'd like an appointment, you should threaten my receptionist.
I did.
Donna!
You suffer so much for me, Donna...
You're a pretty bad lady, Black Cat! And I don't work for bad people...
Unless they've tricked me.
I'm not compromising over a little roughing up.
Though if we could keep it to just a little roughing up, that would be ideal.
You stole a necklace from me, so you owe me for that.
Ehhh...
And I have CCTV footage of you burgling all over my house.*
Waaaughh...
Consider me compromised. What do you want?
*See Howard the Duck #1! Er... the other Howard the Duck #1!

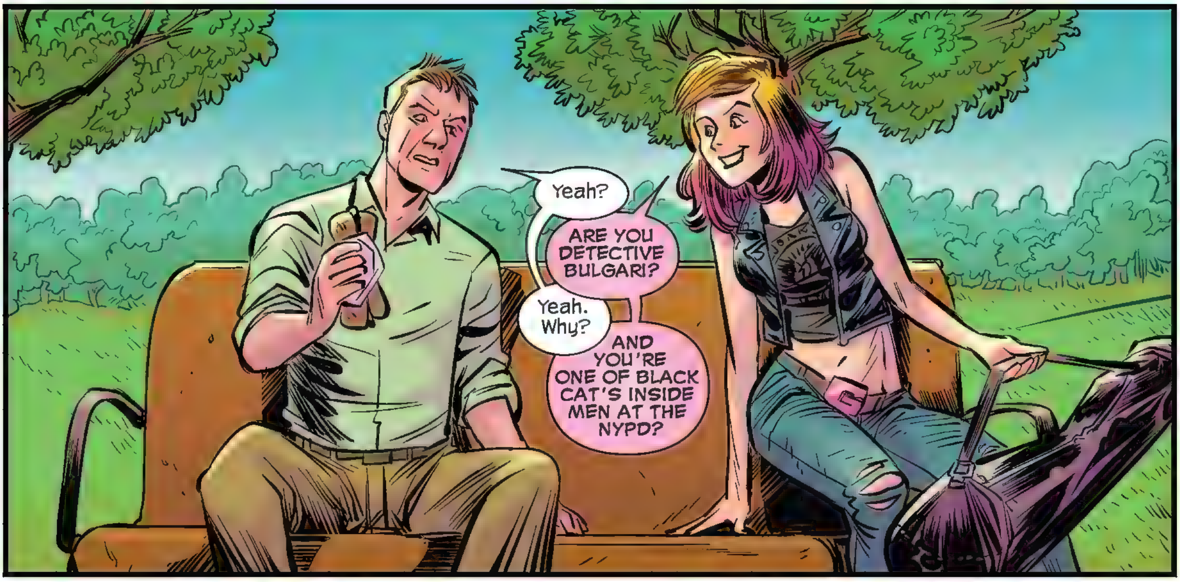

"I was recently conducting some business when..."
RRRRRRR
"Ooh! Mysterious *clandestine* goods?! What was it?"
"I am absolutely not telling you."
VROOM
Buh?
Is there a...
...motorcycle? In the stairwell?
RRRRRR

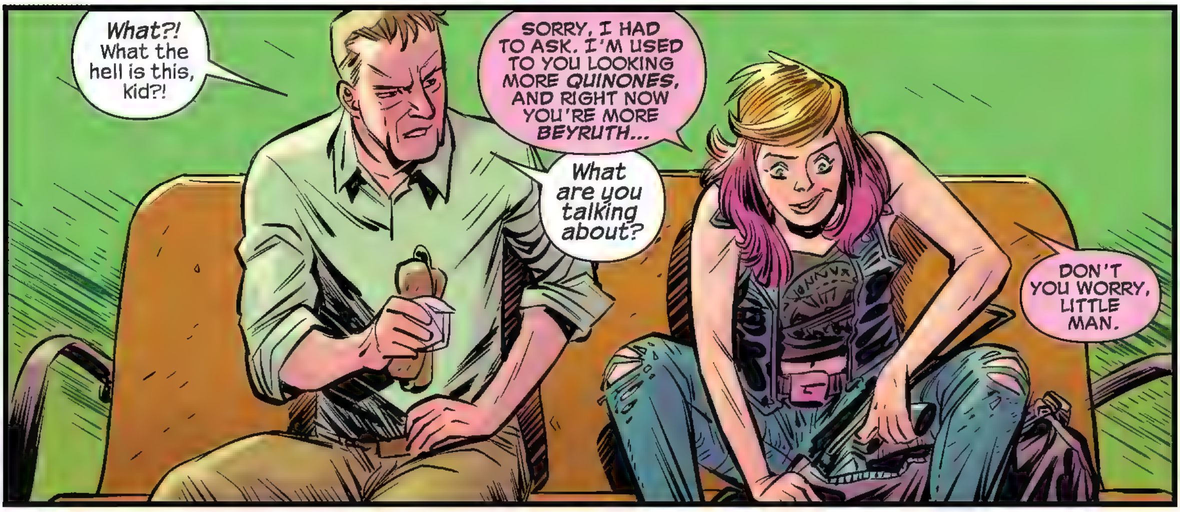

HELLO WORLD!
TRADE YOU PEN FOR GUN!
Aaah!
SHUCK
I KNOW. IT'S A *TERRIBLE* TRADE.

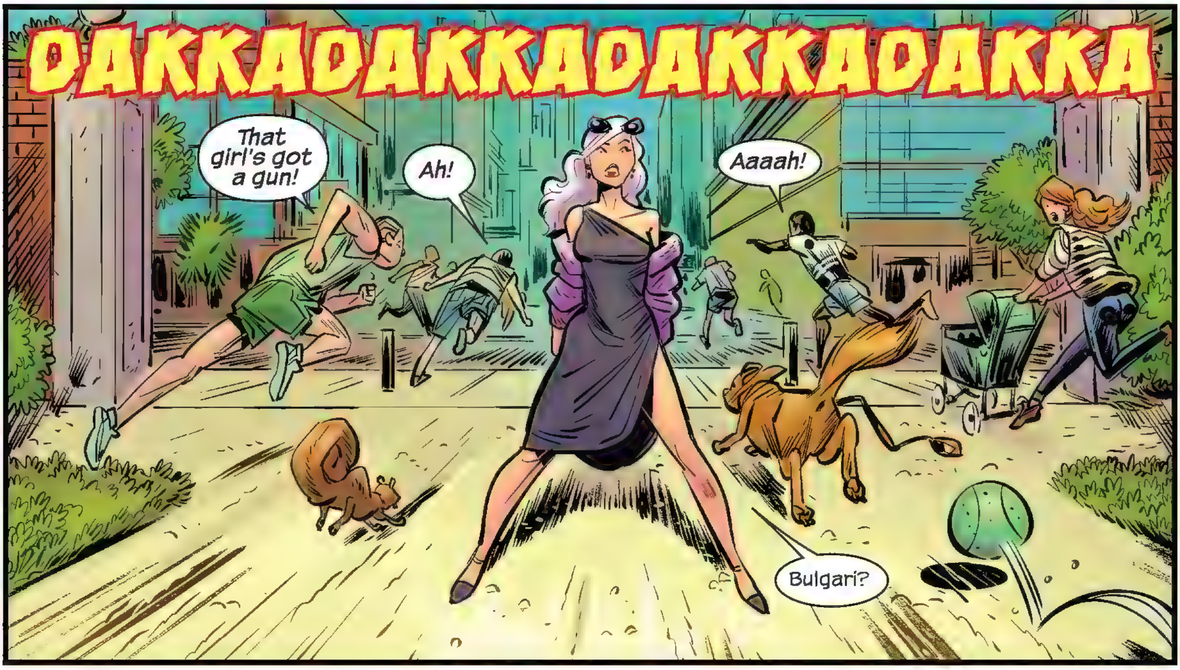

WHOA! HA!
DAKKA DAKKA DAKKA DAKKA
WHAT'S THAT? EXACTLY WHAT I CAME HERE FOR?
YAASSS!

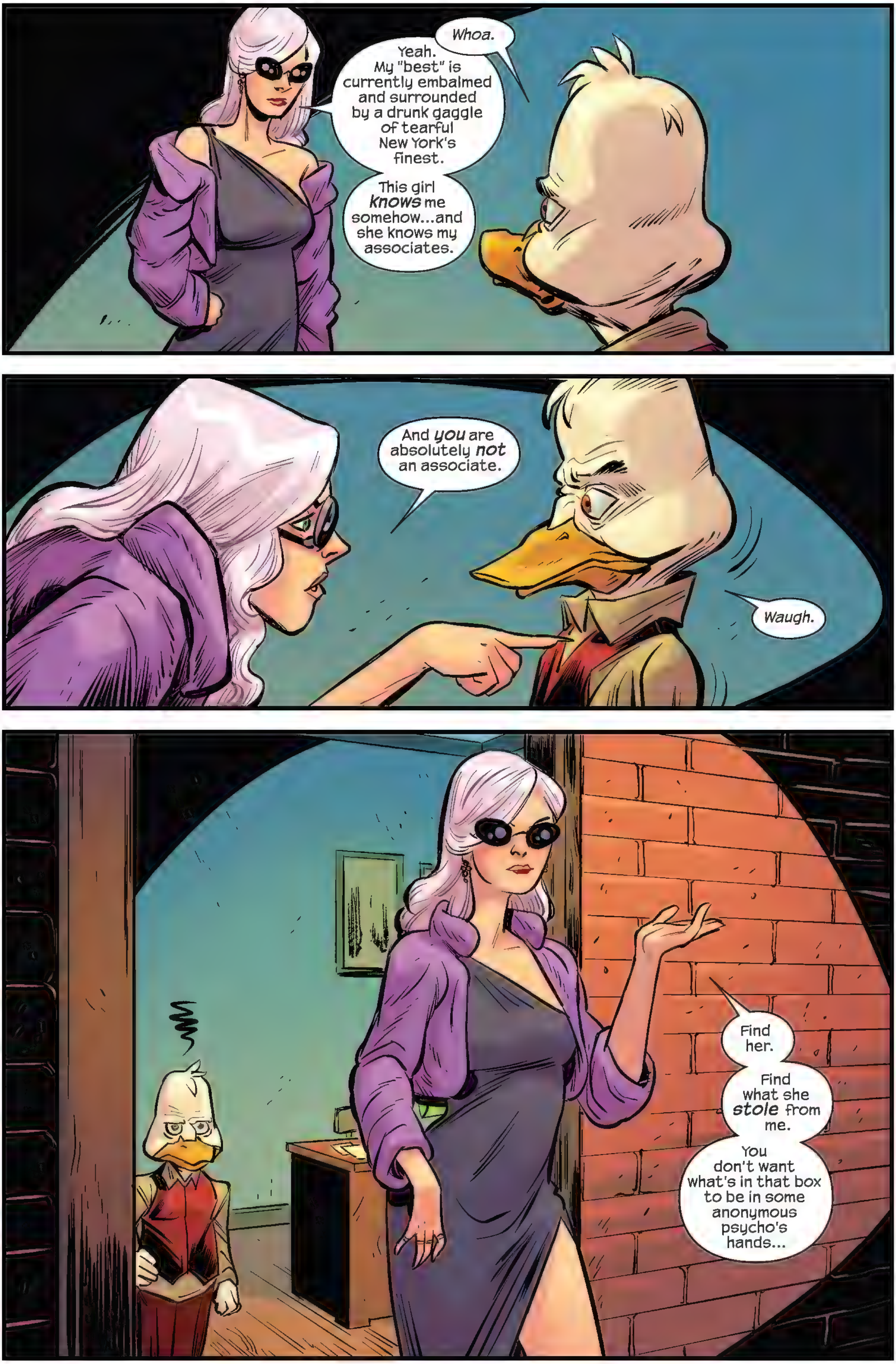

BYE, FELICIA!
Wh--
Do I know you?
Who the hell is that?!
I think she's a pink...
Hydra agent?
I'M VERY CURIOUS HOW I'M GOING TO SURVIVE THIS.
FWOOMPH
HA! A PILLOW TRUCK?
CLASSIC.
My ducks!


Who is this *monster?*
I don't know! Some kind of pantsless...
...arctic ninja or something.
I have to tell you, *duck*-- I'm getting a little annoyed getting constantly ripped off by goofy weirdos.
MAYBE YOUR HIGH STATUS AND CONSTERNATION MAKES YOU THE PERFECT FOIL FOR SUCH SITUATIONS!
What?
Nothing! So you want me to find her?
Obviously.
Ah. You came to the best. Makes sense.
No.
"I came to *you* because earlier today..."
EXCUSE ME...

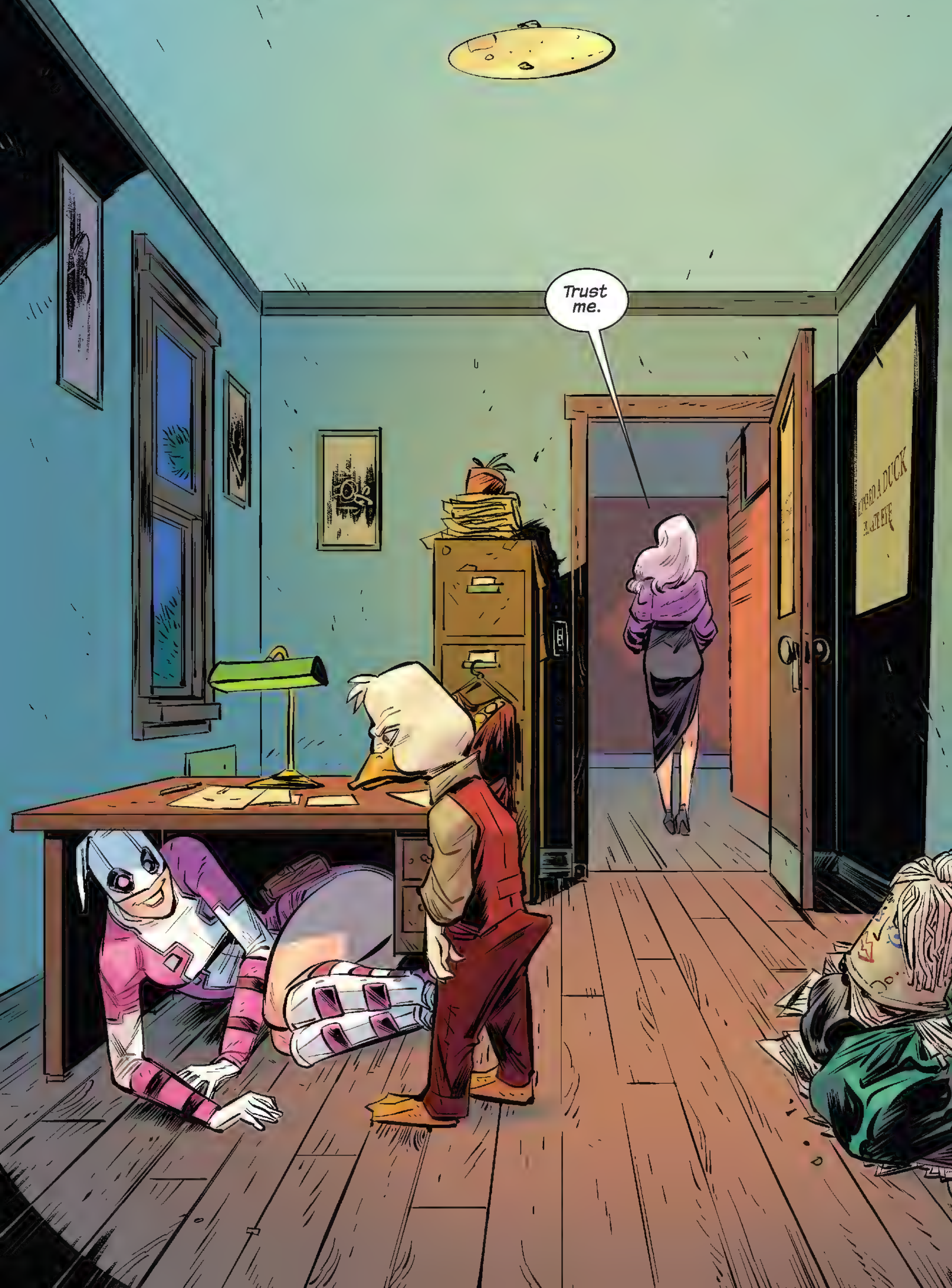

Yeah?
ARE YOU DETECTIVE BULGARI?
Yeah. Why?
AND YOU'RE ONE OF BLACK CAT'S INSIDE MEN AT THE NYPD?

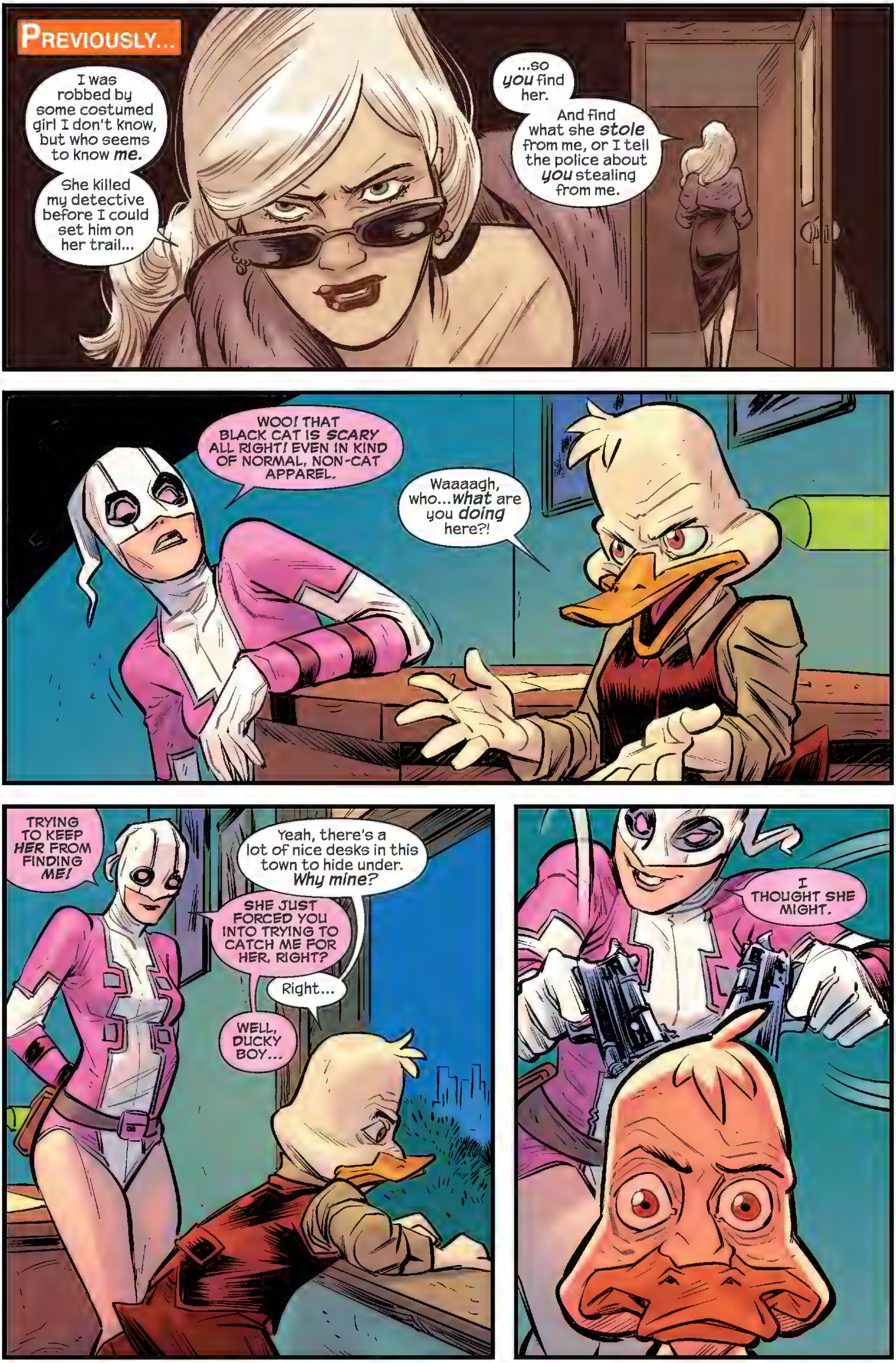

What?! What the hell is this, kid?!
SORRY, I HAD TO ASK. I'M USED TO YOU LOOKING MORE *QUINONES*, AND RIGHT NOW YOU'RE MORE *BEYRUTH*...
What are you talking about?
DON'T YOU WORRY, LITTLE MAN.

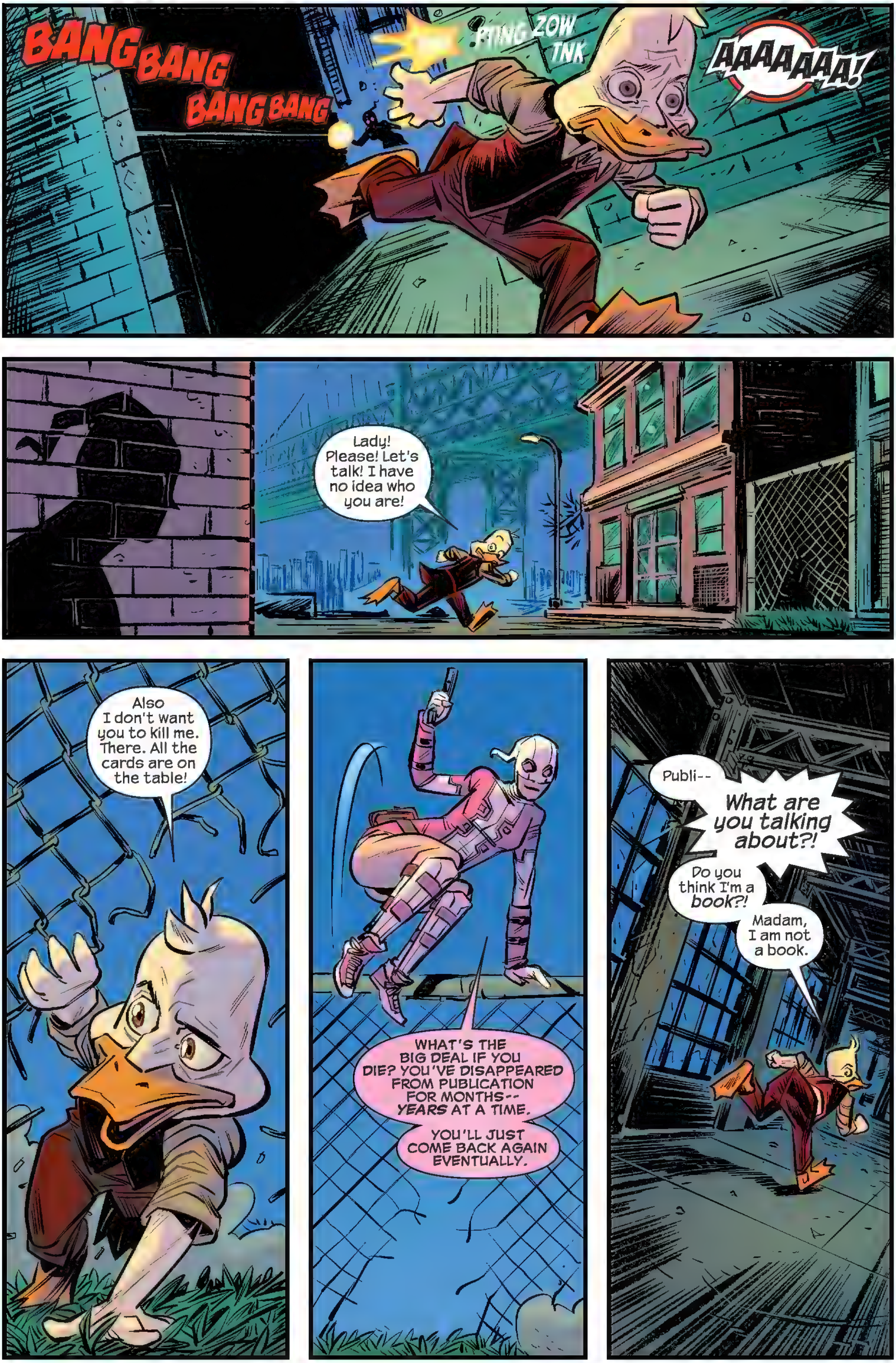

DAKKADAKKADAKKADAKKA
That girl's got a gun!
Ah!
Aaaah!
Bulgari?

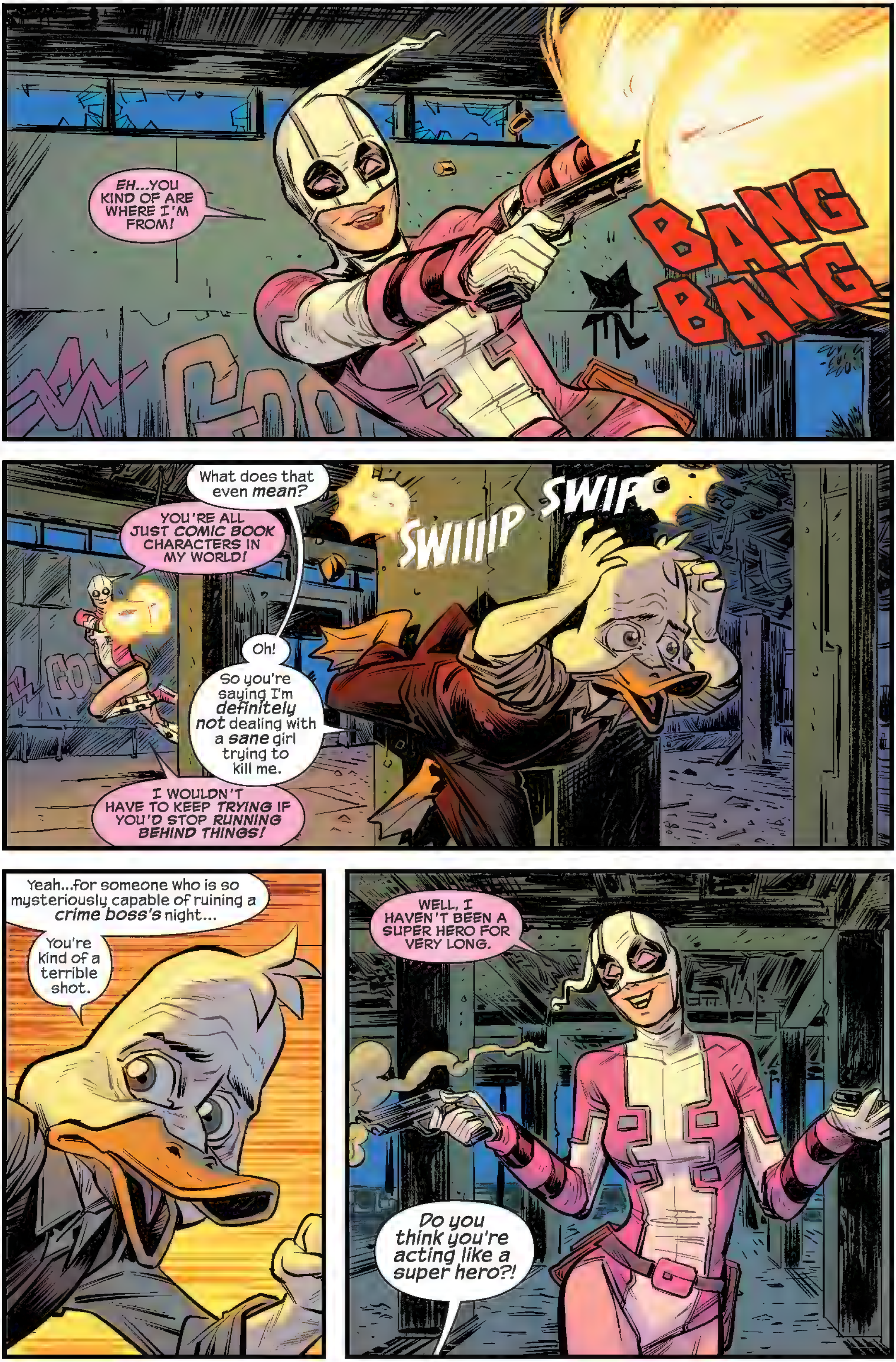

Whoa.
Yeah. My "best" is currently embalmed and surrounded by a drunk gaggle of tearful New York's finest.
This girl *knows* me somehow...and she knows my associates.
And *you* are absolutely ***not*** an associate.
Waugh.
Find her.
Find what she ***stole*** from me.
You don't want what's in that box to be in some anonymous psycho's hands...

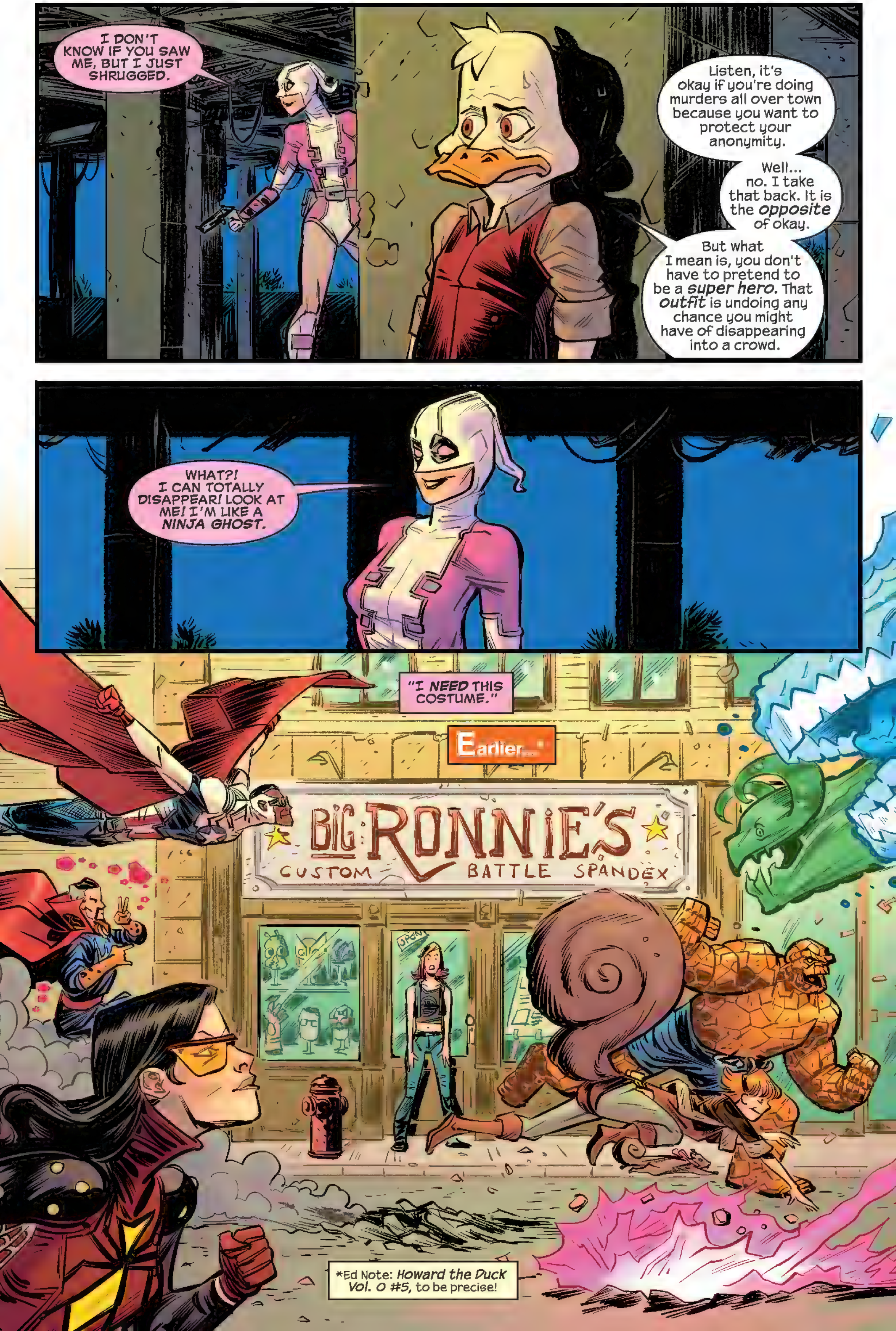
Ms. Poole if You're Nasty
(Part One of Three)

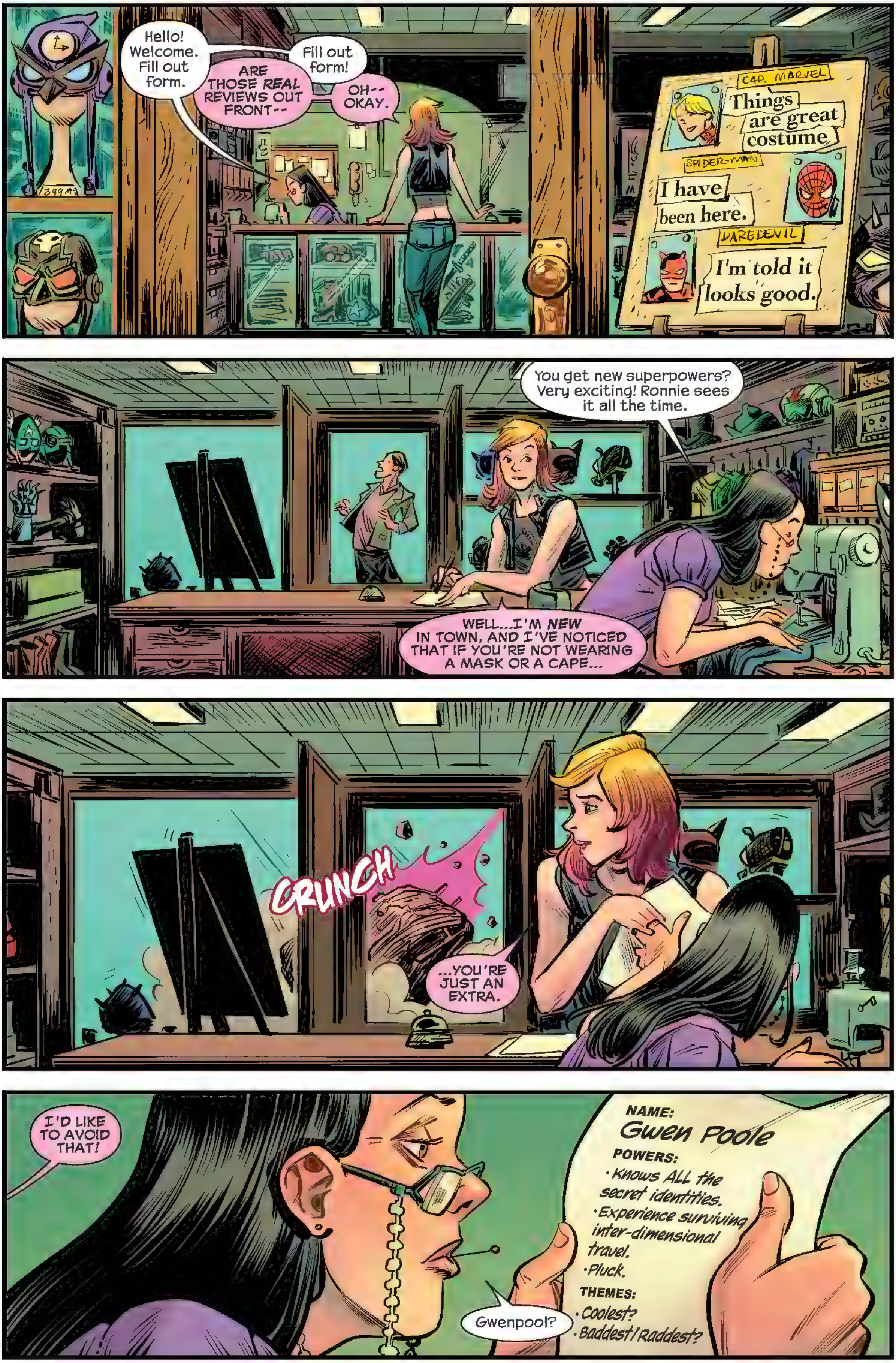

Trust me.
HOWARD A DUCK
PRIVATE EYE

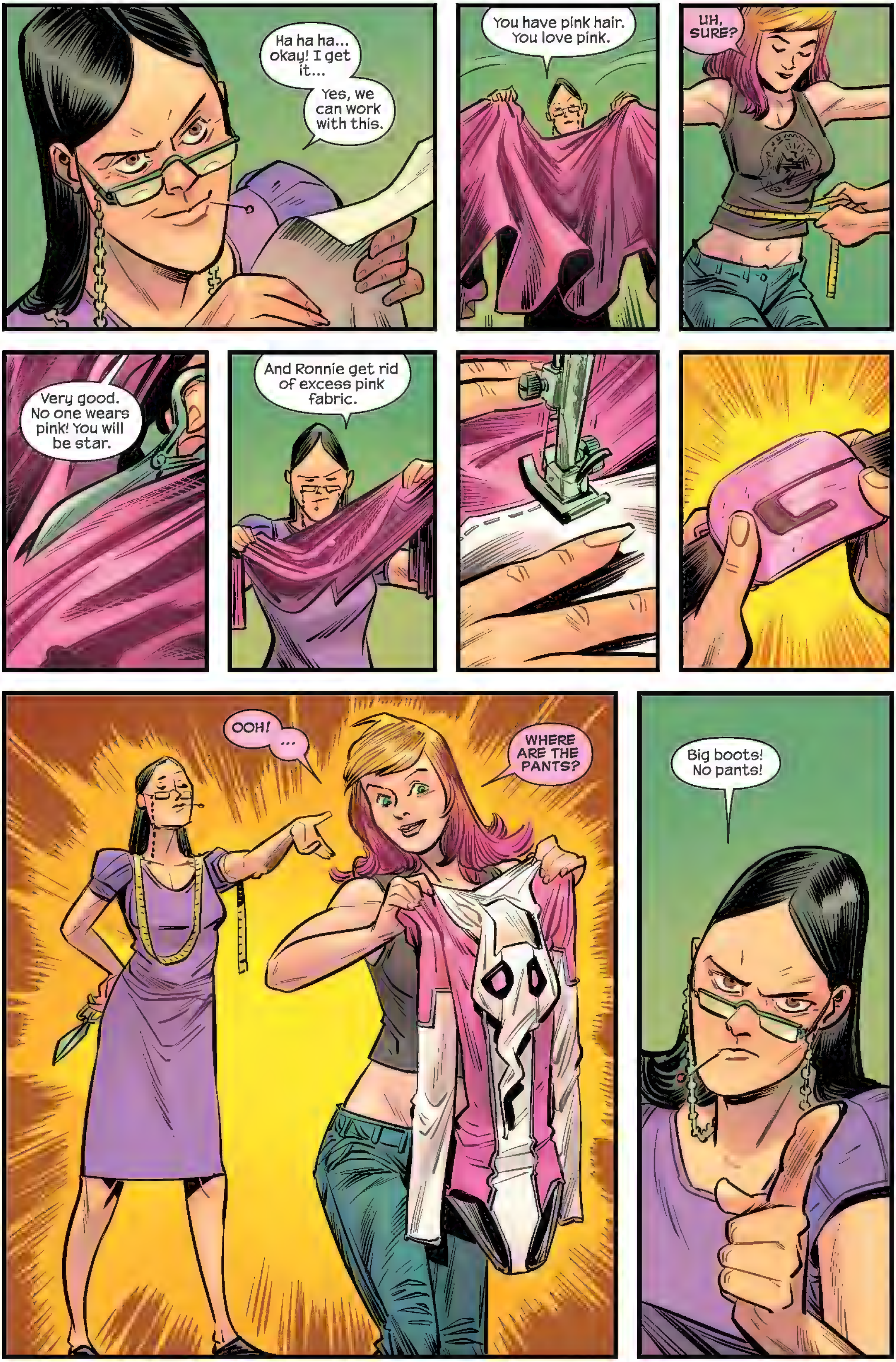

PREVIOUSLY...
I was robbed by some costumed girl I don't know, but who seems to know *me.*
She killed my detective before I could set him on her trail...
...so *you* find her.
And find what she *stole* from me, or I tell the police about *you* stealing from me.
WOO! THAT BLACK CAT IS *SCARY* ALL RIGHT! EVEN IN KIND OF NORMAL, NON-CAT APPAREL.
Waaaagh, who...*what* are you *doing* here?!
TRYING TO KEEP *HER* FROM FINDING *ME!*
Yeah, there's a lot of nice desks in this town to hide under. *Why mine?*
SHE JUST FORCED YOU INTO TRYING TO CATCH ME FOR HER, RIGHT?
Right...
WELL, DUCKY BOY...
I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT.

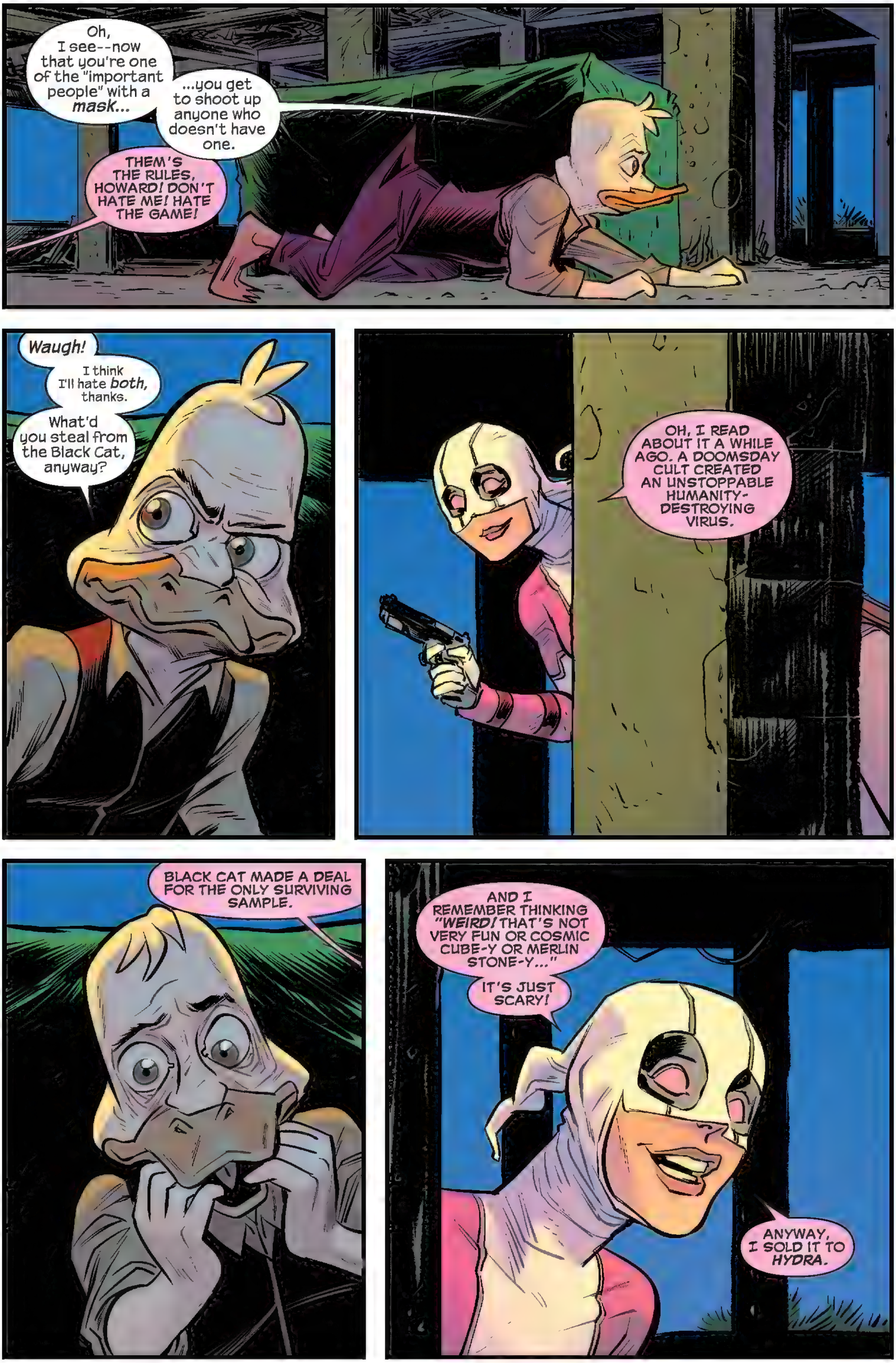

BANG BANG
BANG BANG
PTING ZOW
TNK
AAAAAAA!
Lady! Please! Let's talk! I have no idea who you are!
Also I don't want you to kill me. There. All the cards are on the table!
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL IF YOU DIE? YOU'VE DISAPPEARED FROM PUBLICATION FOR MONTHS-- YEARS AT A TIME.
YOU'LL JUST COME BACK AGAIN EVENTUALLY.
Publi--
What are you talking about?!
Do you think I'm a book?!
Madam, I am not a book.

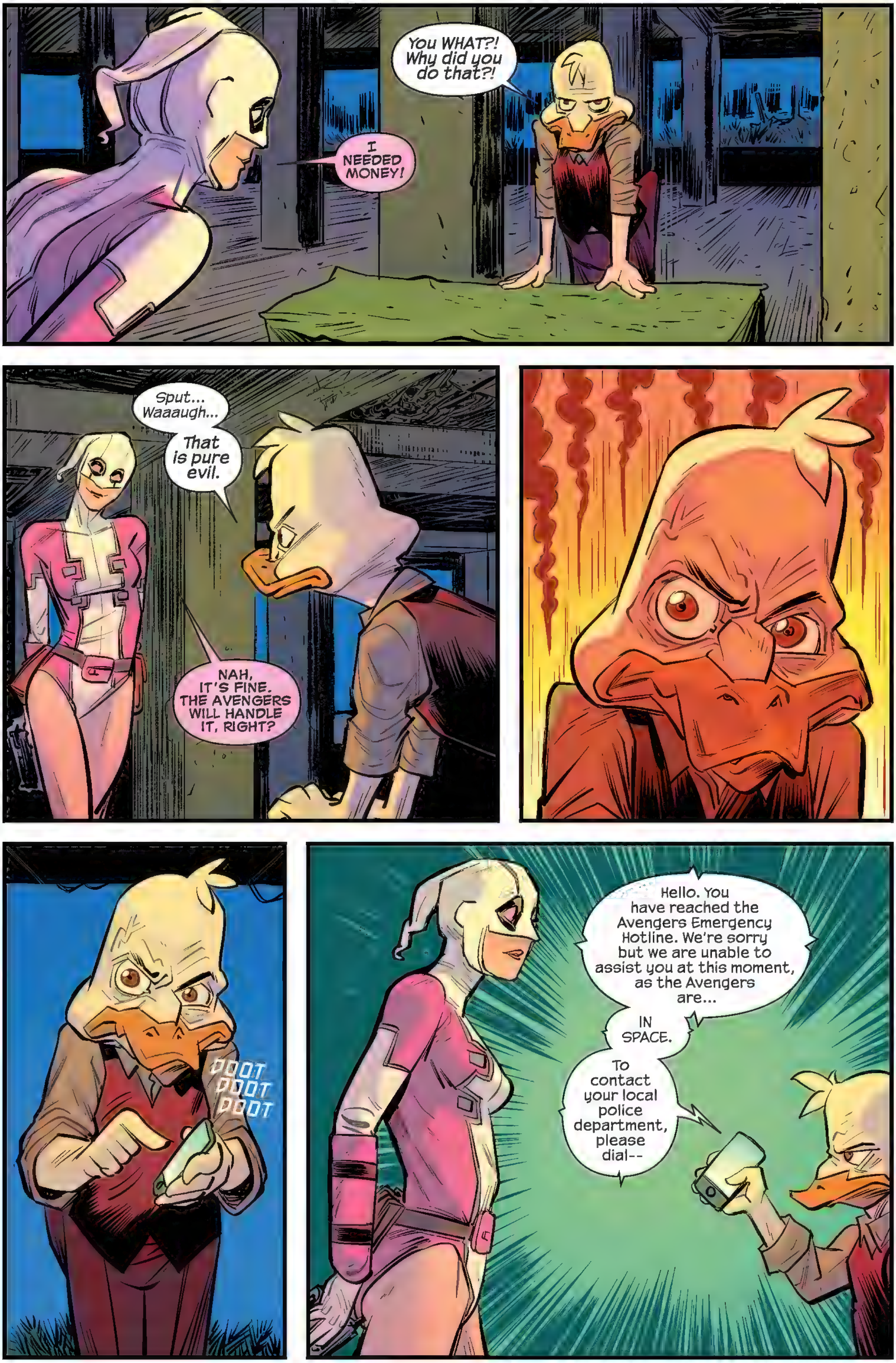

EH...YOU KIND OF ARE WHERE I'M FROM!
BANG BANG
What does that even *mean?*
YOU'RE ALL JUST *COMIC BOOK* CHARACTERS IN MY WORLD!
SWIIIIP SWIP
Oh!
So you're saying I'm *definitely not* dealing with a *sane* girl trying to kill me.
I WOULDN'T HAVE TO KEEP *TRYING* IF YOU'D STOP *RUNNING BEHIND THINGS!*
Yeah...for someone who is so mysteriously capable of ruining a *crime boss's* night...
You're kind of a terrible shot.
WELL, I HAVEN'T BEEN A SUPER HERO FOR VERY LONG.
Do you think you're acting like a super hero?!

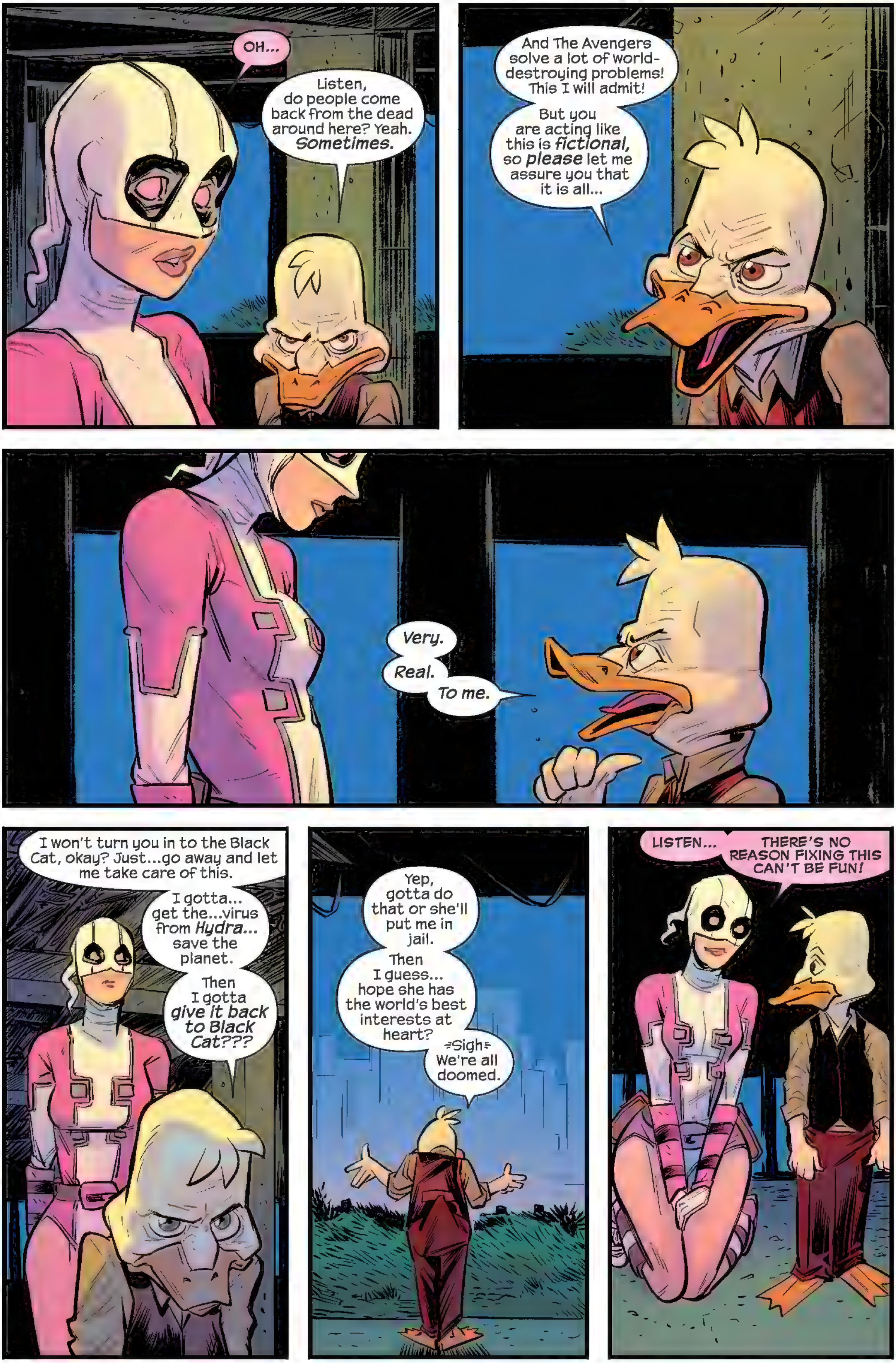

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU SAW ME, BUT I JUST SHRUGGED.
Listen, it's okay if you're doing murders all over town because you want to protect your anonymity.
Well... no. I take that back. It is the *opposite* of okay.
But what I mean is, you don't have to pretend to be a *super hero.* That *outfit* is undoing any chance you might have of disappearing into a crowd.
WHAT?! I CAN TOTALLY DISAPPEAR! LOOK AT ME! I'M LIKE A *NINJA GHOST.*
"I *NEED* THIS COSTUME."
Earlier...
BIG RONNIE'S
CUSTOM BATTLE SPANDEX
OPEN
*Ed Note: *Howard the Duck Vol. 0 #5,* to be precise!

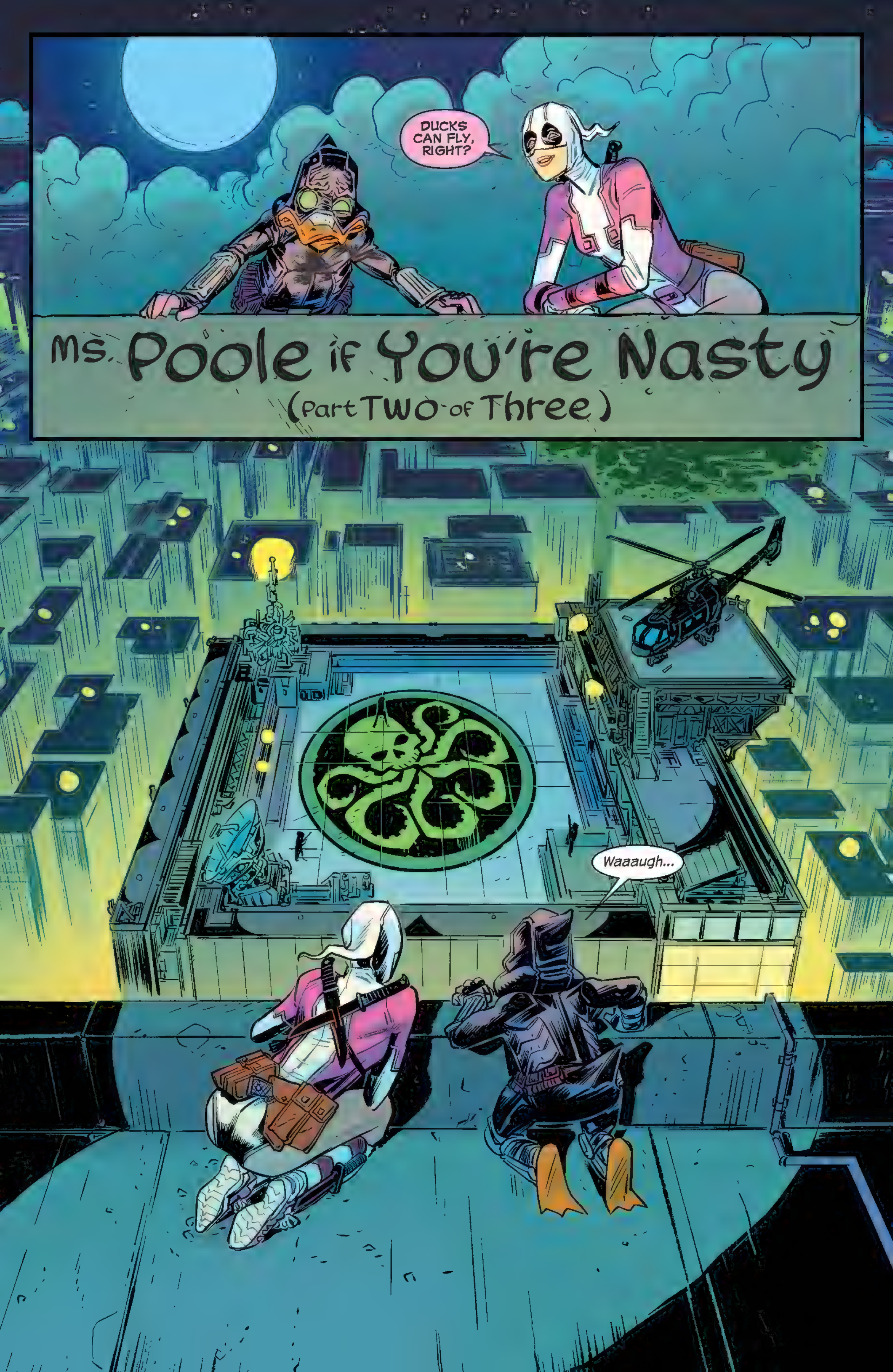

399.99
Hello! Welcome. Fill out form.
Fill out form!
ARE THOSE *REAL* REVIEWS OUT FRONT--
OH--OKAY.
CAP. MARVEL
Things are great costume
SPIDER-MAN
I have been here.
DAREDEVIL
I'm told it looks good.
You get new superpowers? Very exciting! Ronnie sees it all the time.
WELL...I'M *NEW* IN TOWN, AND I'VE NOTICED THAT IF YOU'RE NOT WEARING A MASK OR A CAPE...
CRUNCH
...YOU'RE JUST AN EXTRA.
I'D LIKE TO AVOID THAT!
NAME:
Gwen Poole
POWERS:
·Knows ALL the secret identities.
·Experience surviving inter-dimensional travel.
·Pluck.
THEMES:
·Coolest?
·Baddest/Raddest?
Gwenpool?

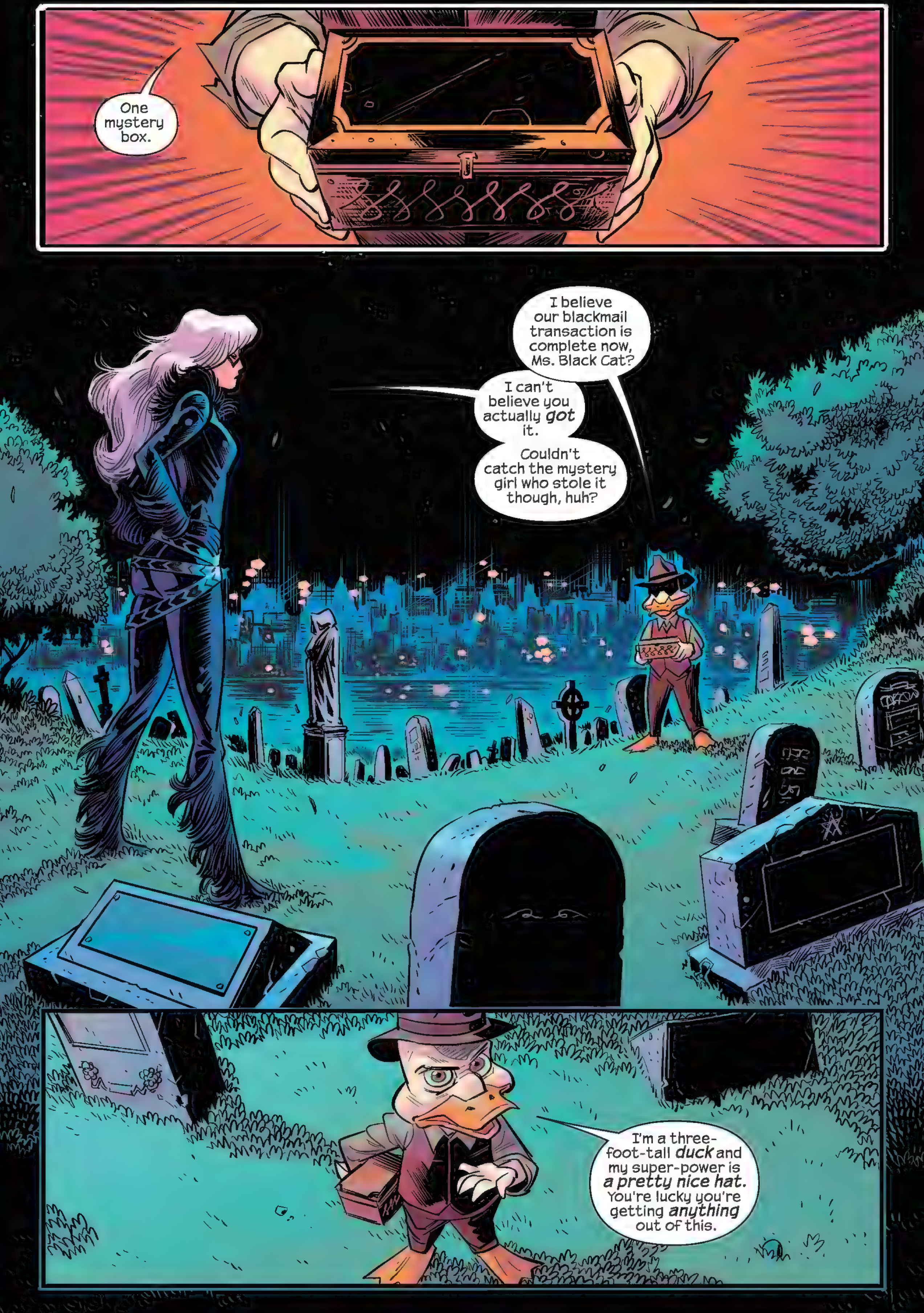

Ha ha ha... okay! I get it...
Yes, we can work with this.
You have pink hair. You love pink.
UH, SURE?
Very good. No one wears pink! You will be star.
And Ronnie get rid of excess pink fabric.
OOH!
...
WHERE ARE THE PANTS?
Big boots! No pants!

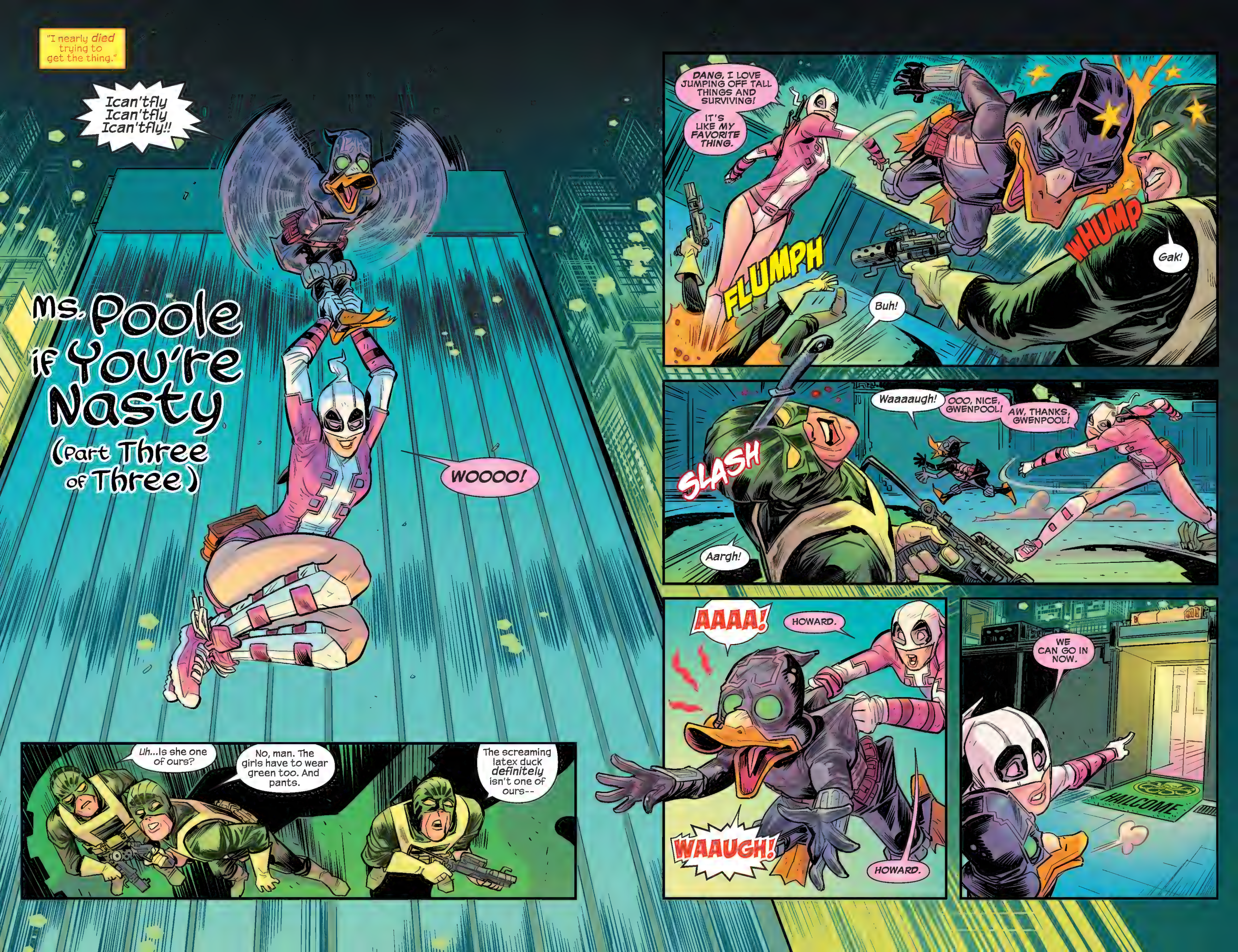

Oh, I see--now that you're one of the "important people" with a *mask*...
...you get to shoot up anyone who doesn't have one.
THEM'S THE RULES, HOWARD! DON'T HATE ME! HATE THE GAME!
Waugh!
I think I'll hate *both*, thanks.
What'd you steal from the Black Cat, anyway?
OH, I READ ABOUT IT A WHILE AGO. A DOOMSDAY CULT CREATED AN UNSTOPPABLE HUMANITY-DESTROYING VIRUS.
BLACK CAT MADE A DEAL FOR THE ONLY SURVIVING SAMPLE.
AND I REMEMBER THINKING *"WEIRD!* THAT'S NOT VERY FUN OR COSMIC CUBE-Y OR MERLIN STONE-Y..."
IT'S JUST SCARY!
ANYWAY, I SOLD IT TO *HYDRA*.

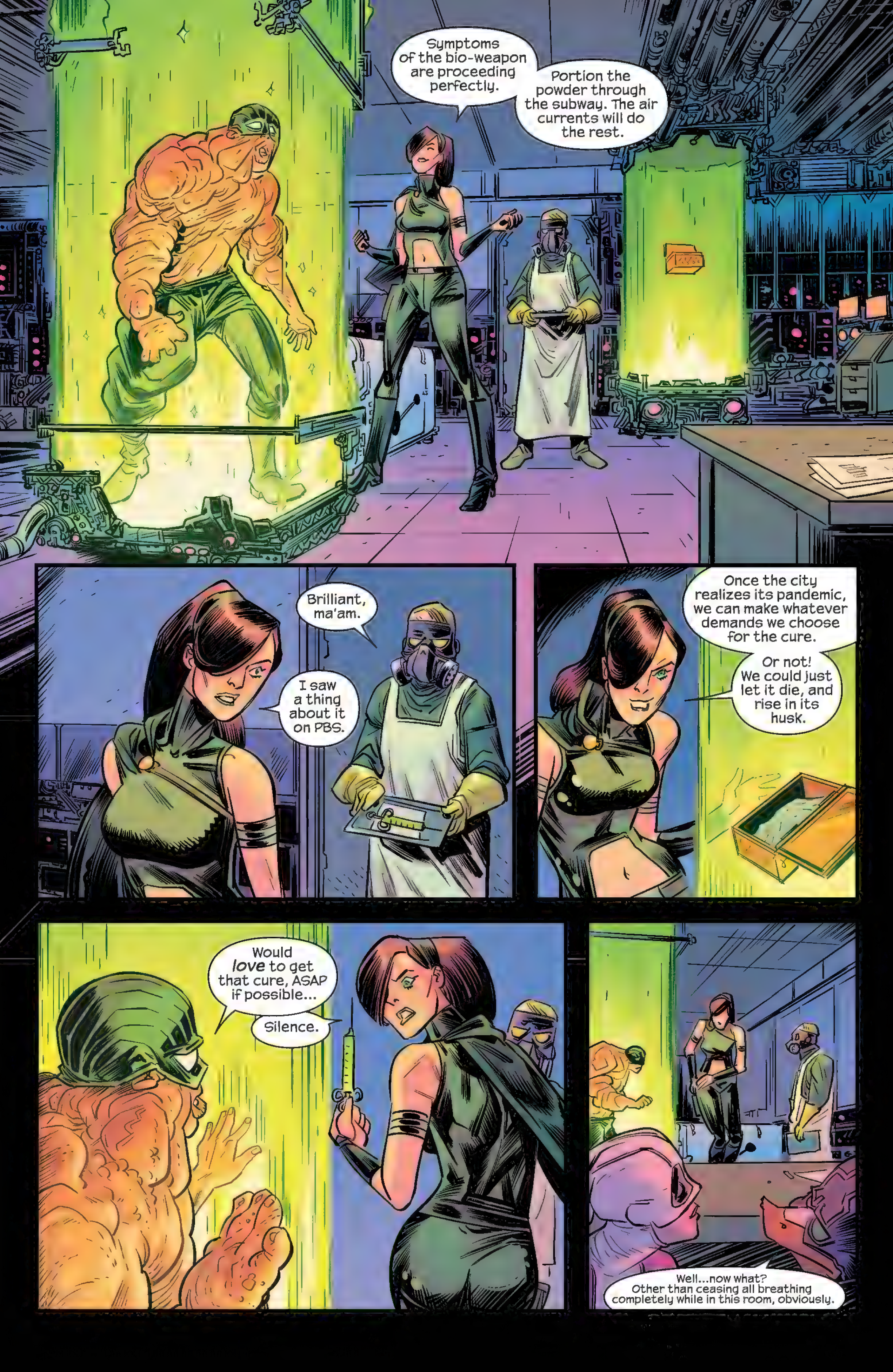

You WHAT?! Why did you do that?!
I NEEDED MONEY!
Sput... Waaaugh...
That is pure evil.
NAH, IT'S FINE. THE AVENGERS WILL HANDLE IT, RIGHT?
DOOT DOOT DOOT
Hello. You have reached the Avengers Emergency Hotline. We're sorry but we are unable to assist you at this moment, as the Avengers are...
IN SPACE.
To contact your local police department, please dial--

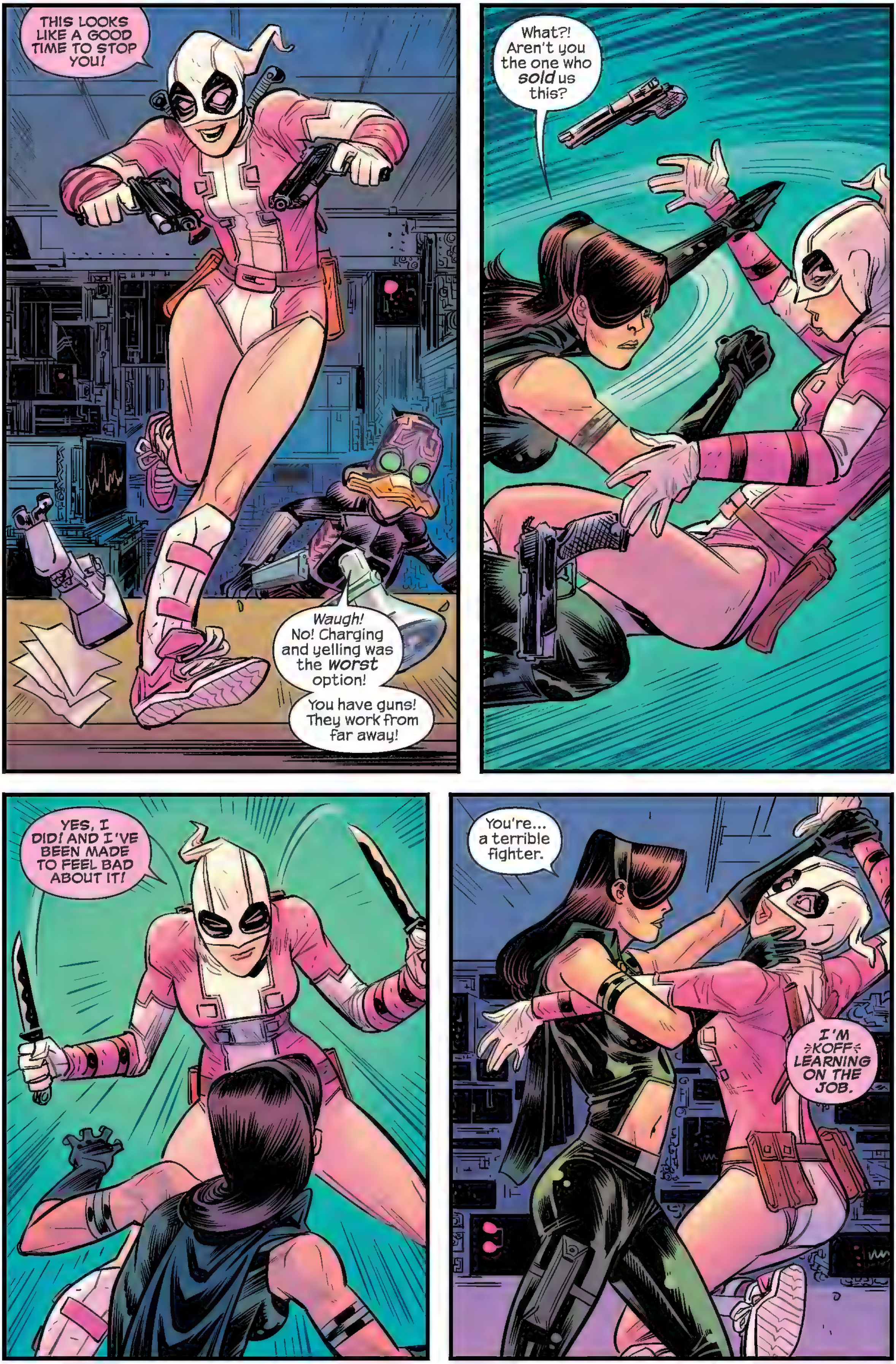

OH...
Listen, do people come back from the dead around here? Yeah. *Sometimes.*
And The Avengers solve a lot of world-destroying problems! This I will admit!
But you are acting like this is *fictional,* so *please* let me assure you that it is all...
Very.
Real.
To me.
I won't turn you in to the Black Cat, okay? Just...go away and let me take care of this.
I gotta... get the...virus from *Hydra...* save the planet.
Then I gotta *give it back to Black Cat???*
Yep, gotta do that or she'll put me in jail.
Then I guess... hope she has the world's best interests at heart?
=Sigh= We're all doomed.
LISTEN...
THERE'S NO REASON FIXING THIS CAN'T BE FUN!

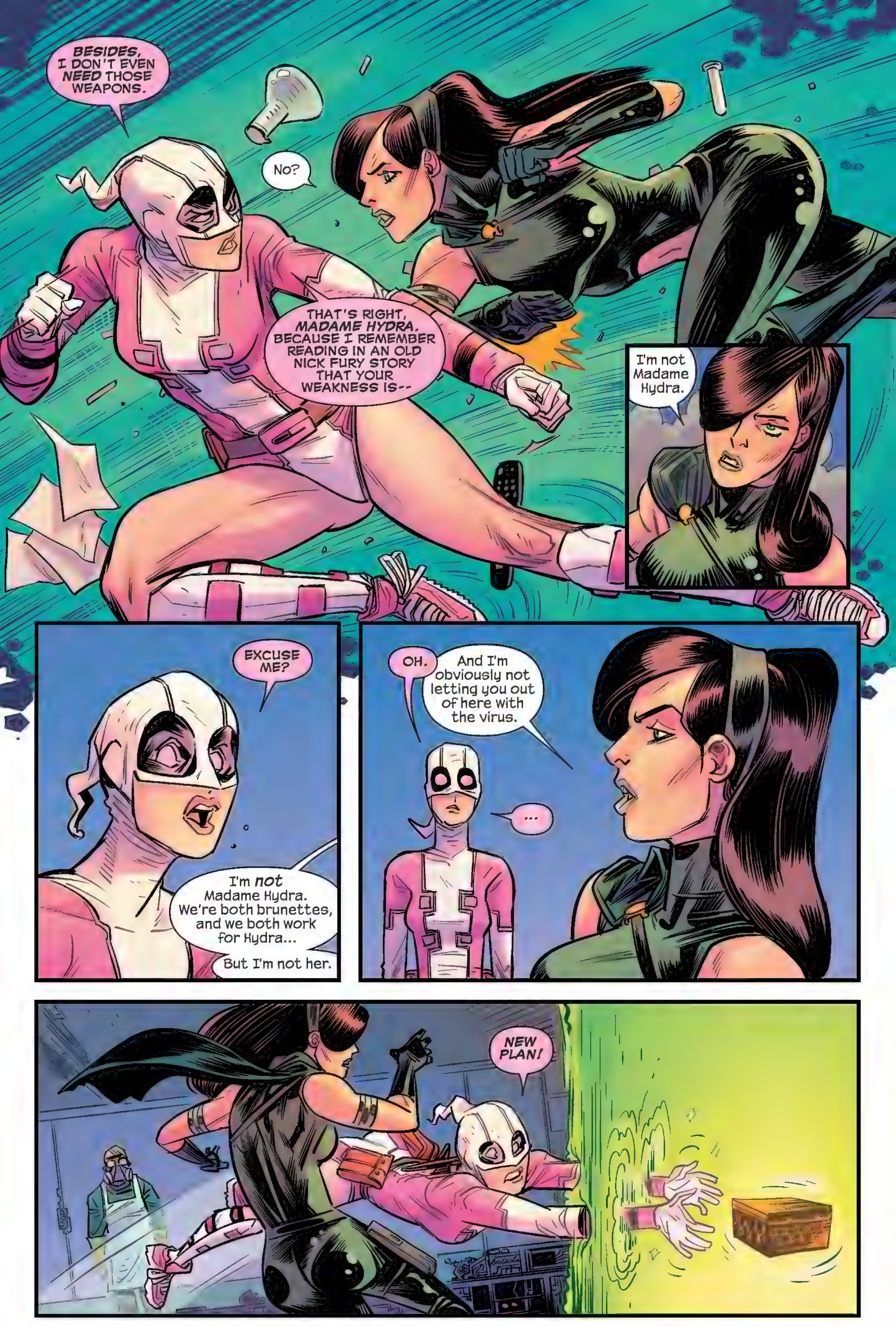

DUCKS CAN FLY, RIGHT?
Ms. Poole if You're Nasty
(Part TWO of Three)
Waaaugh...

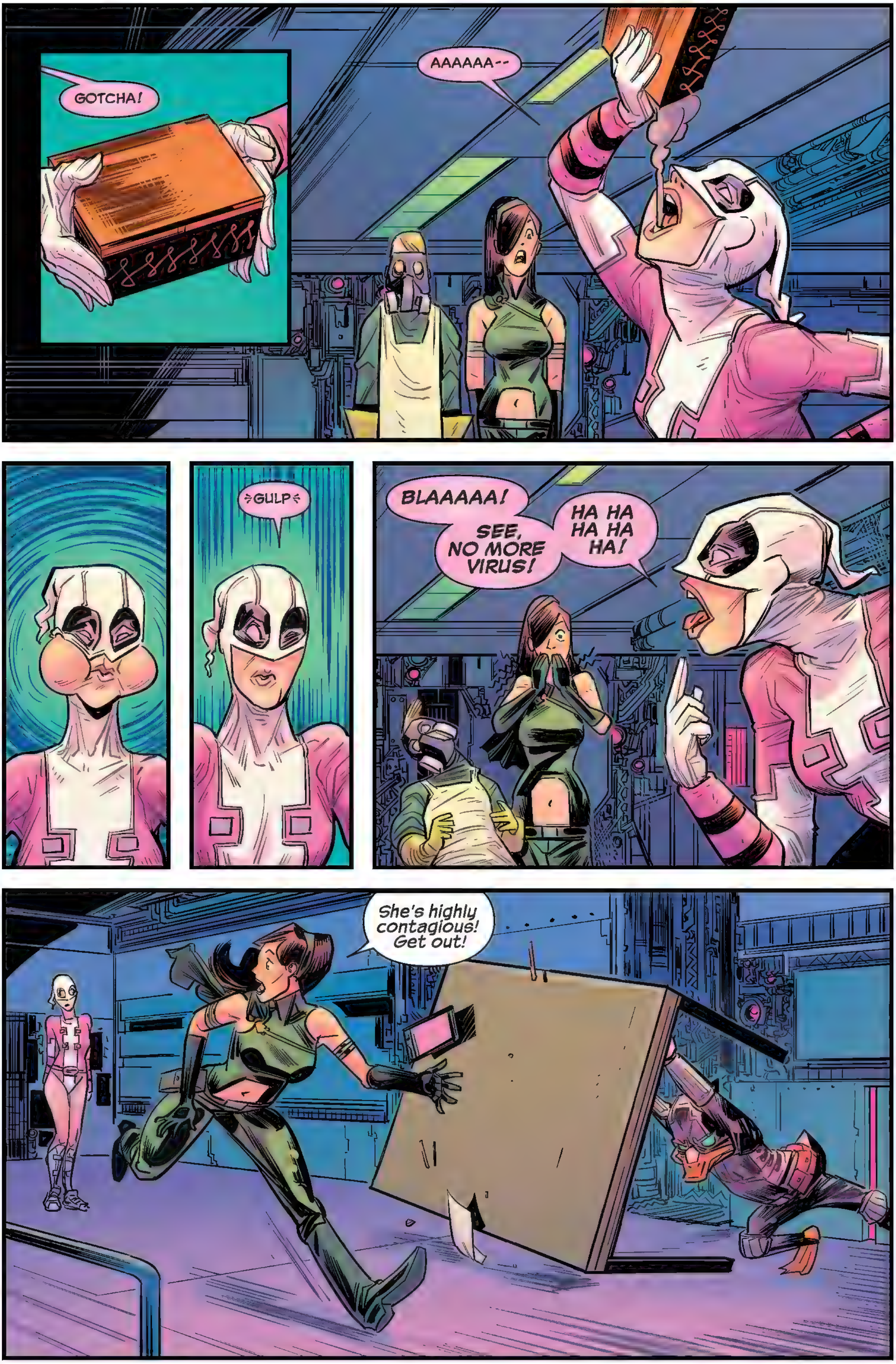

One mystery box.
I believe our blackmail transaction is complete now, Ms. Black Cat?
I can't believe you actually *got* it.
Couldn't catch the mystery girl who stole it though, huh?
I'm a three-foot-tall *duck* and my super-power is *a pretty nice hat.* You're lucky you're getting *anything* out of this.

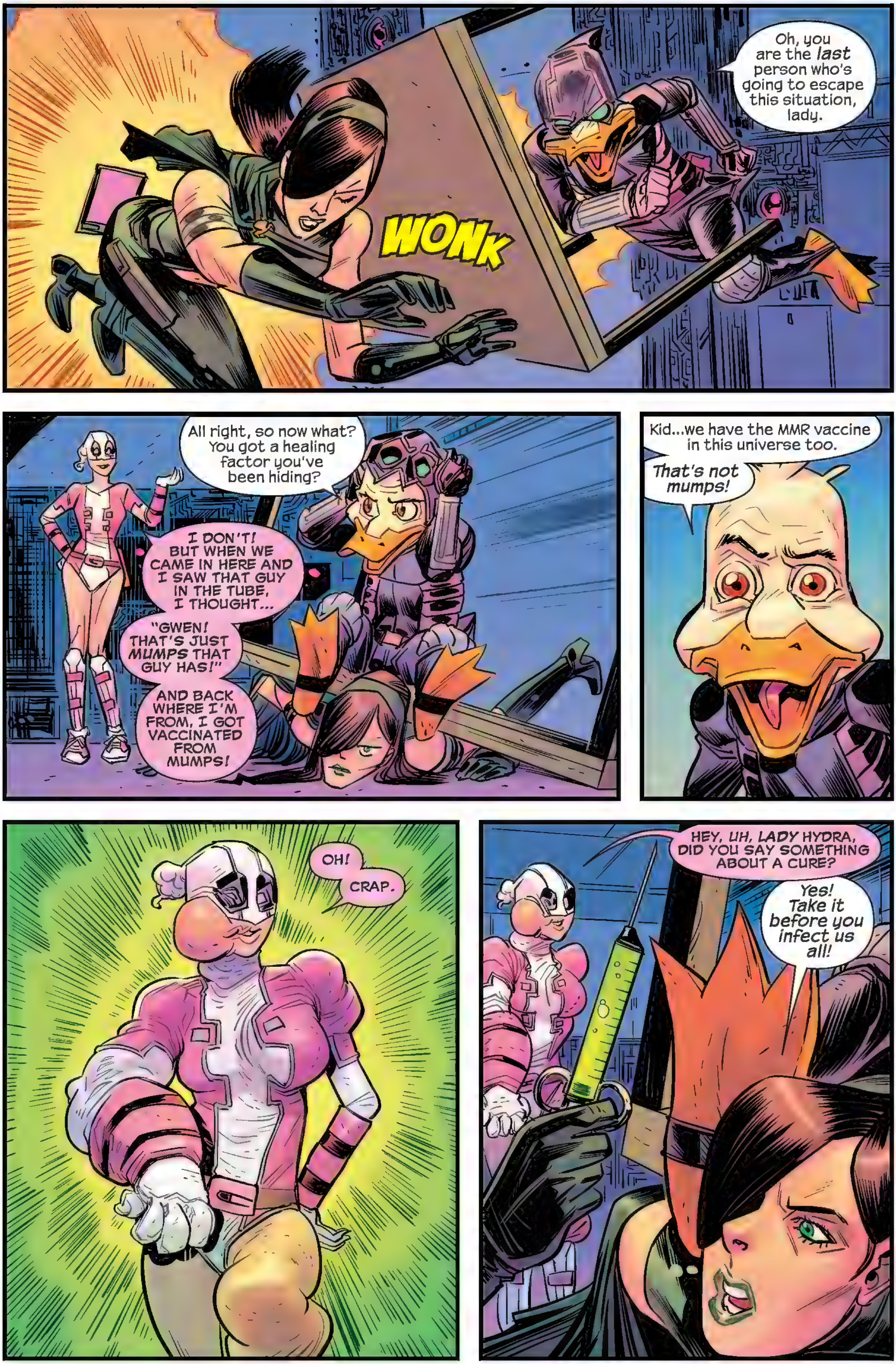

"I nearly *died* trying to get the thing."
Ican'tfly Ican'tfly Ican'tfly!!
Ms. Poole if You're Nasty (Part Three of Three)
WOOOO!
Uh...Is she one of ours?
No, man. The girls have to wear green too. And pants.
The screaming latex duck *definitely* isn't one of ours--
DANG, I LOVE JUMPING OFF TALL THINGS AND SURVIVING!
IT'S LIKE MY FAVORITE THING.
FLUMPH
WHUMP
Gak!
Buh!
SLASH
Waaaaugh!
OOO, NICE, GWENPOOL!
AW, THANKS, GWENPOOL!
Aargh!
AAAA!
HOWARD.
WAAUGH!
HOWARD.
WE CAN GO IN NOW.
HAILCOME

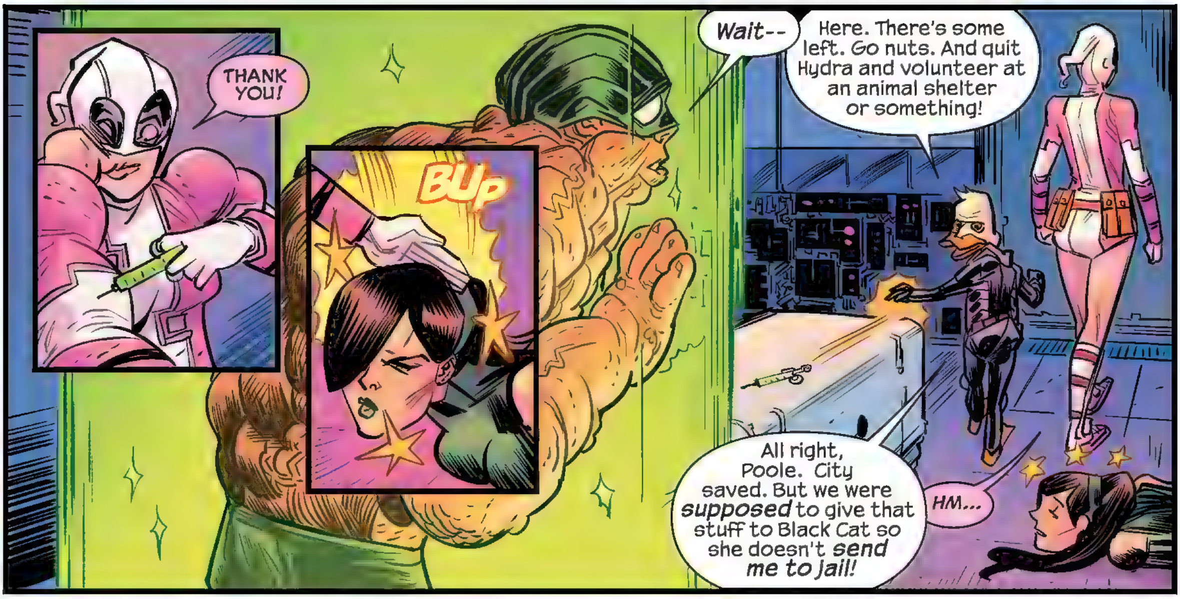

Symptoms of the bio-weapon are proceeding perfectly.
Portion the powder through the subway. The air currents will do the rest.
Brilliant, ma'am.
I saw a thing about it on PBS.
Once the city realizes its pandemic, we can make whatever demands we choose for the cure.
Or not! We could just let it die, and rise in its husk.
Would *love* to get that cure, ASAP if possible...
Silence.
Well...now what? Other than ceasing all breathing completely while in this room, obviously.

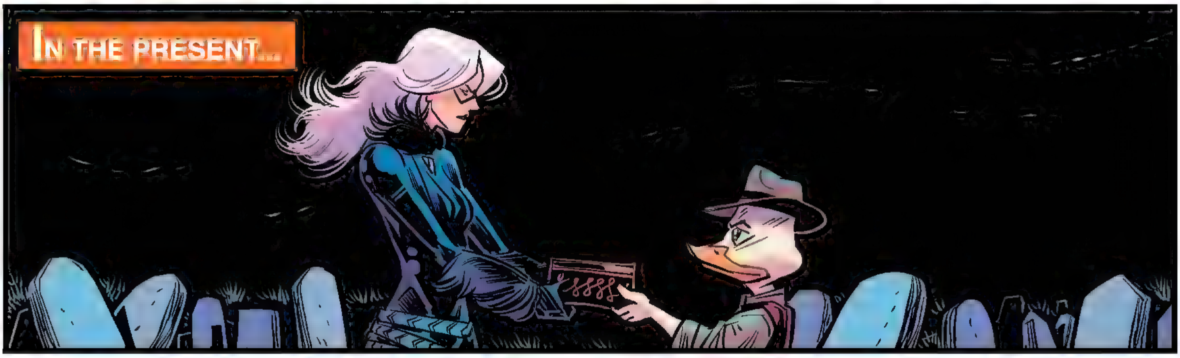

THIS LOOKS LIKE A GOOD TIME TO STOP YOU!
Waugh! No! Charging and yelling was the ***worst*** option!
You have guns! They work from far away!
What?! Aren't you the one who ***sold*** us this?
YES, I DID! AND I'VE BEEN MADE TO FEEL BAD ABOUT IT!
You're... a terrible fighter.
I'M *KOFF* LEARNING ON THE JOB.

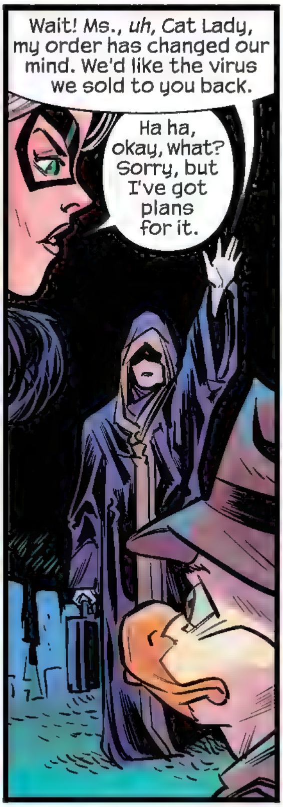

BESIDES, I DON'T EVEN *NEED* THOSE WEAPONS.
No?
THAT'S RIGHT, *MADAME HYDRA.* BECAUSE I REMEMBER READING IN AN OLD NICK FURY STORY THAT YOUR WEAKNESS IS--
I'm not Madame Hydra.
EXCUSE ME?
I'm *not* Madame Hydra. We're both brunettes, and we both work for Hydra...
But I'm not her.
OH.
And I'm obviously not letting you out of here with the virus.
...
NEW PLAN!

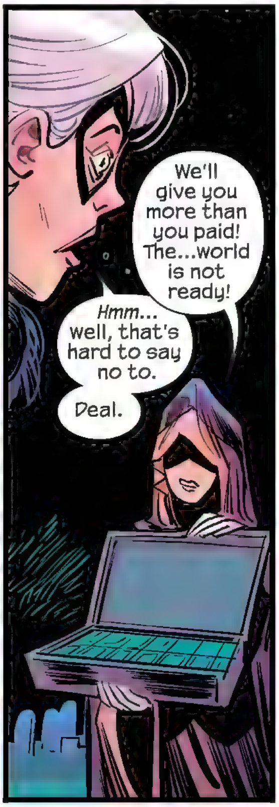

GOTCHA!
AAAAAA--
GULP
BLAAAAA!
SEE, NO MORE VIRUS!
HA HA HA HA HA!
She's highly contagious! Get out!

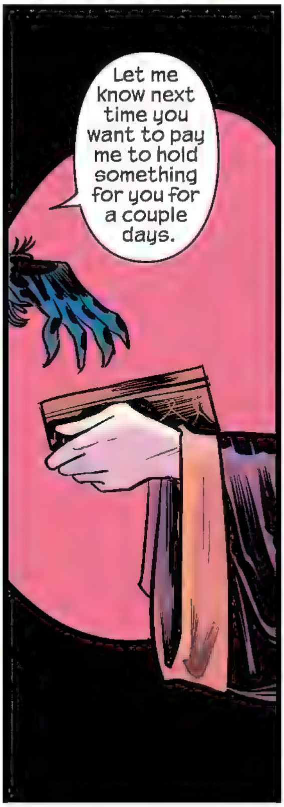

Oh, you are the *last* person who's going to escape this situation, lady.
WONK
All right, so now what? You got a healing factor you've been hiding?
I DON'T! BUT WHEN WE CAME IN HERE AND I SAW THAT GUY IN THE TUBE, I THOUGHT...
"GWEN! THAT'S JUST *MUMPS* THAT GUY HAS!"
AND BACK WHERE I'M FROM, I GOT VACCINATED FROM MUMPS!
Kid...we have the MMR vaccine in this universe too.
That's not mumps!
OH!
CRAP.
HEY, UH, LADY HYDRA, DID YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT A CURE?
Yes! Take it before you infect us all!

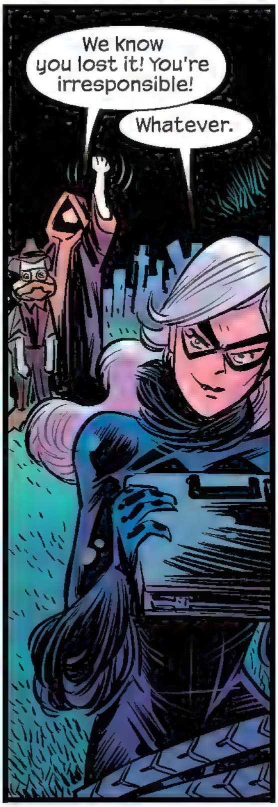

THANK YOU!
BUP
Wait--
Here. There's some left. Go nuts. And quit Hydra and volunteer at an animal shelter or something!
All right, Poole. City saved. But we were *supposed* to give that stuff to Black Cat so she doesn't *send me to jail!*
HM...

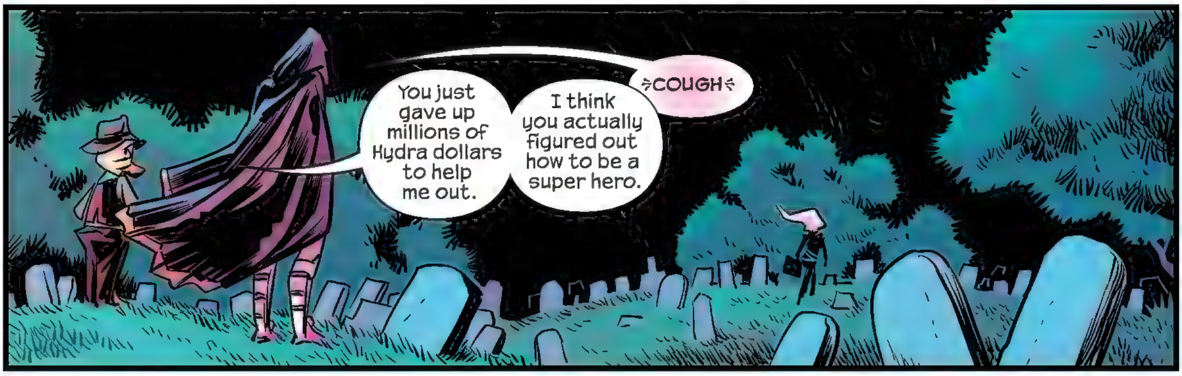

IN THE PRESENT...


Wait! Ms., *uh*, Cat Lady, my order has changed our mind. We'd like the virus we sold to you back.
Ha ha, okay, what? Sorry, but I've got plans for it.

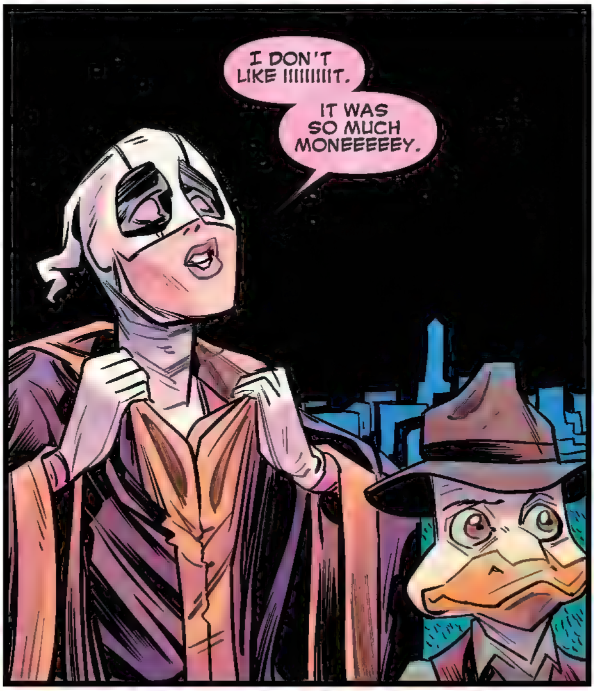

We'll give you more than you paid! The...world is not ready!
Hmm... well, that's hard to say no to.
Deal.


Let me know next time you want to pay me to hold something for you for a couple days.

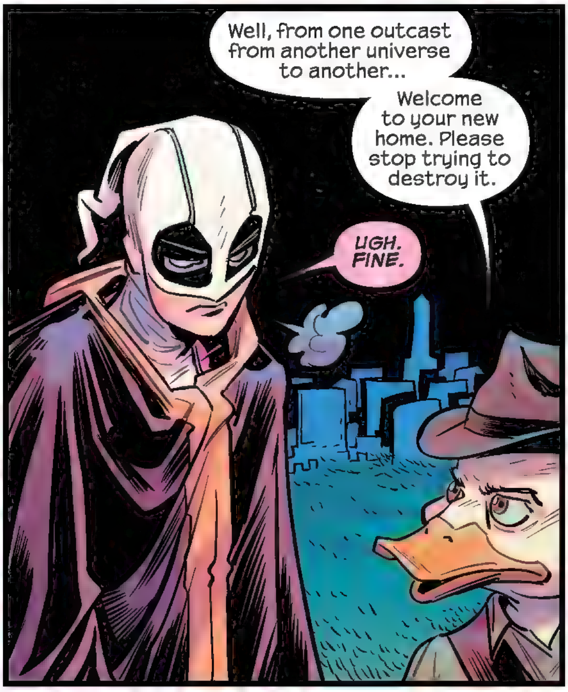

We know you lost it! You're irresponsible!
Whatever.



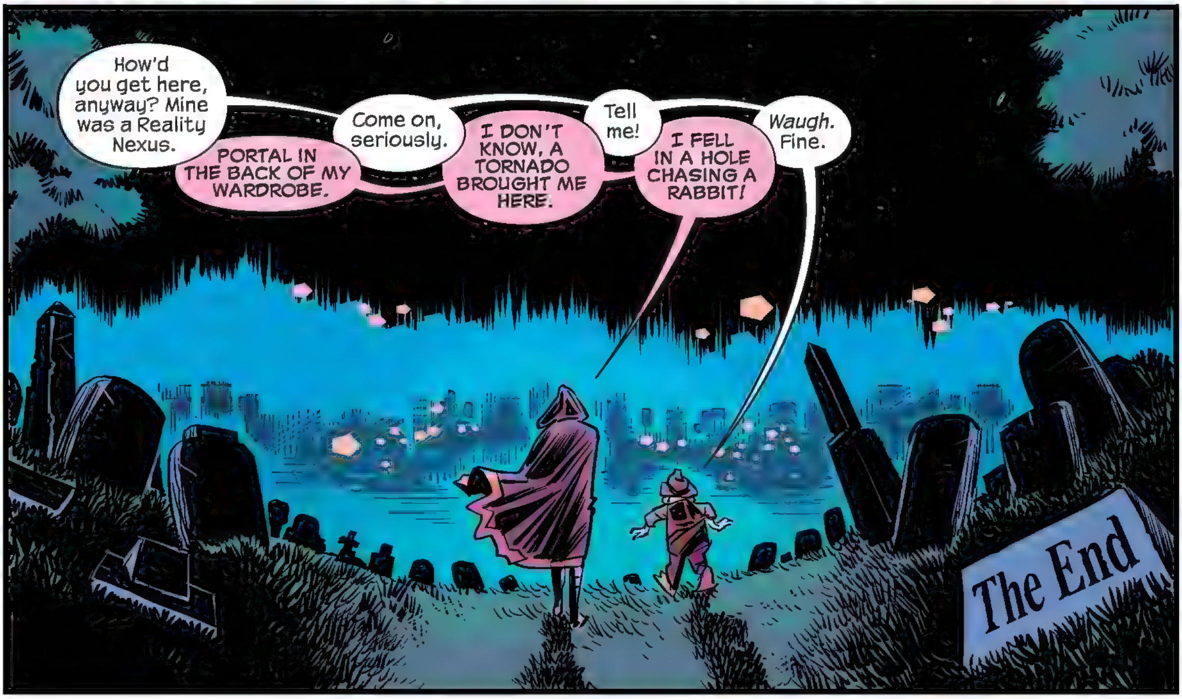
You just gave up millions of Hydra dollars to help me out.
I think you actually figured out how to be a super hero.
COUGH



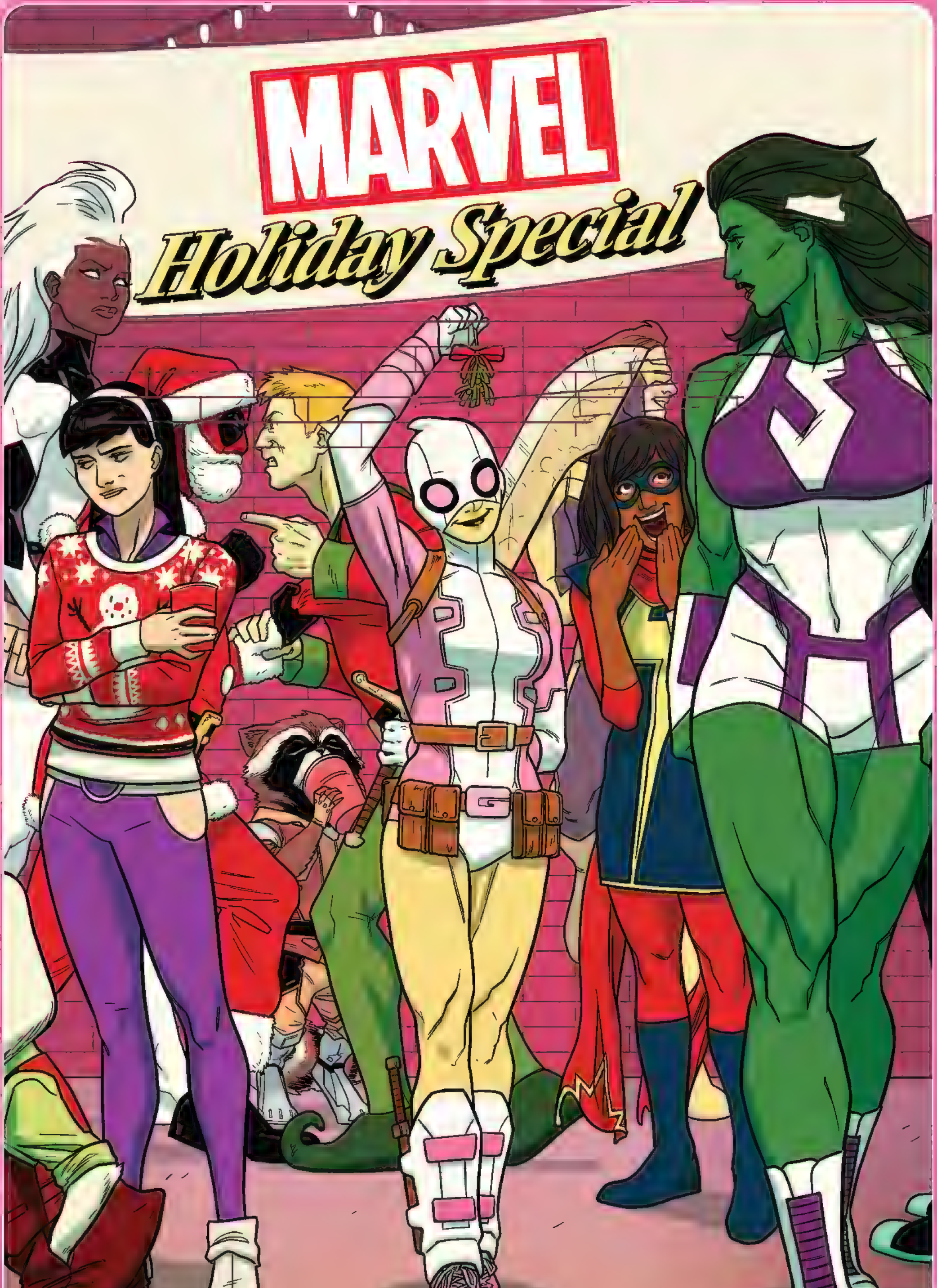
I DON'T LIKE IIIIIIIIIT.
IT WAS SO MUCH MONEEEEEY.



Well, from one outcast from another universe to another...
Welcome to your new home. Please stop trying to destroy it.
UGH. FINE.

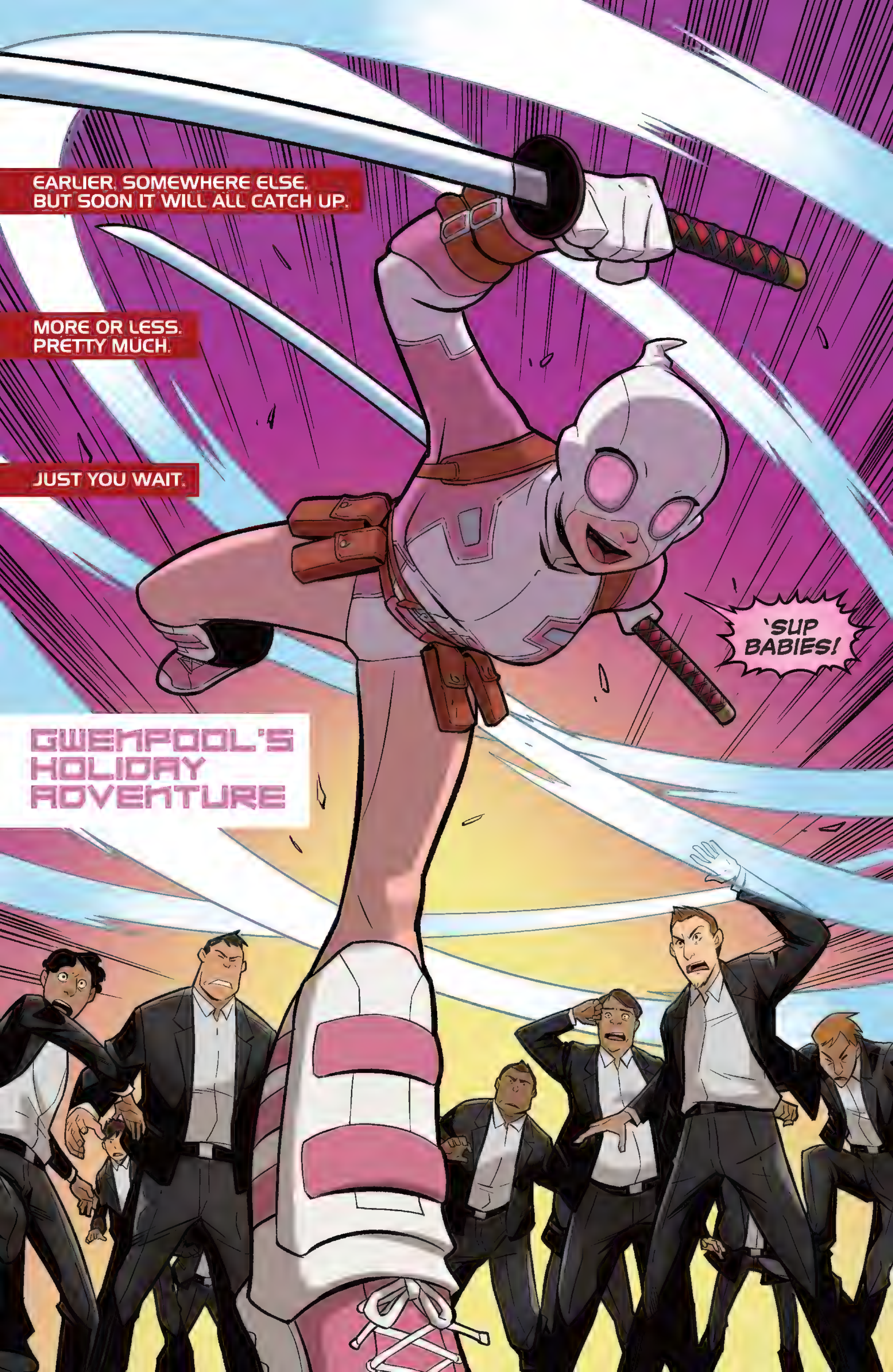


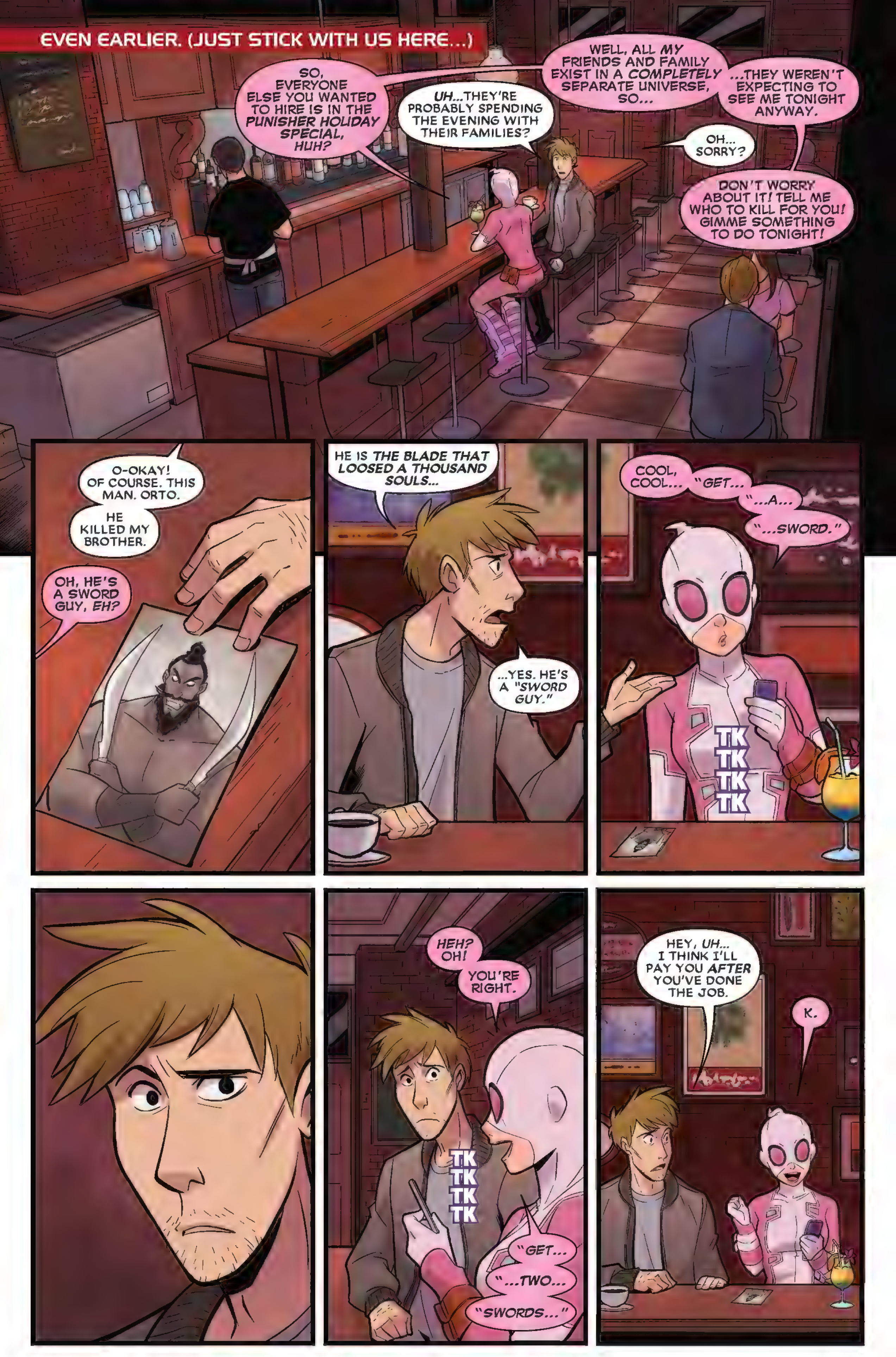
How'd you get here, anyway? Mine was a Reality Nexus.
PORTAL IN THE BACK OF MY WARDROBE.
Come on, seriously.
I DON'T KNOW, A TORNADO BROUGHT ME HERE.
Tell me!
I FELL IN A HOLE CHASING A RABBIT!
Waugh. Fine.
The End

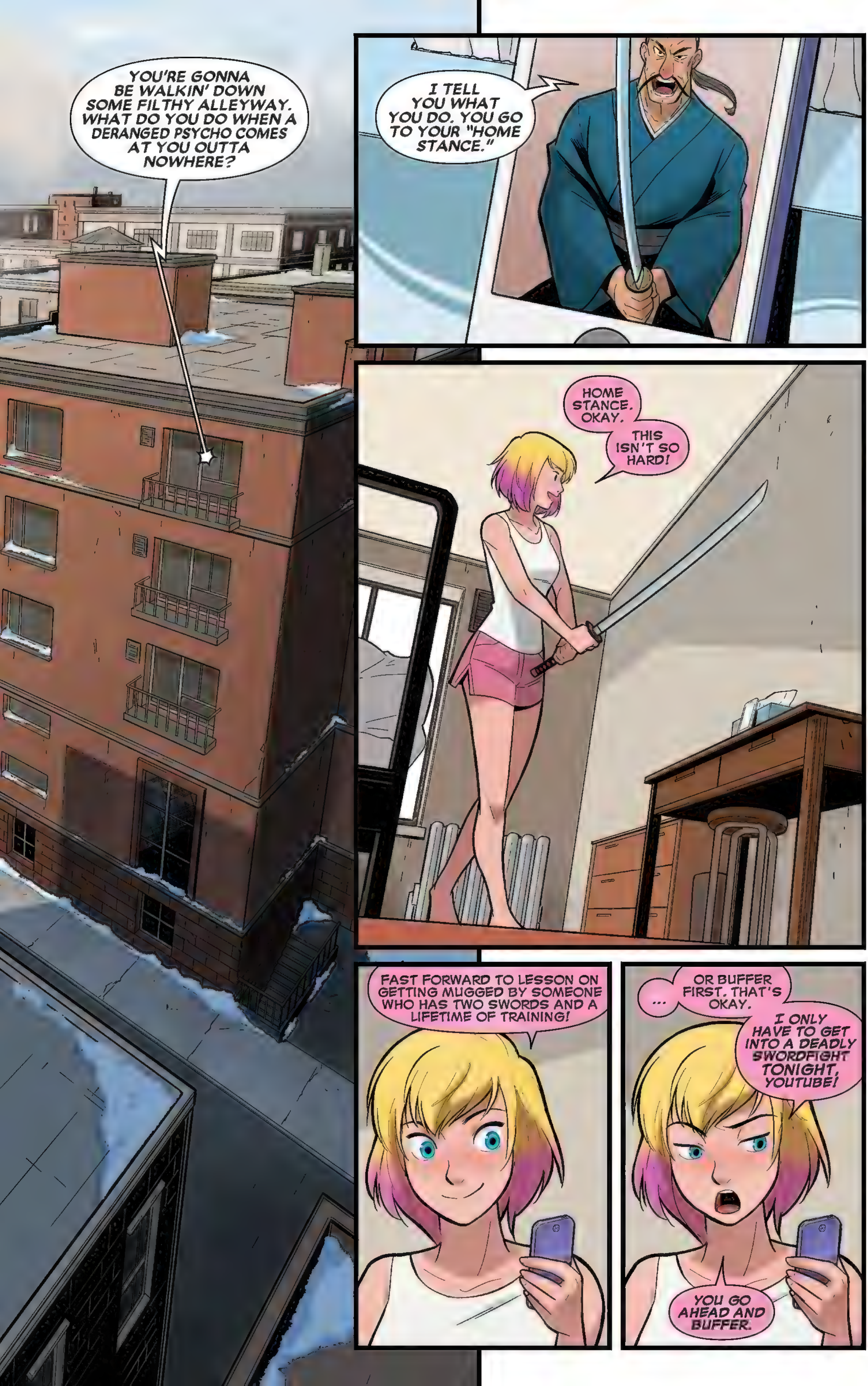

MARVEL
Holiday Special

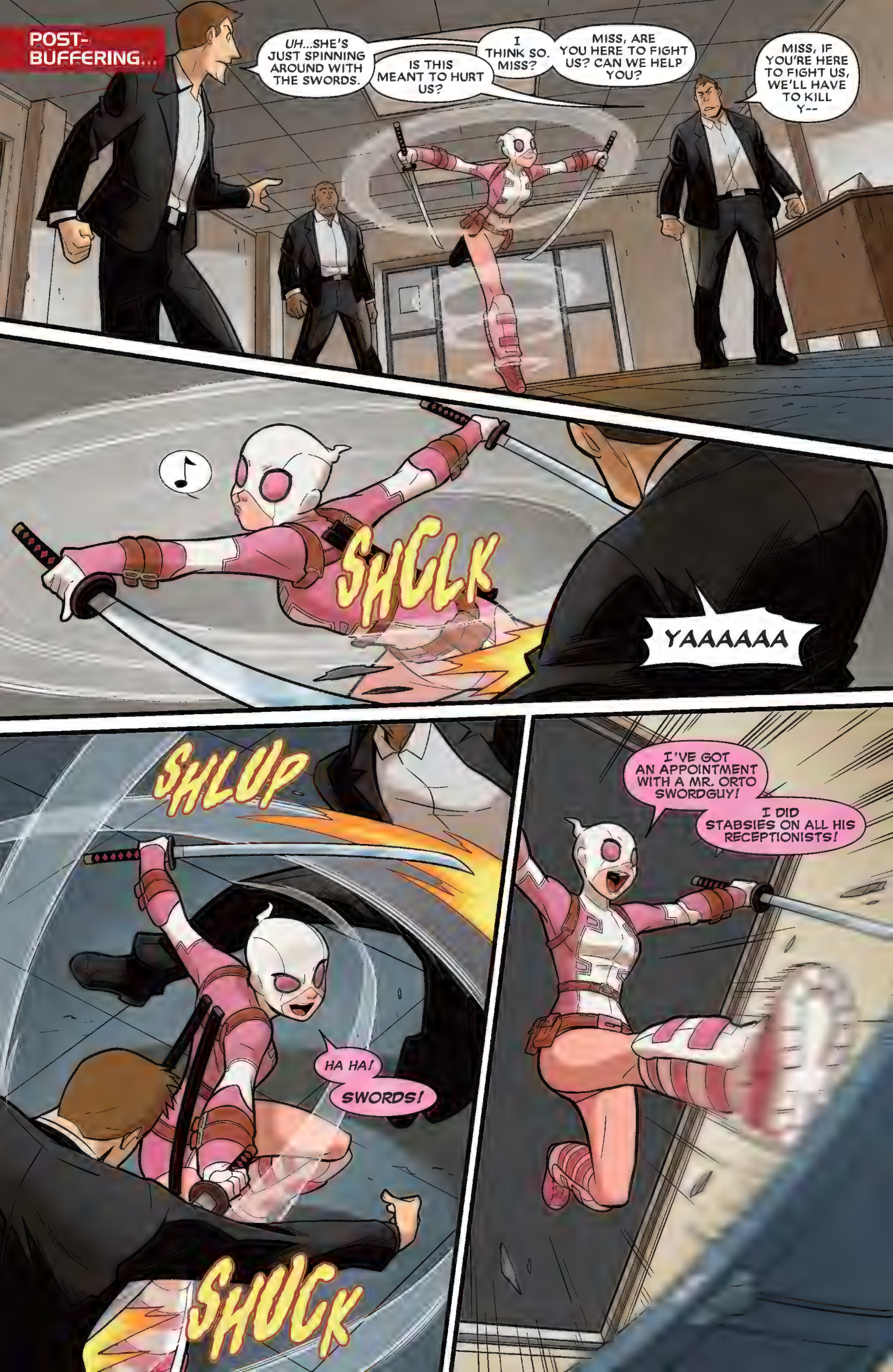
GWENPOOL SPECIAL #1

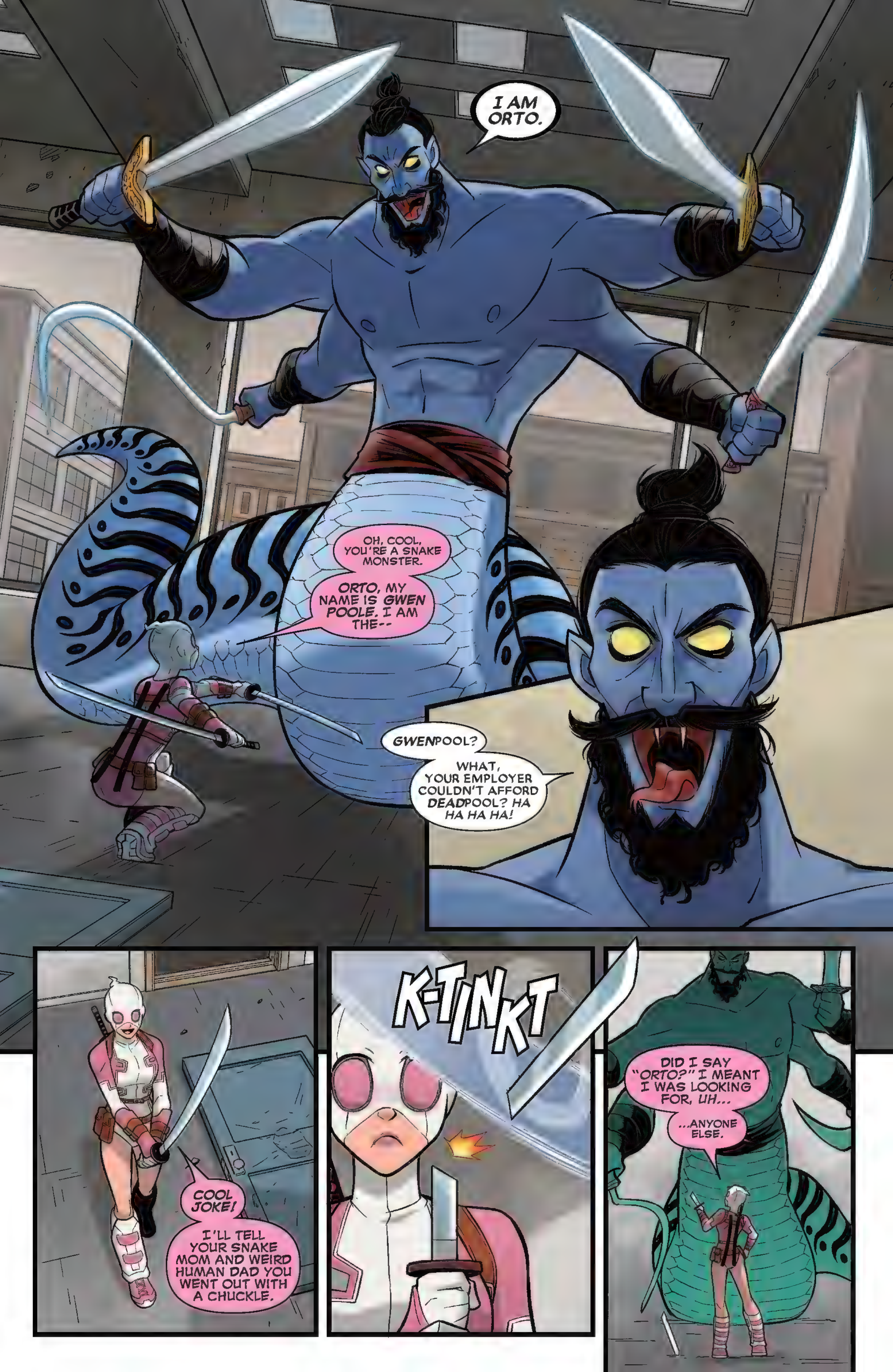
GWENPOOL'S HOLIDAY ADVENTURE

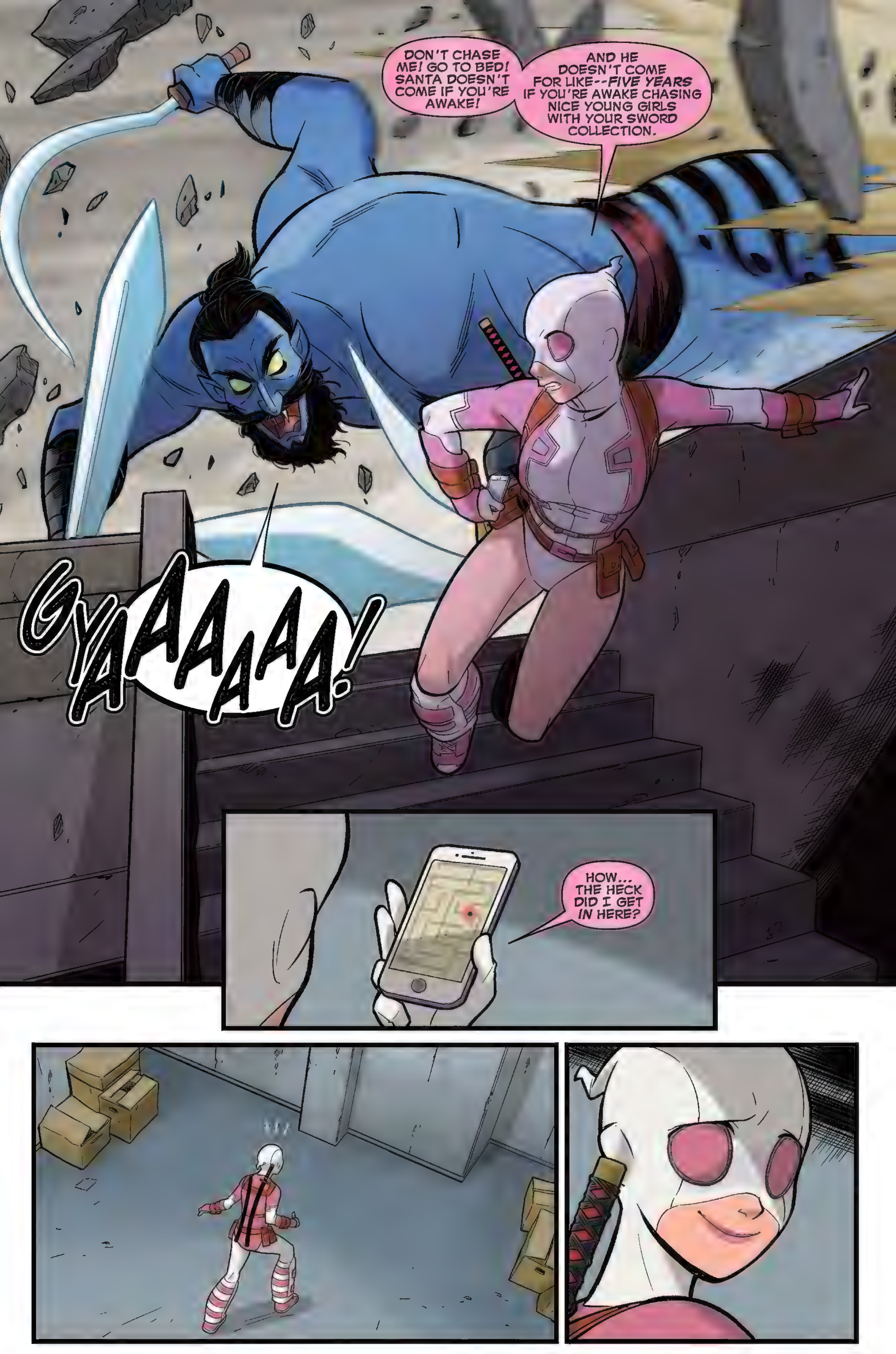

EARLIER, SOMEWHERE ELSE. BUT SOON IT WILL ALL CATCH UP.
MORE OR LESS. PRETTY MUCH.
JUST YOU WAIT.
'SUP BABIES!
GWENPOOL'S HOLIDAY ADVENTURE

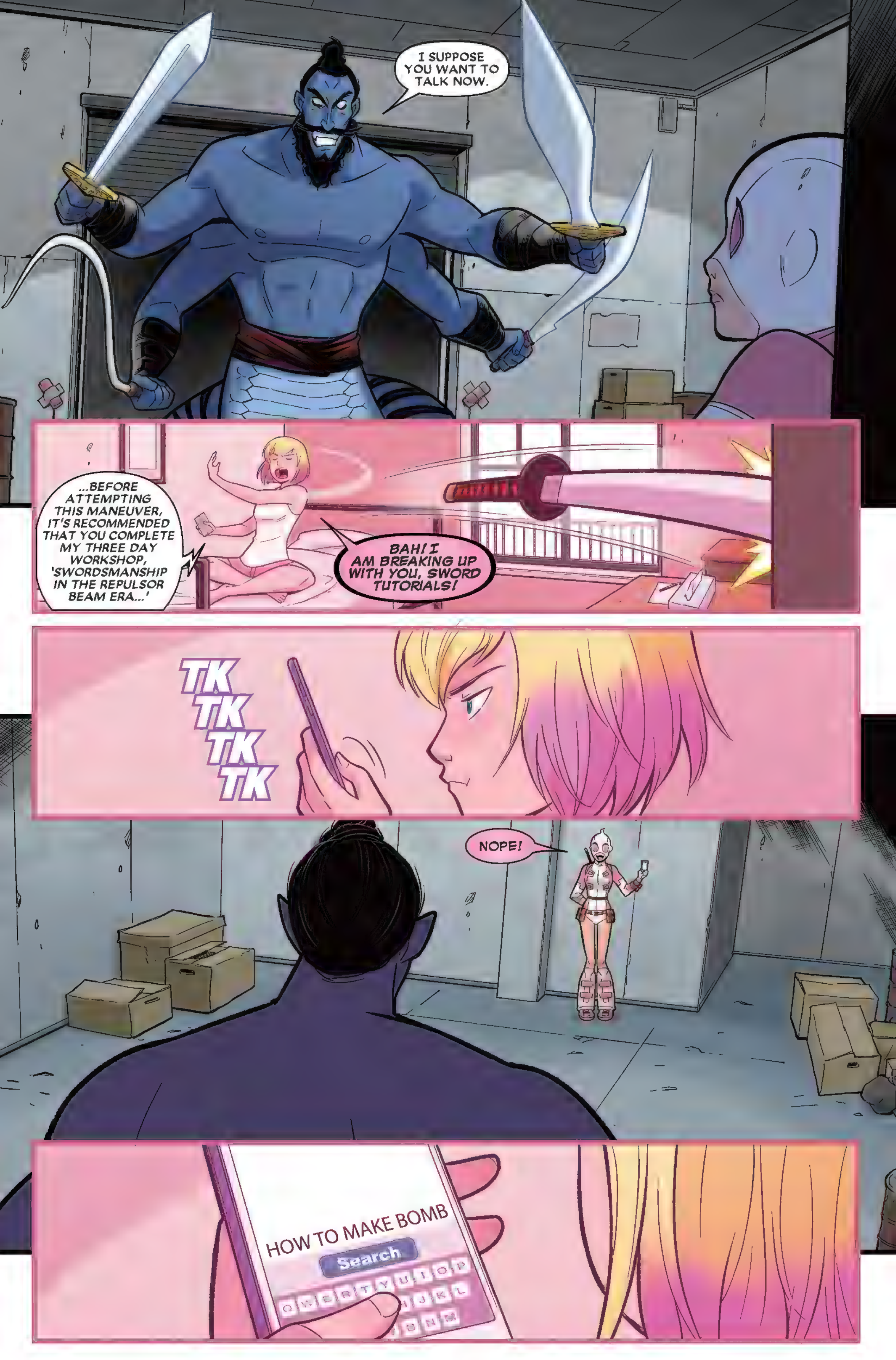

EVEN EARLIER. (JUST STICK WITH US HERE...)
SO, EVERYONE ELSE YOU WANTED TO HIRE IS IN THE PUNISHER HOLIDAY SPECIAL, HUH?
UH...THEY'RE PROBABLY SPENDING THE EVENING WITH THEIR FAMILIES?
WELL, ALL MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY EXIST IN A COMPLETELY SEPARATE UNIVERSE, SO...
...THEY WEREN'T EXPECTING TO SEE ME TONIGHT ANYWAY.
OH... SORRY?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT! TELL ME WHO TO KILL FOR YOU! GIMME SOMETHING TO DO TONIGHT!
O-OKAY! OF COURSE. THIS MAN. ORTO.
HE KILLED MY BROTHER.
OH, HE'S A SWORD GUY, EH?
HE IS THE BLADE THAT LOOSED A THOUSAND SOULS...
...YES. HE'S A "SWORD GUY."
COOL, COOL... "GET...
"...A...
"...SWORD."
TK TK TK TK
HEH? OH!
YOU'RE RIGHT.
TK TK TK TK
"GET...
"...TWO...
"SWORDS..."
HEY, UH... I THINK I'LL PAY YOU AFTER YOU'VE DONE THE JOB.
K.

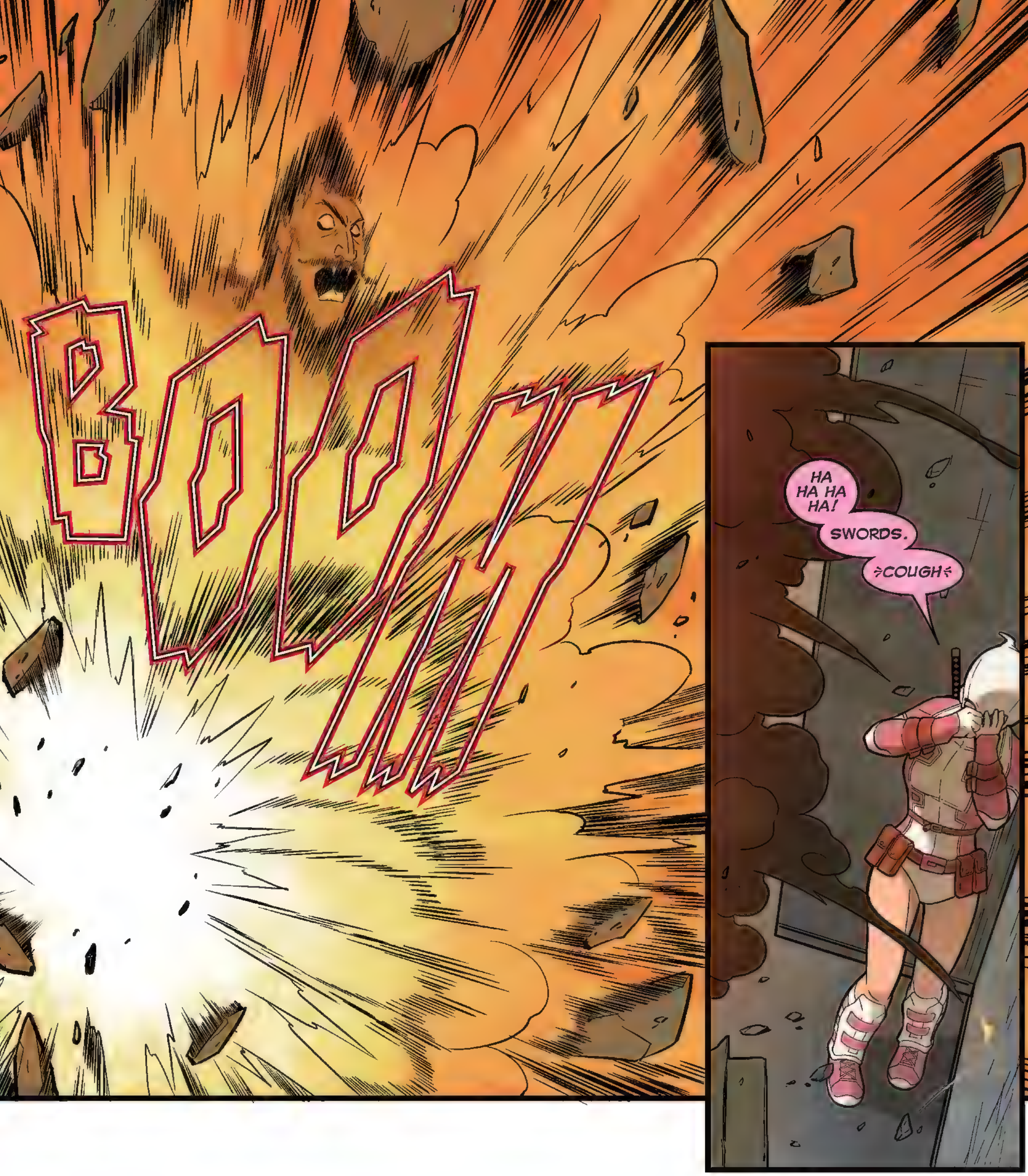

YOU'RE GONNA BE WALKIN' DOWN SOME FILTHY ALLEYWAY. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN A DERANGED PSYCHO COMES AT YOU OUTTA NOWHERE?
I TELL YOU WHAT YOU DO. YOU GO TO YOUR "HOME STANCE."
HOME STANCE. OKAY.
THIS ISN'T SO HARD!
FAST FORWARD TO LESSON ON GETTING MUGGED BY SOMEONE WHO HAS TWO SWORDS AND A LIFETIME OF TRAINING!
...OR BUFFER FIRST. THAT'S OKAY.
I ONLY HAVE TO GET INTO A DEADLY SWORDFIGHT TONIGHT, YOUTUBE!
YOU GO AHEAD AND BUFFER.

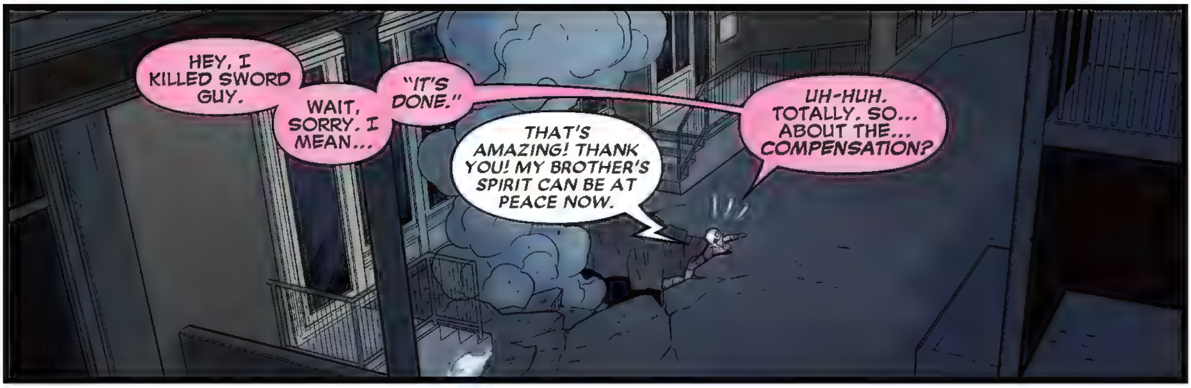

POST-BUFFERING...
UH...SHE'S JUST SPINNING AROUND WITH THE SWORDS.
I THINK SO. MISS?
IS THIS MEANT TO HURT US?
MISS, ARE YOU HERE TO FIGHT US? CAN WE HELP YOU?
MISS, IF YOU'RE HERE TO FIGHT US, WE'LL HAVE TO KILL Y--
♪
SHCLK
YAAAAAA
SHLUP
HA HA!
SWORDS!
SHUCK
I'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT WITH A MR. ORTO SWORDGUY!
I DID STABSIES ON ALL HIS RECEPTIONISTS!

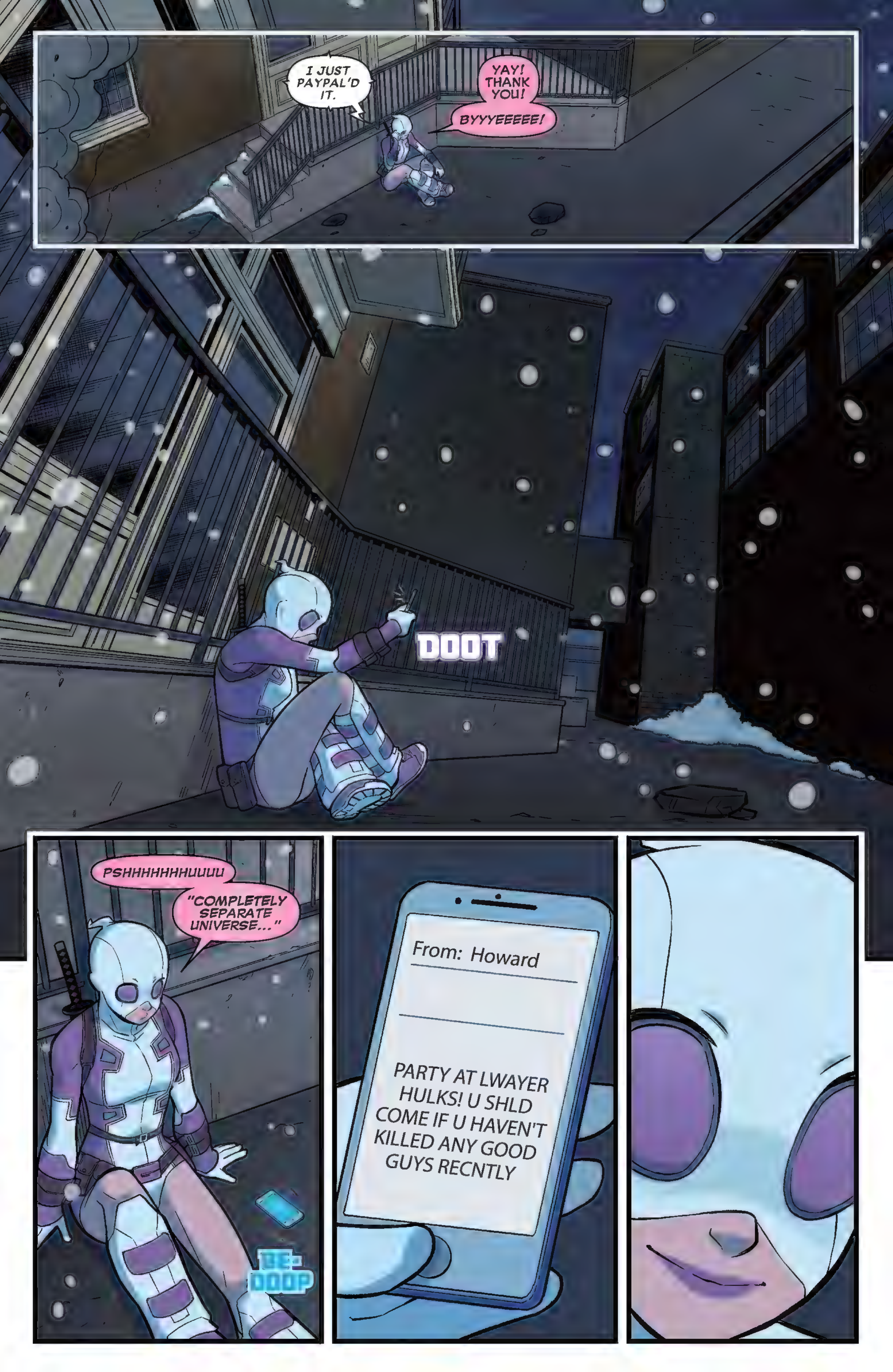

I AM ORTO.
OH, COOL, YOU'RE A SNAKE MONSTER.
ORTO, MY NAME IS GWEN POOLE. I AM THE--
GWENPOOL?
WHAT, YOUR EMPLOYER COULDN'T AFFORD DEADPOOL? HA HA HA HA!
COOL JOKE!
I'LL TELL YOUR SNAKE MOM AND WEIRD HUMAN DAD YOU WENT OUT WITH A CHUCKLE.
K-TINKT
DID I SAY "ORTO?" I MEANT I WAS LOOKING FOR, UH...
...ANYONE ELSE.

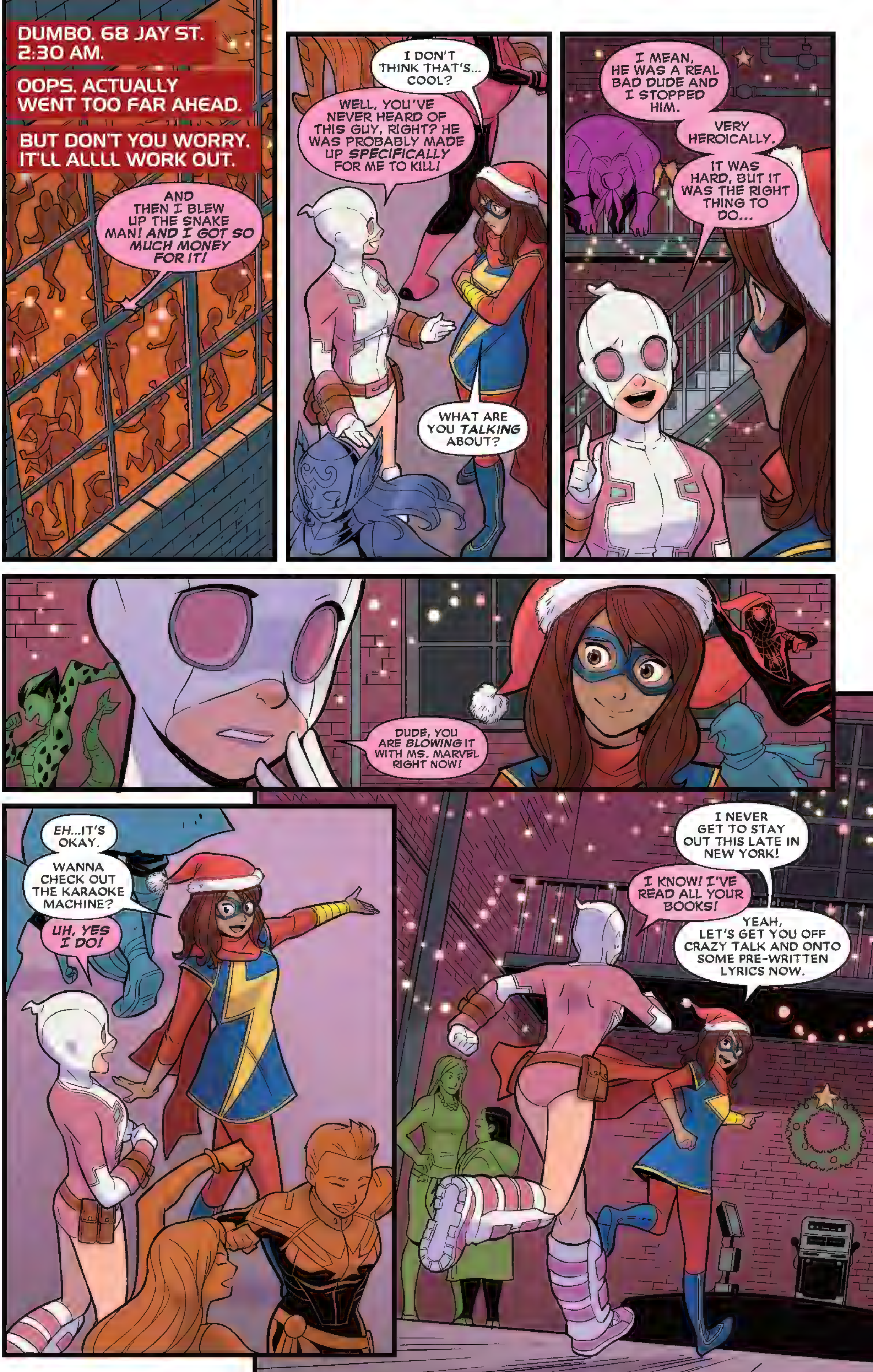

DON'T CHASE ME! GO TO BED! SANTA DOESN'T COME IF YOU'RE AWAKE!
AND HE DOESN'T COME FOR LIKE--*FIVE YEARS* IF YOU'RE AWAKE CHASING NICE YOUNG GIRLS WITH YOUR SWORD COLLECTION.
GYAAAAAAA!
HOW... THE HECK DID I GET *IN* HERE?

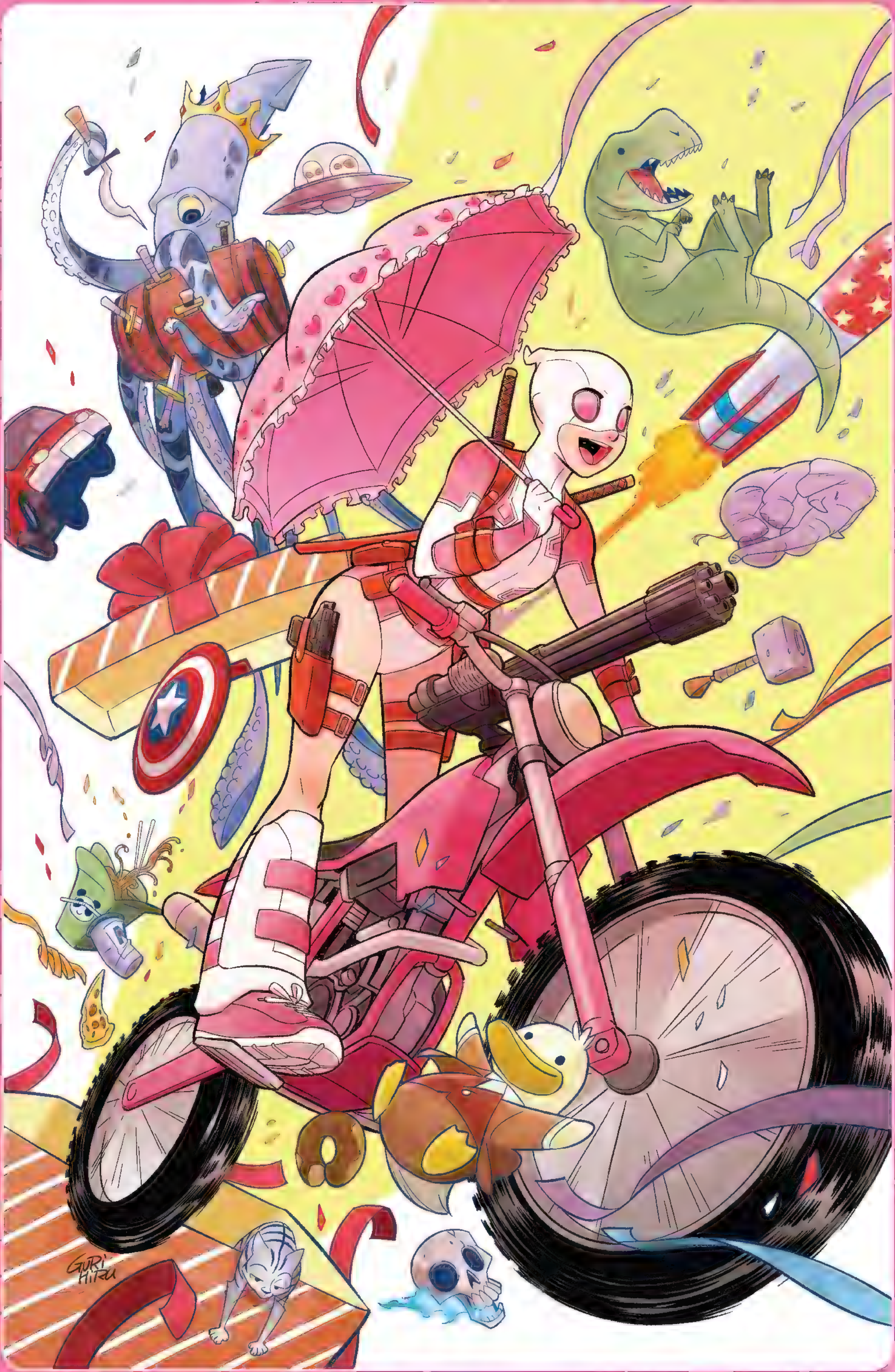

I SUPPOSE YOU WANT TO TALK NOW.
...BEFORE ATTEMPTING THIS MANEUVER, IT'S RECOMMENDED THAT YOU COMPLETE MY THREE DAY WORKSHOP, 'SWORDSMANSHIP IN THE REPULSOR BEAM ERA...'
BAH! I AM BREAKING UP WITH YOU, SWORD TUTORIALS!
TK TK TK TK
NOPE!
HOW TO MAKE BOMB
Search


BOOM
HA HA HA HA!
SWORDS.
⸗COUGH⸗

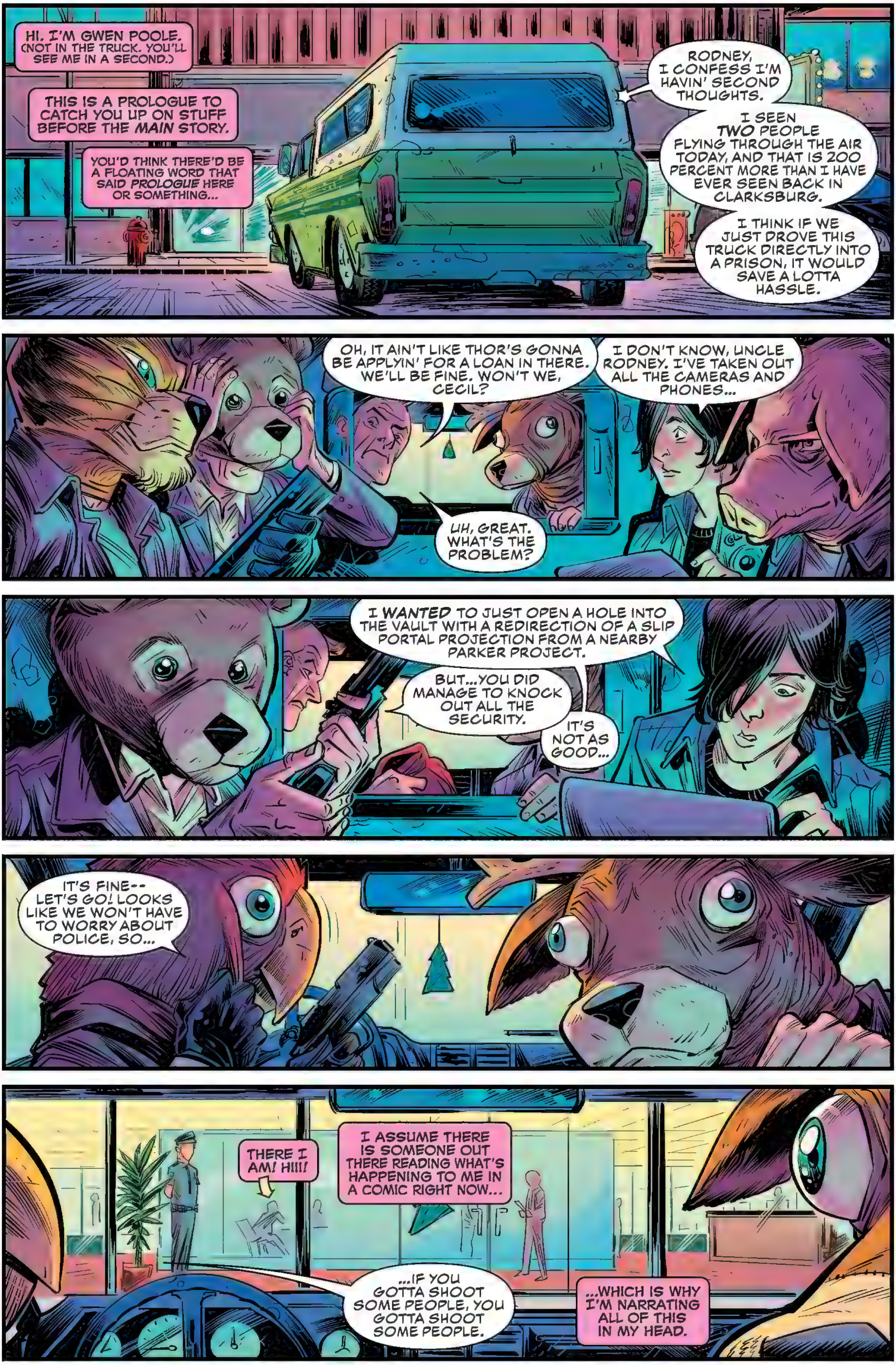

HEY, I KILLED SWORD GUY.
WAIT, SORRY. I MEAN...
"IT'S DONE."
THAT'S AMAZING! THANK YOU! MY BROTHER'S SPIRIT CAN BE AT PEACE NOW.
UH-HUH. TOTALLY. SO... ABOUT THE... COMPENSATION?

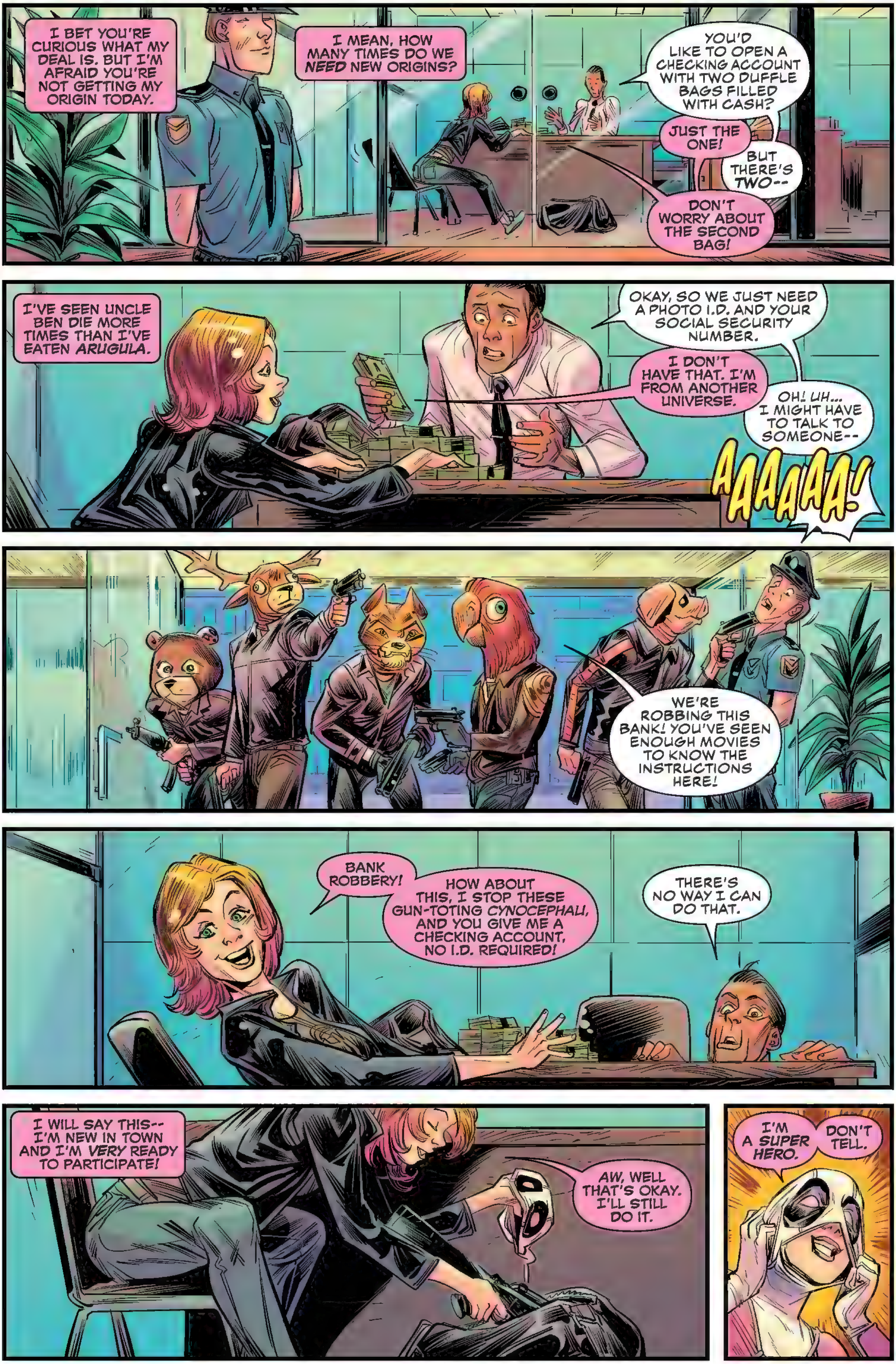

I JUST PAYPAL'D IT.
YAY! THANK YOU!
BYYYEEEEE!
DOOT
PSHHHHHHHUUUU
"COMPLETELY SEPARATE UNIVERSE..."
BE-DOOP
From: Howard
PARTY AT LWAYER HULKS! U SHLD COME IF U HAVEN'T KILLED ANY GOOD GUYS RECNTLY

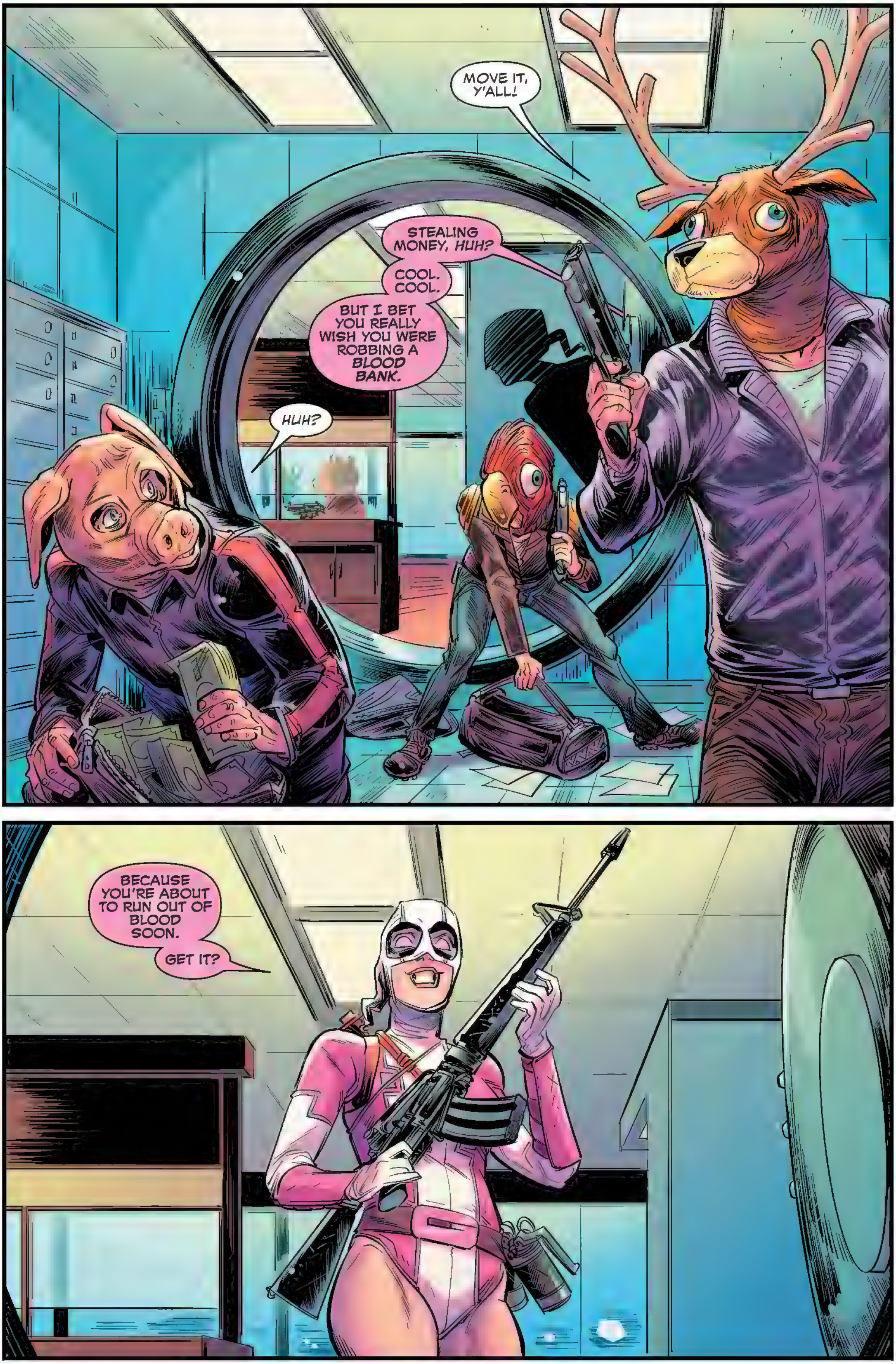

DUMBO, 68 JAY ST. 2:30 AM.
OOPS, ACTUALLY WENT TOO FAR AHEAD.
BUT DON'T YOU WORRY, IT'LL ALLLL WORK OUT.
AND THEN I BLEW UP THE SNAKE MAN! *AND I GOT SO MUCH MONEY FOR IT!*
I DON'T THINK THAT'S... COOL?
WELL, YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS GUY, RIGHT? HE WAS PROBABLY MADE UP *SPECIFICALLY* FOR ME TO KILL!
WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT?
I MEAN, HE WAS A REAL BAD DUDE AND I STOPPED HIM.
VERY HEROICALLY.
IT WAS HARD, BUT IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO...
DUDE, YOU ARE *BLOWING* IT WITH MS. MARVEL RIGHT NOW!
EH...IT'S OKAY.
WANNA CHECK OUT THE KARAOKE MACHINE?
UH, YES I DO!
I NEVER GET TO STAY OUT THIS LATE IN NEW YORK!
I KNOW! I'VE READ ALL YOUR BOOKS!
YEAH, LET'S GET YOU OFF CRAZY TALK AND ONTO SOME PRE-WRITTEN LYRICS NOW.

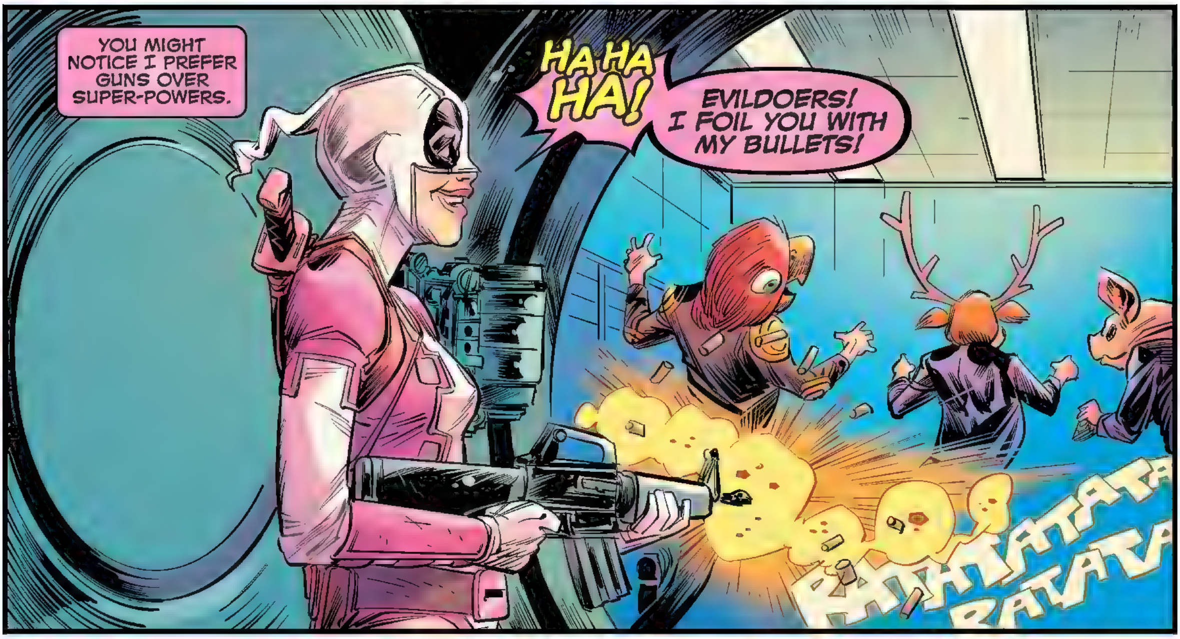


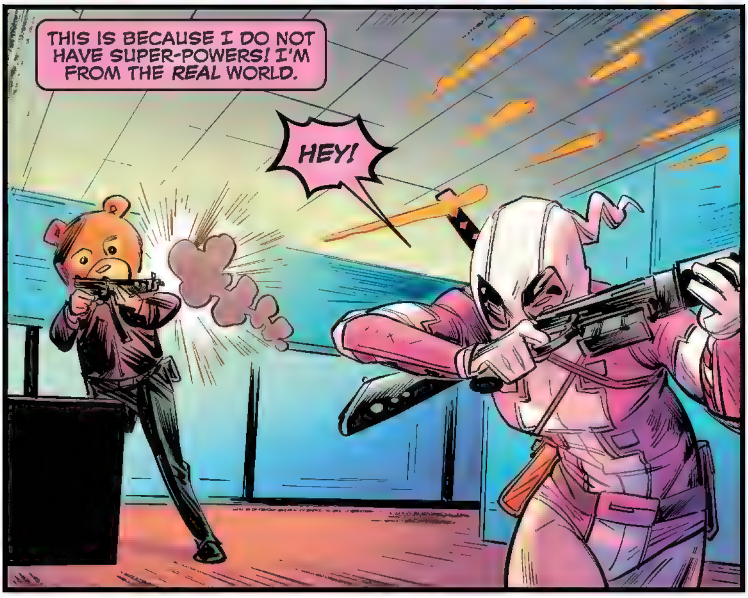
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1

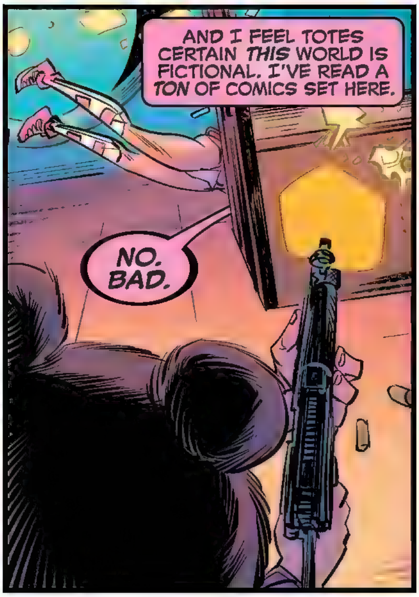

HI. I'M GWEN POOLE. (NOT IN THE TRUCK. YOU'LL SEE ME IN A SECOND.)
THIS IS A PROLOGUE TO CATCH YOU UP ON STUFF BEFORE THE *MAIN* STORY.
YOU'D THINK THERE'D BE A FLOATING WORD THAT SAID *PROLOGUE* HERE OR SOMETHING...
RODNEY, I CONFESS I'M HAVIN' SECOND THOUGHTS.
I SEEN *TWO* PEOPLE FLYING THROUGH THE AIR TODAY, AND THAT IS 200 PERCENT MORE THAN I HAVE EVER SEEN BACK IN CLARKSBURG.
I THINK IF WE JUST DROVE THIS TRUCK DIRECTLY INTO A PRISON, IT WOULD SAVE A LOTTA HASSLE.
OH, IT AIN'T LIKE THOR'S GONNA BE APPLYIN' FOR A LOAN IN THERE. WE'LL BE FINE. WON'T WE, CECIL?
I DON'T KNOW, UNCLE RODNEY. I'VE TAKEN OUT ALL THE CAMERAS AND PHONES...
UH, GREAT. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
I *WANTED* TO JUST OPEN A HOLE INTO THE VAULT WITH A REDIRECTION OF A SLIP PORTAL PROJECTION FROM A NEARBY PARKER PROJECT.
BUT...YOU DID MANAGE TO KNOCK OUT ALL THE SECURITY.
IT'S NOT AS GOOD...
IT'S FINE-- LET'S GO! LOOKS LIKE WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT POLICE, SO...
THERE I AM! HIII!
I ASSUME THERE IS SOMEONE OUT THERE READING WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME IN A COMIC RIGHT NOW...
...IF YOU GOTTA SHOOT SOME PEOPLE, YOU GOTTA SHOOT SOME PEOPLE.
...WHICH IS WHY I'M NARRATING ALL OF THIS IN MY HEAD.

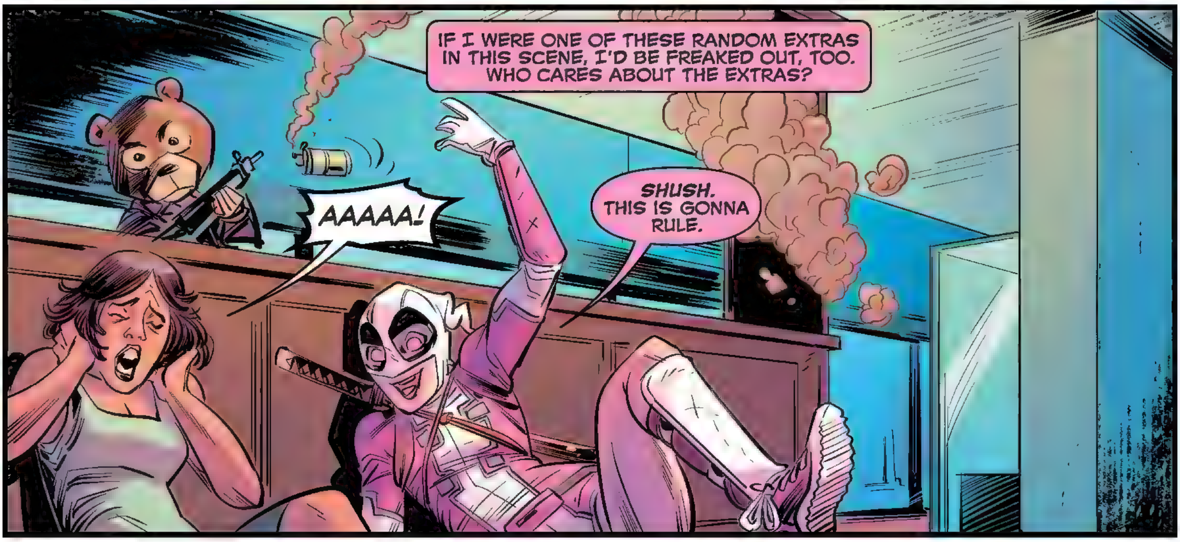

I BET YOU'RE CURIOUS WHAT MY DEAL IS. BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'RE NOT GETTING MY ORIGIN TODAY.
I MEAN, HOW MANY TIMES DO WE *NEED* NEW ORIGINS?
YOU'D LIKE TO OPEN A CHECKING ACCOUNT WITH TWO DUFFLE BAGS FILLED WITH CASH?
JUST THE ONE!
BUT THERE'S *TWO*--
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE SECOND BAG!
I'VE SEEN UNCLE BEN DIE MORE TIMES THAN I'VE EATEN *ARUGULA*.
OKAY, SO WE JUST NEED A PHOTO I.D. AND YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.
I DON'T HAVE THAT. I'M FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE.
OH! UH... I MIGHT HAVE TO TALK TO SOMEONE--
AAAAAA!
WE'RE ROBBING THIS BANK! YOU'VE SEEN ENOUGH MOVIES TO KNOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE!
BANK ROBBERY!
HOW ABOUT THIS, I STOP THESE GUN-TOTING *CYNOCEPHALI*, AND YOU GIVE ME A CHECKING ACCOUNT, NO I.D. REQUIRED!
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN DO THAT.
I WILL SAY THIS-- I'M NEW IN TOWN AND I'M *VERY* READY TO PARTICIPATE!
AW, WELL THAT'S OKAY. I'LL STILL DO IT.
I'M A *SUPER HERO*.
DON'T TELL.

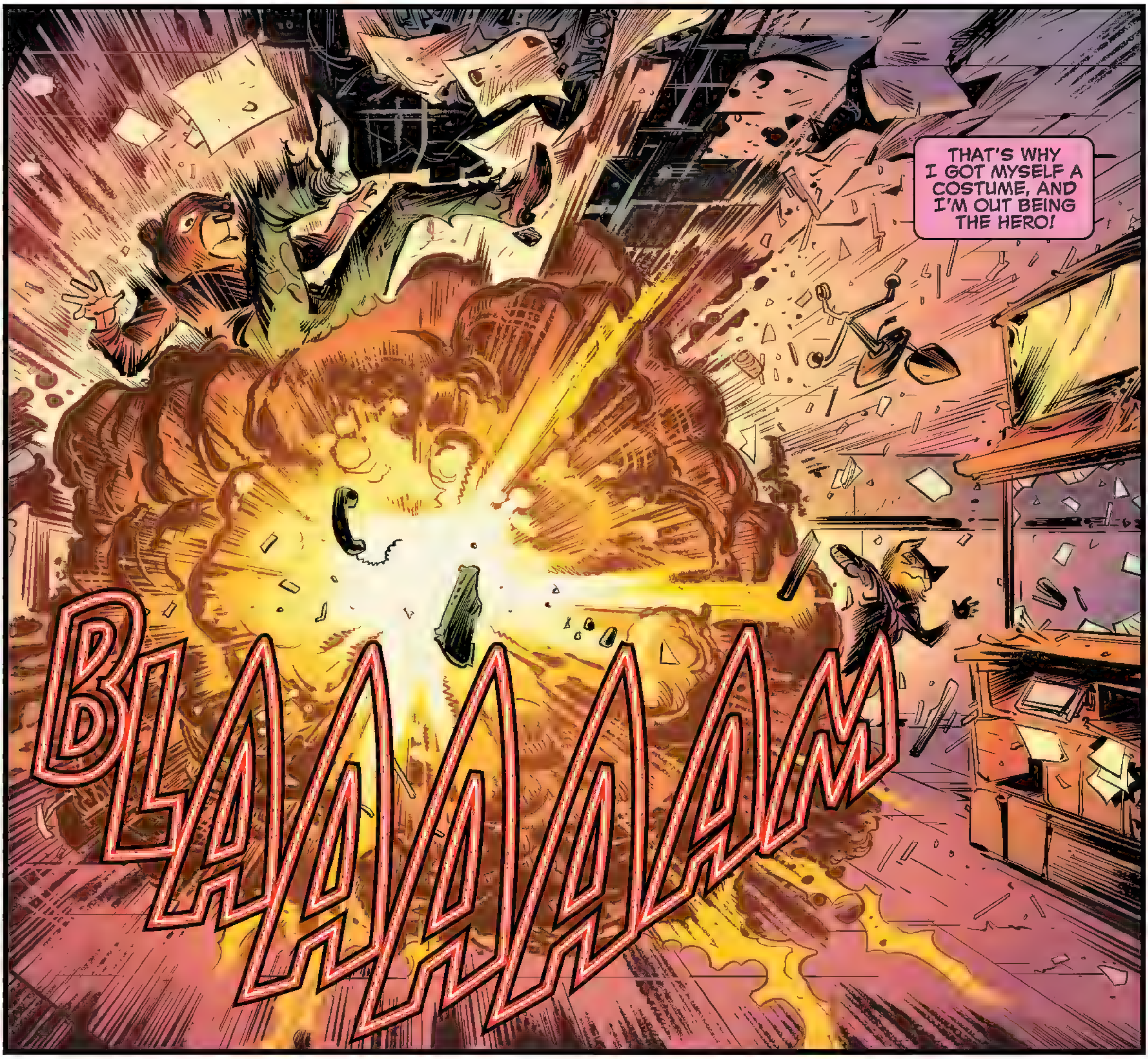

MOVE IT, Y'ALL!
STEALING MONEY, *HUH?*
COOL. COOL.
BUT I BET YOU REALLY WISH YOU WERE ROBBING A *BLOOD BANK.*
HUH?
BECAUSE YOU'RE ABOUT TO RUN OUT OF BLOOD SOON.
GET IT?

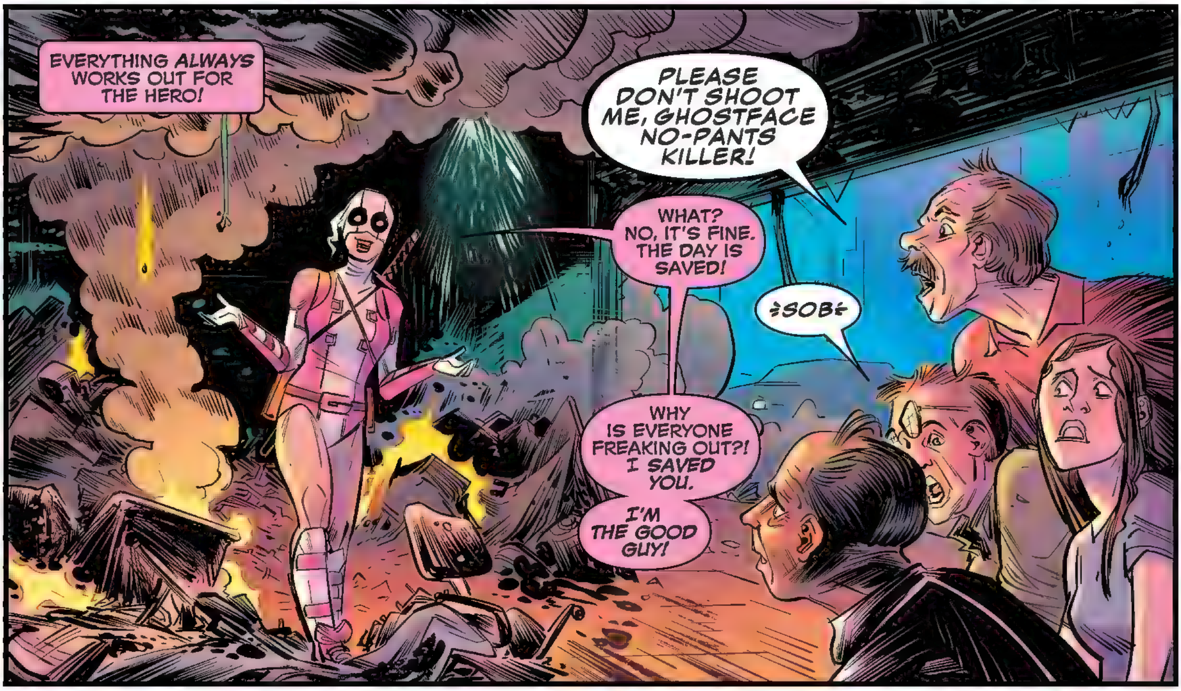

YOU MIGHT NOTICE I PREFER GUNS OVER SUPER-POWERS.
HA HA HA!
EVILDOERS! I FOIL YOU WITH MY BULLETS!
RATATATA
RATATA

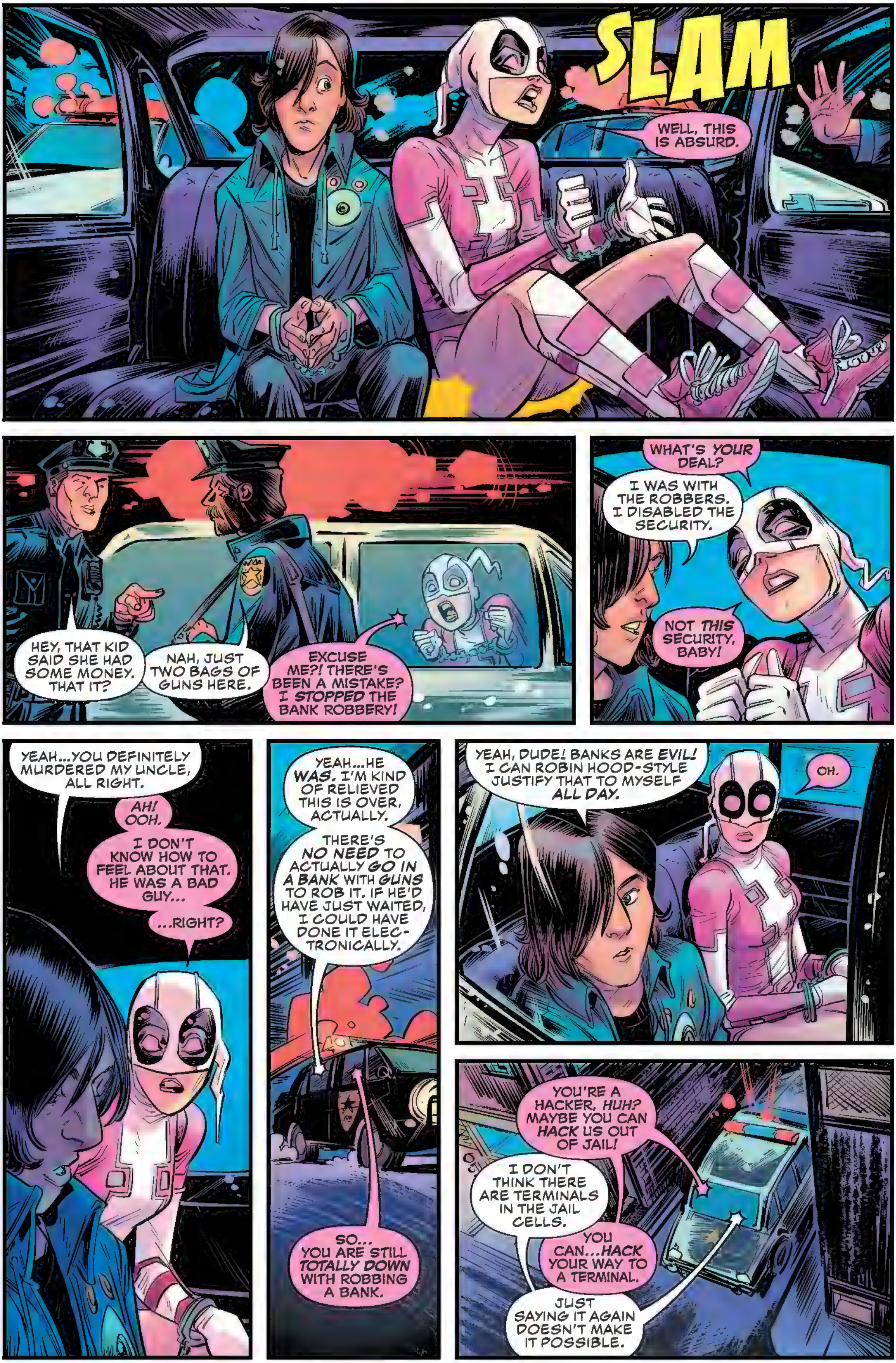

THIS IS BECAUSE I DO NOT HAVE SUPER-POWERS! I'M FROM THE *REAL* WORLD.
HEY!

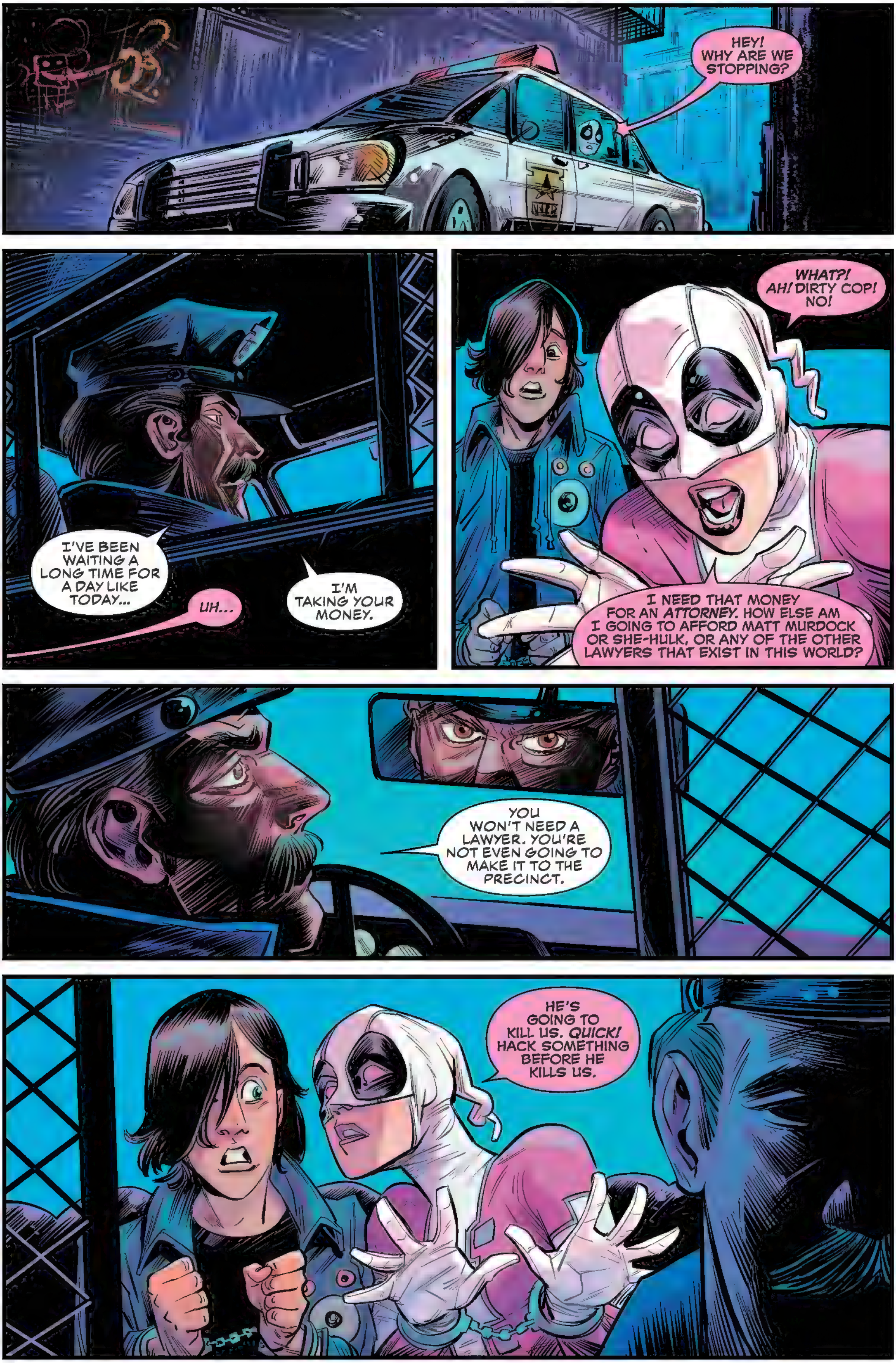

AND I FEEL TOTES CERTAIN *THIS* WORLD IS FICTIONAL. I'VE READ A *TON* OF COMICS SET HERE.
NO. BAD.

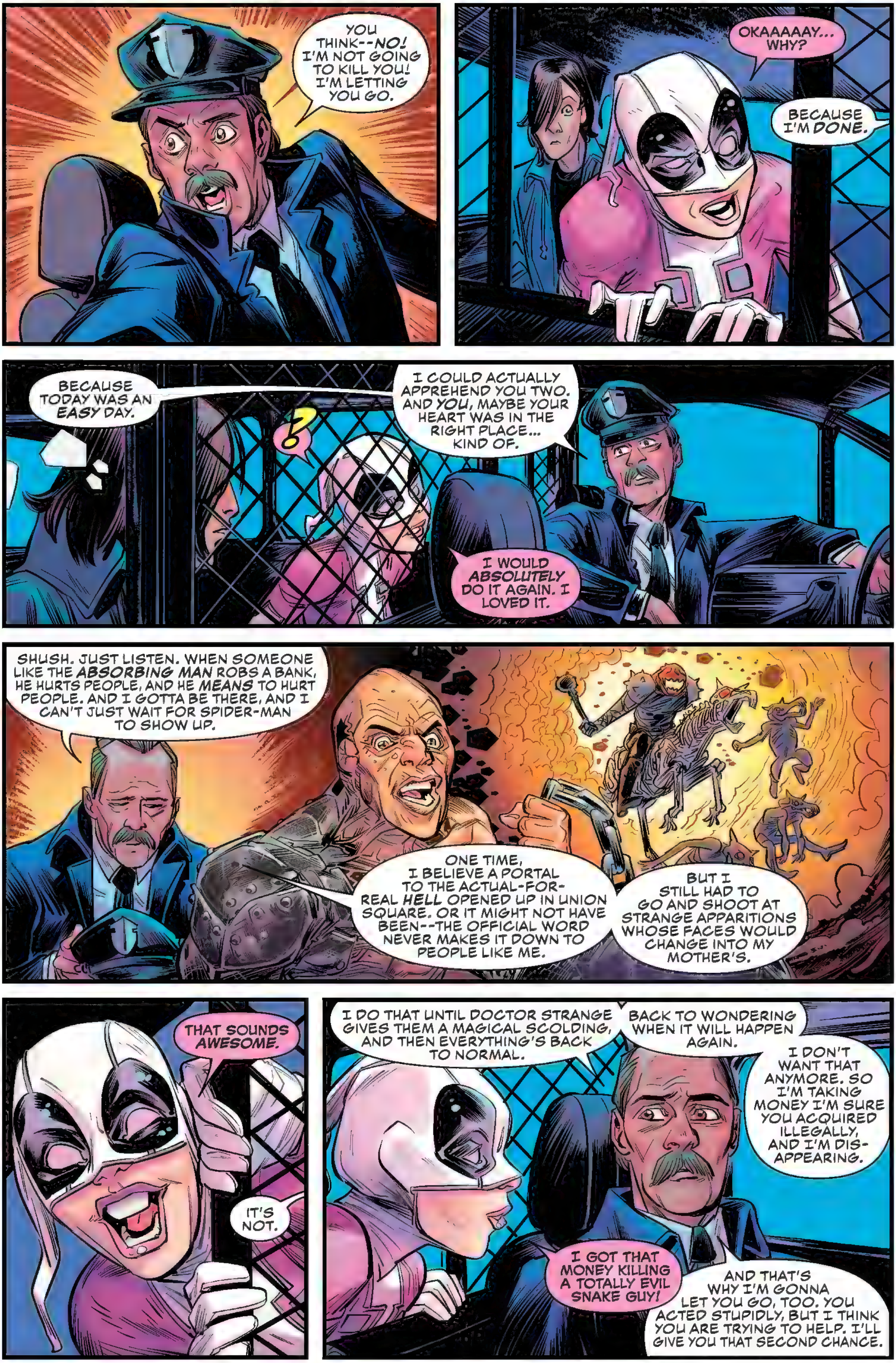

IF I WERE ONE OF THESE RANDOM EXTRAS IN THIS SCENE, I'D BE FREAKED OUT, TOO. WHO CARES ABOUT THE EXTRAS?
AAAAA!
SHUSH. THIS IS GONNA RULE.

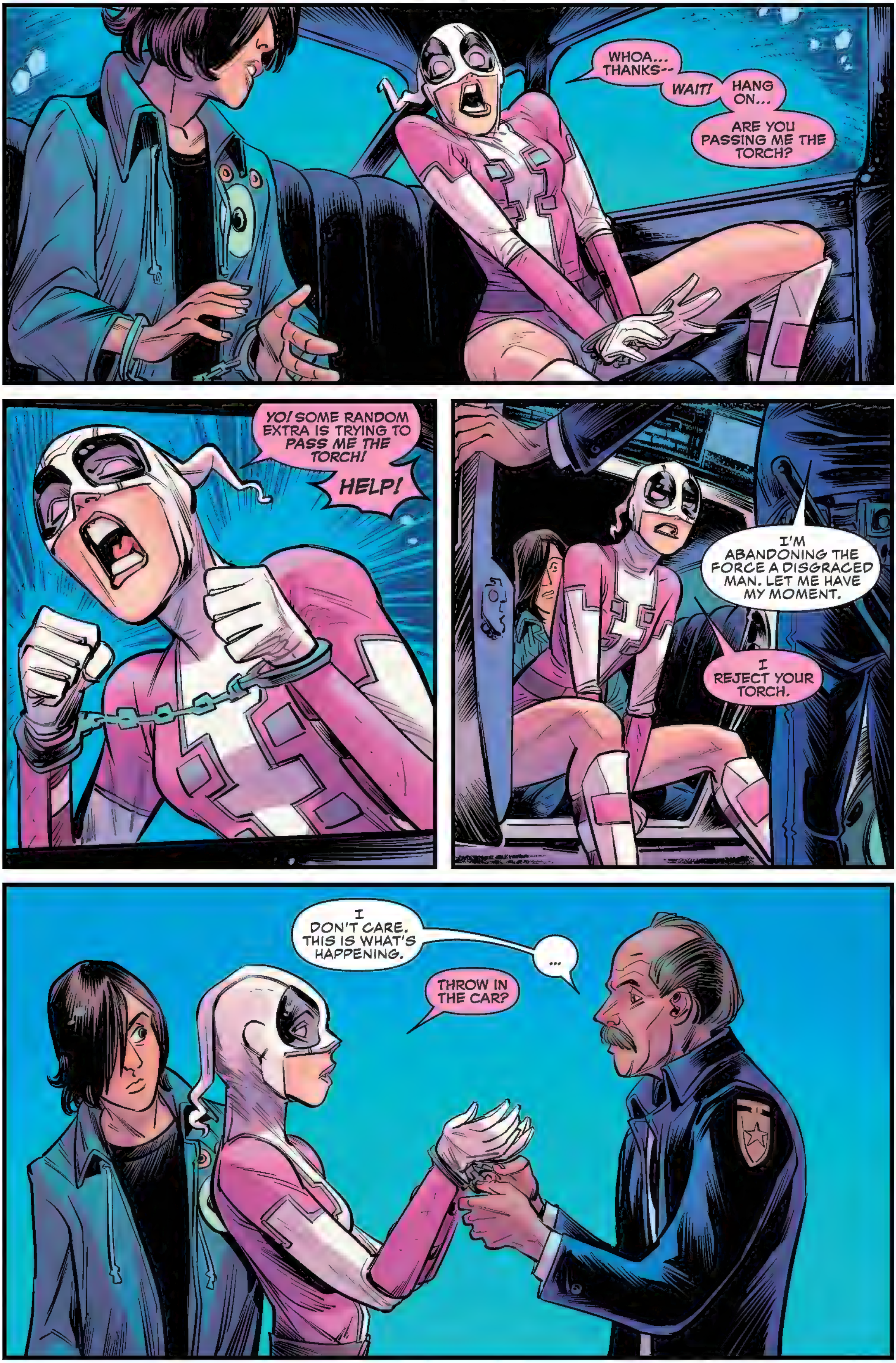

THAT'S WHY I GOT MYSELF A COSTUME, AND I'M OUT BEING THE HERO!
BLAAAAAAM

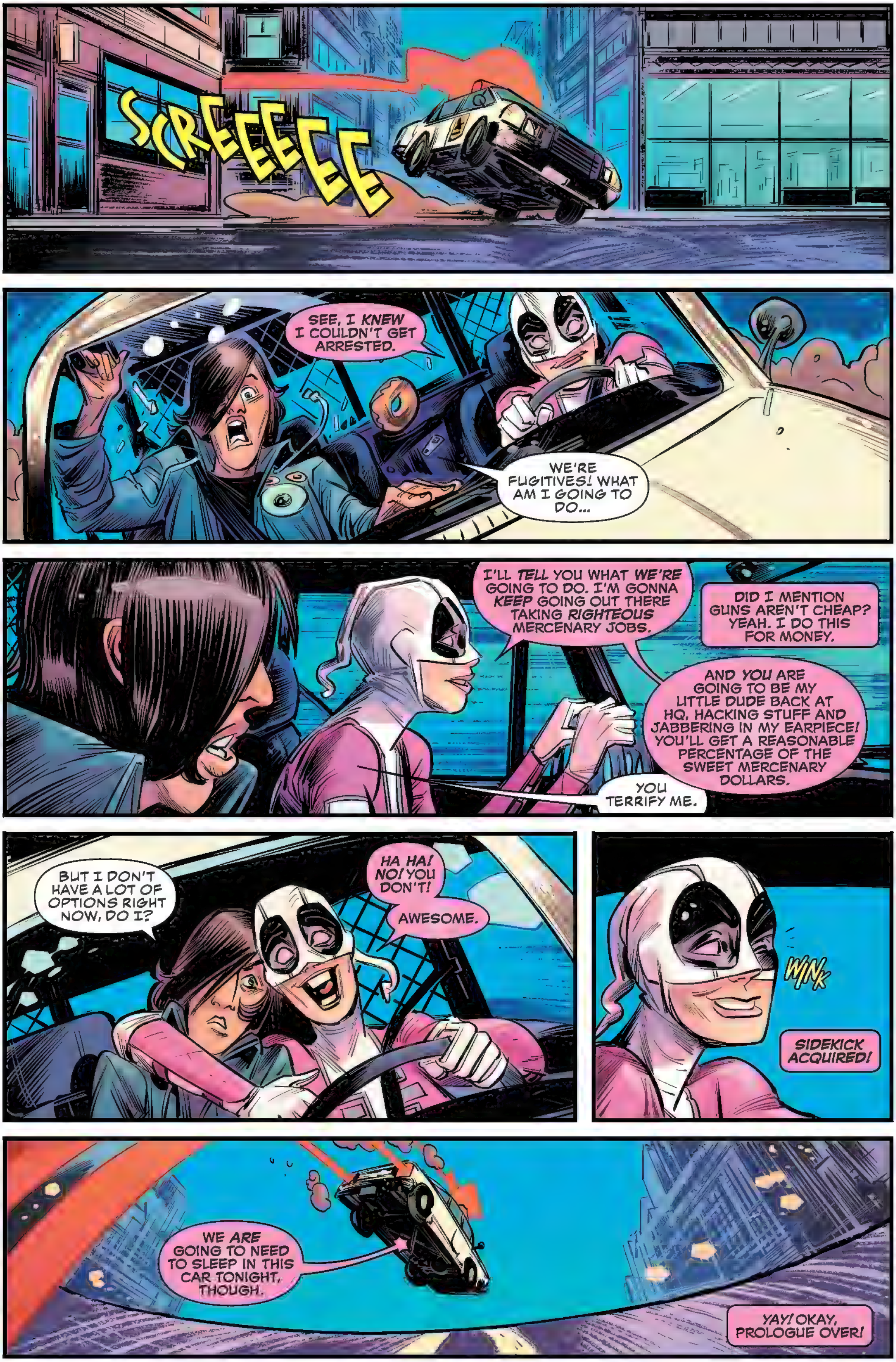

EVERYTHING *ALWAYS* WORKS OUT FOR THE HERO!
PLEASE DON'T SHOOT ME, GHOSTFACE NO-PANTS KILLER!
WHAT? NO, IT'S FINE. THE DAY IS SAVED!
SOB
WHY IS EVERYONE FREAKING OUT?! I *SAVED* YOU.
I'M THE GOOD GUY!

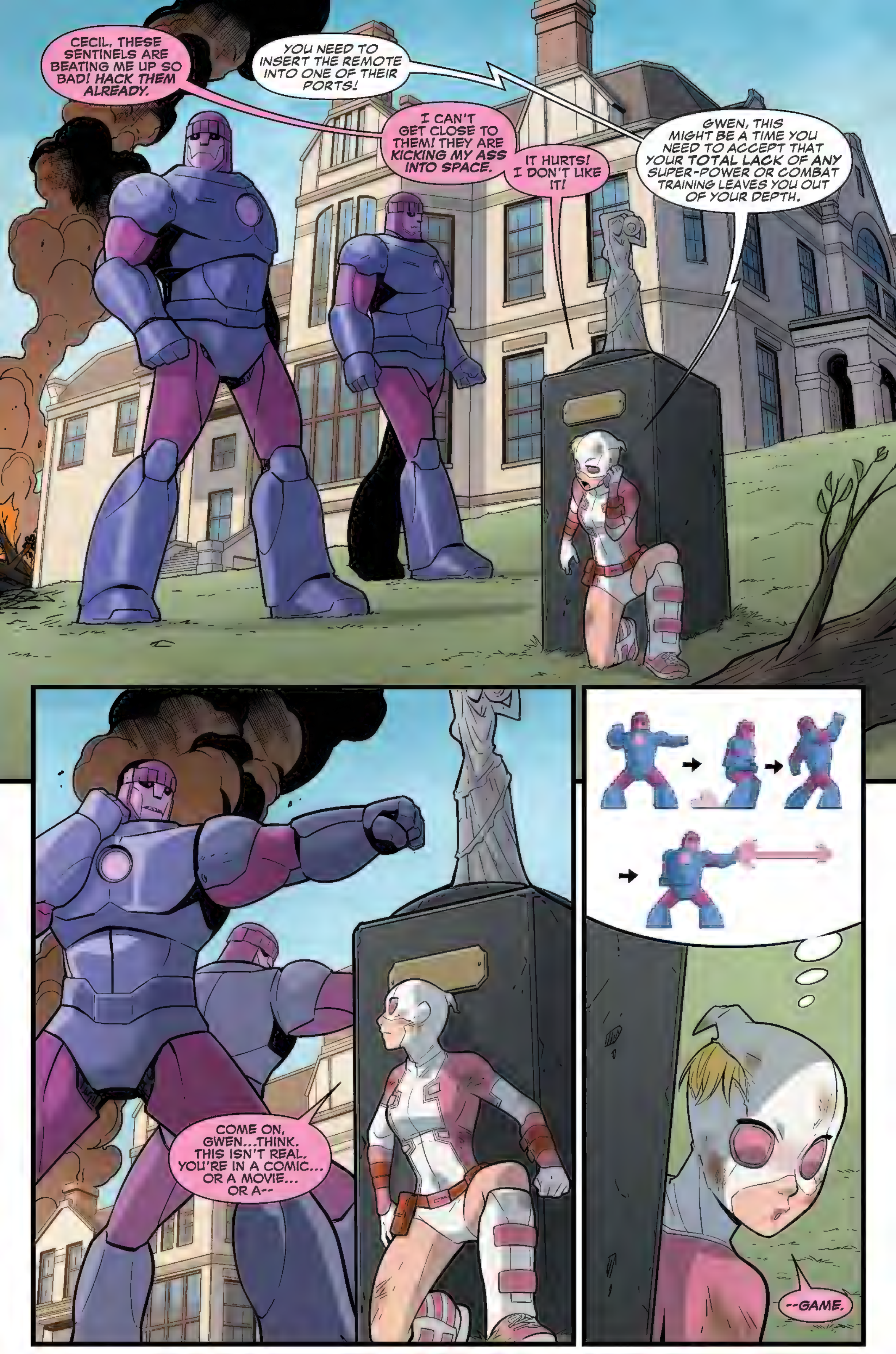

SLAM
WELL, THIS IS ABSURD.
HEY, THAT KID SAID SHE HAD SOME MONEY. THAT IT?
NAH, JUST TWO BAGS OF GUNS HERE.
EXCUSE ME?! THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE? I *STOPPED* THE BANK ROBBERY!
WHAT'S *YOUR* DEAL?
I WAS WITH THE ROBBERS. I DISABLED THE SECURITY.
NOT *THIS* SECURITY, BABY!
YEAH...YOU DEFINITELY MURDERED MY UNCLE, ALL RIGHT.
AH! OOH.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL ABOUT THAT. HE WAS A BAD GUY...
...RIGHT?
YEAH...HE *WAS.* I'M KIND OF RELIEVED THIS IS OVER, ACTUALLY.
THERE'S *NO NEED* TO ACTUALLY *GO IN A BANK* WITH *GUNS* TO ROB IT. IF HE'D HAVE JUST WAITED, I COULD HAVE DONE IT ELECTRONICALLY.
SO... YOU ARE STILL *TOTALLY DOWN* WITH ROBBING A BANK.
YEAH, DUDE! BANKS ARE *EVIL!* I CAN ROBIN HOOD-STYLE JUSTIFY THAT TO MYSELF *ALL DAY.*
OH.
YOU'RE A HACKER, *HUH?* MAYBE YOU CAN *HACK* US OUT OF JAIL!
I DON'T THINK THERE ARE TERMINALS IN THE JAIL CELLS.
YOU CAN...*HACK* YOUR WAY TO A TERMINAL.
JUST SAYING IT AGAIN DOESN'T MAKE IT POSSIBLE.

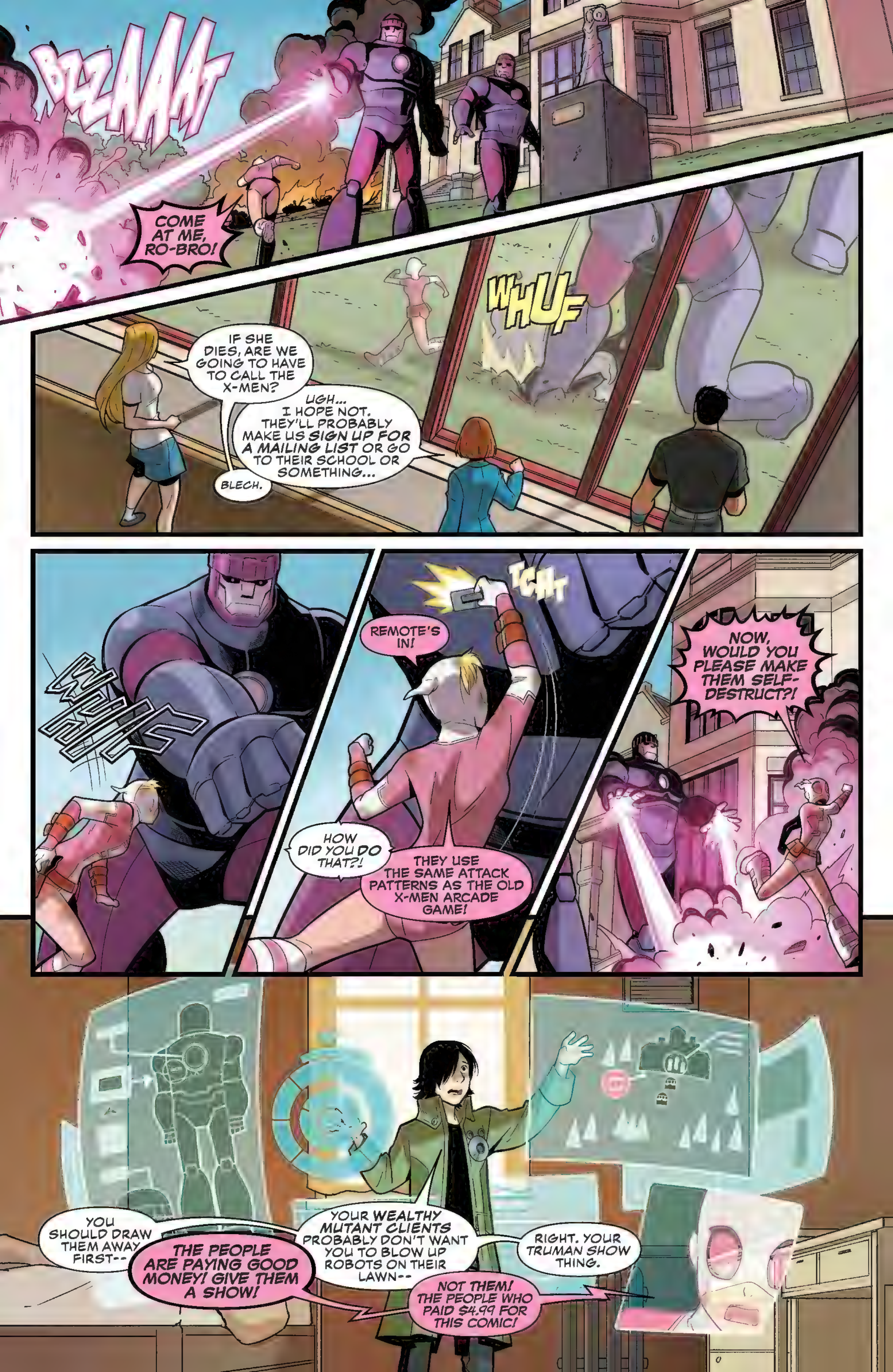

HEY! WHY ARE WE STOPPING?
I'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR A DAY LIKE TODAY...
UH...
I'M TAKING YOUR MONEY.
WHAT?! AH! DIRTY COP! NO!
I NEED THAT MONEY FOR AN *ATTORNEY*. HOW ELSE AM I GOING TO AFFORD MATT MURDOCK OR SHE-HULK, OR ANY OF THE OTHER LAWYERS THAT EXIST IN THIS WORLD?
YOU WON'T NEED A LAWYER. YOU'RE NOT EVEN GOING TO MAKE IT TO THE PRECINCT.
HE'S GOING TO KILL US. *QUICK!* HACK SOMETHING BEFORE HE KILLS US.

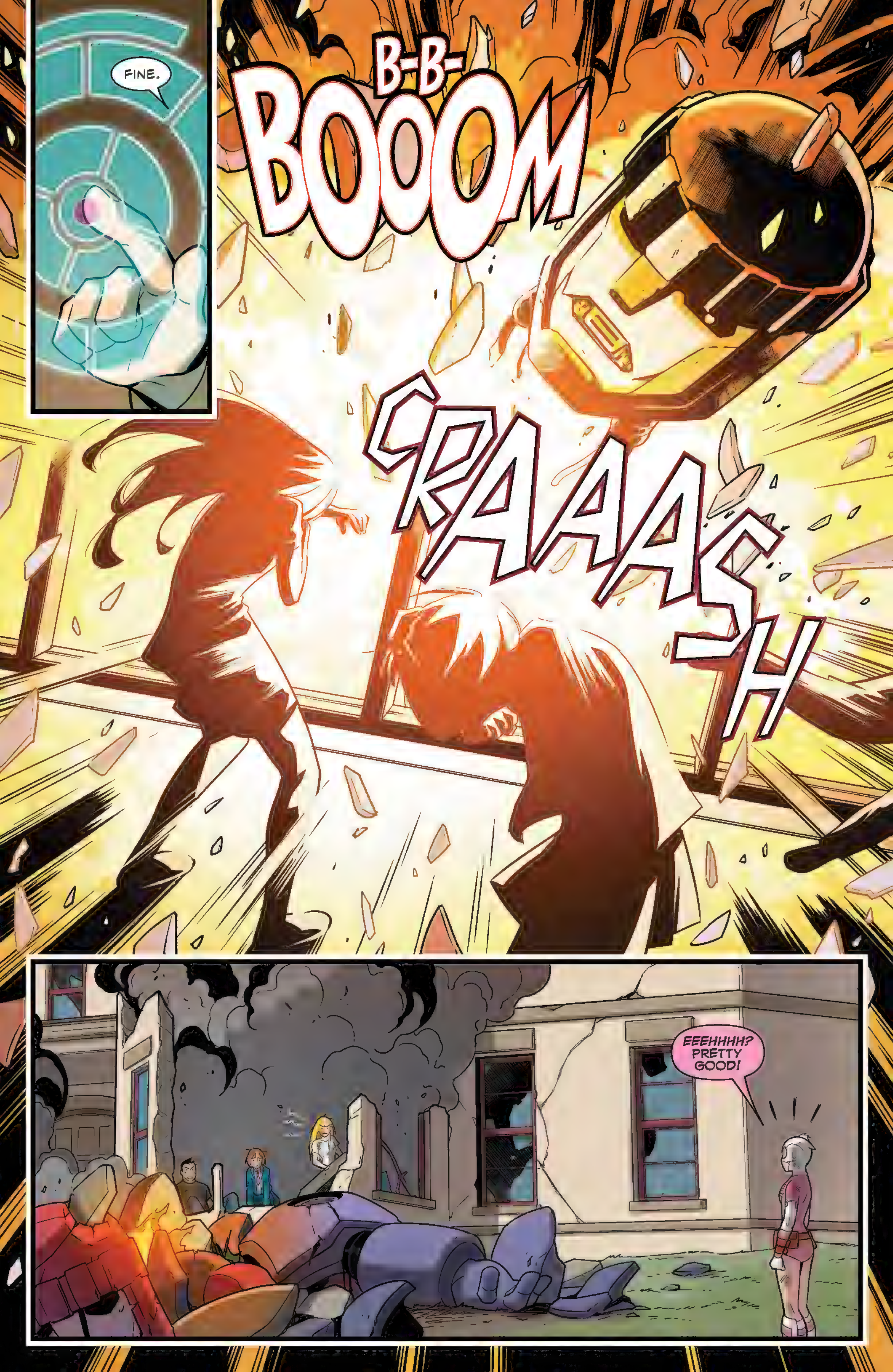

YOU THINK--NO! I'M NOT GOING TO KILL YOU! I'M LETTING YOU GO.
OKAAAAAY... WHY?
BECAUSE I'M DONE.
BECAUSE TODAY WAS AN EASY DAY.
I COULD ACTUALLY APPREHEND YOU TWO. AND YOU, MAYBE YOUR HEART WAS IN THE RIGHT PLACE... KIND OF.
?
I WOULD ABSOLUTELY DO IT AGAIN. I LOVED IT.
SHUSH. JUST LISTEN. WHEN SOMEONE LIKE THE ABSORBING MAN ROBS A BANK, HE HURTS PEOPLE, AND HE MEANS TO HURT PEOPLE. AND I GOTTA BE THERE, AND I CAN'T JUST WAIT FOR SPIDER-MAN TO SHOW UP.
ONE TIME, I BELIEVE A PORTAL TO THE ACTUAL-FOR-REAL HELL OPENED UP IN UNION SQUARE. OR IT MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN--THE OFFICIAL WORD NEVER MAKES IT DOWN TO PEOPLE LIKE ME.
BUT I STILL HAD TO GO AND SHOOT AT STRANGE APPARITIONS WHOSE FACES WOULD CHANGE INTO MY MOTHER'S.
THAT SOUNDS AWESOME.
IT'S NOT.
I DO THAT UNTIL DOCTOR STRANGE GIVES THEM A MAGICAL SCOLDING, AND THEN EVERYTHING'S BACK TO NORMAL.
BACK TO WONDERING WHEN IT WILL HAPPEN AGAIN.
I DON'T WANT THAT ANYMORE. SO I'M TAKING MONEY I'M SURE YOU ACQUIRED ILLEGALLY, AND I'M DISAPPEARING.
I GOT THAT MONEY KILLING A TOTALLY EVIL SNAKE GUY!
AND THAT'S WHY I'M GONNA LET YOU GO, TOO. YOU ACTED STUPIDLY, BUT I THINK YOU ARE TRYING TO HELP. I'LL GIVE YOU THAT SECOND CHANCE.

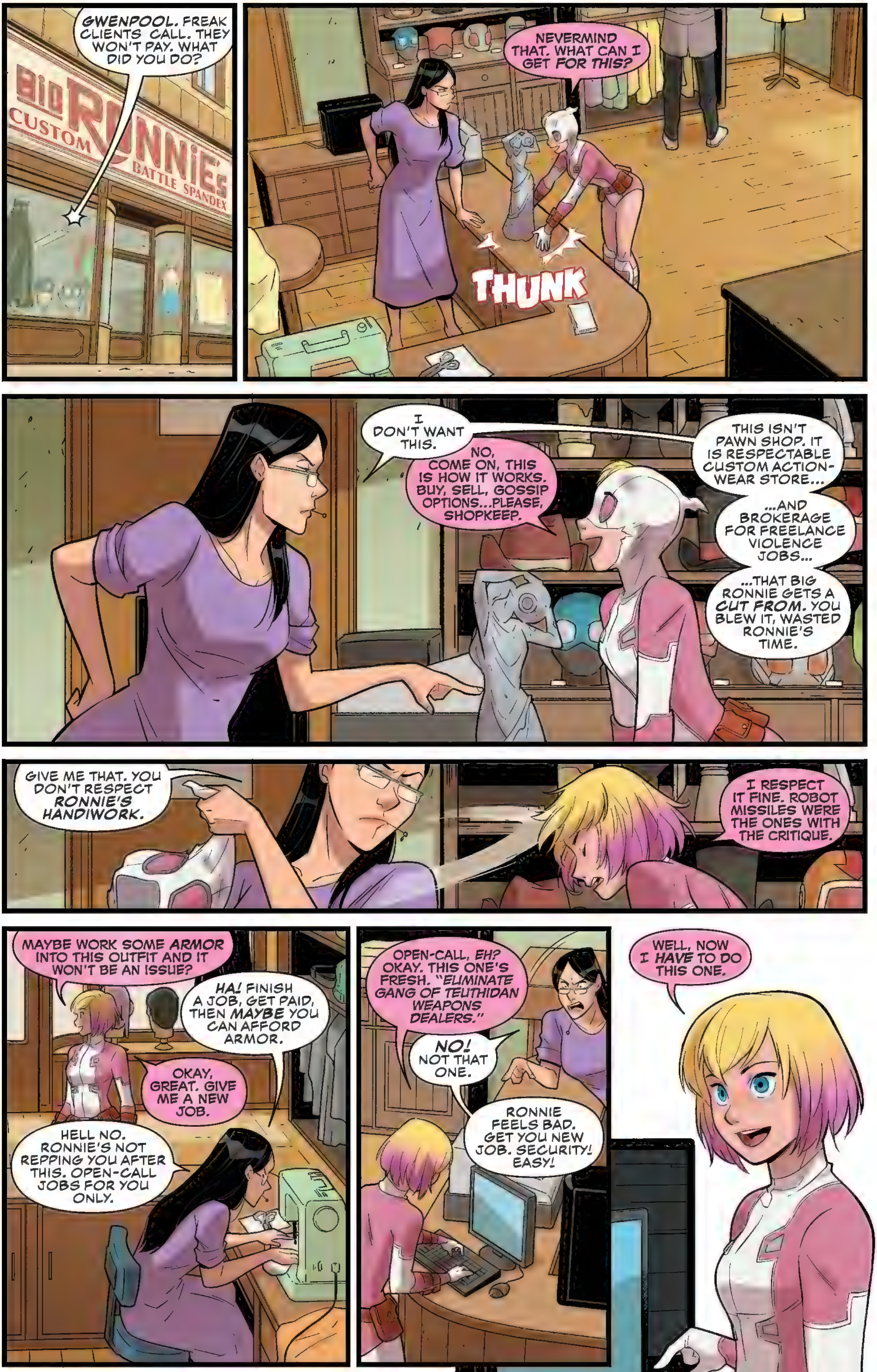

WHOA... THANKS--
WAIT!
HANG ON...
ARE YOU PASSING ME THE TORCH?
YO! SOME RANDOM EXTRA IS TRYING TO PASS ME THE TORCH!
HELP!
I'M ABANDONING THE FORCE A DISGRACED MAN. LET ME HAVE MY MOMENT.
I REJECT YOUR TORCH.
I DON'T CARE. THIS IS WHAT'S HAPPENING.
...
THROW IN THE CAR?

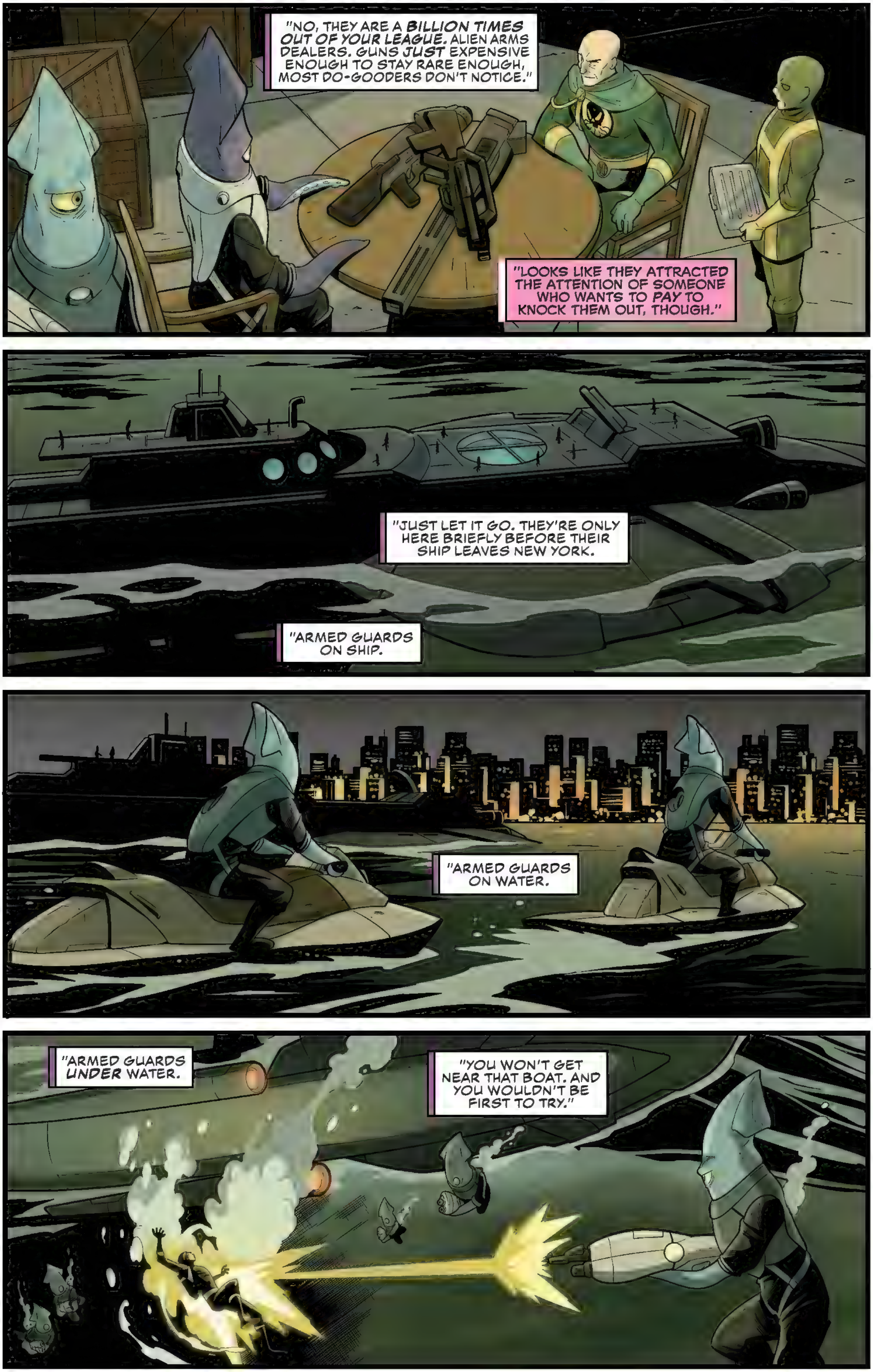

SCREEEEEE
SEE, I *KNEW* I COULDN'T GET ARRESTED.
WE'RE FUGITIVES! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO...
I'LL *TELL* YOU WHAT *WE'RE* GOING TO DO. I'M GONNA *KEEP* GOING OUT THERE TAKING *RIGHTEOUS* MERCENARY JOBS.
DID I MENTION GUNS AREN'T CHEAP? YEAH. I DO THIS FOR MONEY.
AND *YOU* ARE GOING TO BE MY LITTLE DUDE BACK AT HQ, HACKING STUFF AND JABBERING IN MY EARPIECE! YOU'LL GET A REASONABLE PERCENTAGE OF THE SWEET MERCENARY DOLLARS.
YOU TERRIFY ME.
BUT I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF OPTIONS RIGHT NOW, DO I?
HA HA! NO! YOU DON'T!
AWESOME.
WINK
SIDEKICK ACQUIRED!
WE *ARE* GOING TO NEED TO SLEEP IN THIS CAR TONIGHT, THOUGH.
YAY! OKAY, PROLOGUE OVER!

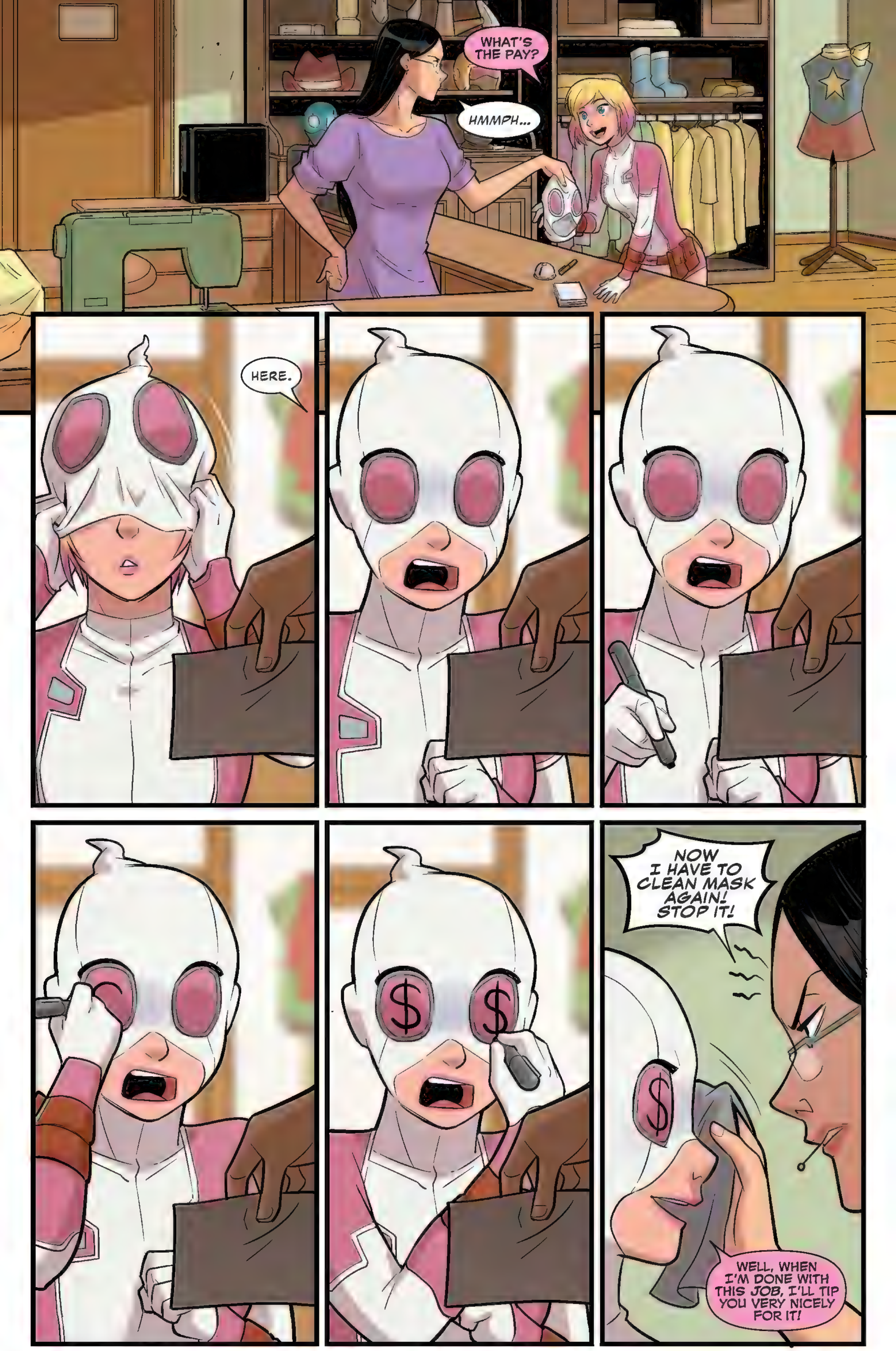

CECIL, THESE SENTINELS ARE BEATING ME UP SO BAD! *HACK THEM ALREADY.*
YOU NEED TO INSERT THE REMOTE INTO ONE OF THEIR PORTS!
I CAN'T GET CLOSE TO THEM! THEY ARE *KICKING MY ASS INTO SPACE.*
IT HURTS! I DON'T LIKE IT!
GWEN, THIS MIGHT BE A TIME YOU NEED TO ACCEPT THAT YOUR **TOTAL LACK OF ANY** SUPER-POWER OR COMBAT TRAINING LEAVES YOU OUT OF YOUR DEPTH.
COME ON, GWEN...THINK. THIS ISN'T REAL. YOU'RE IN A COMIC... OR A MOVIE... OR A--
--GAME.

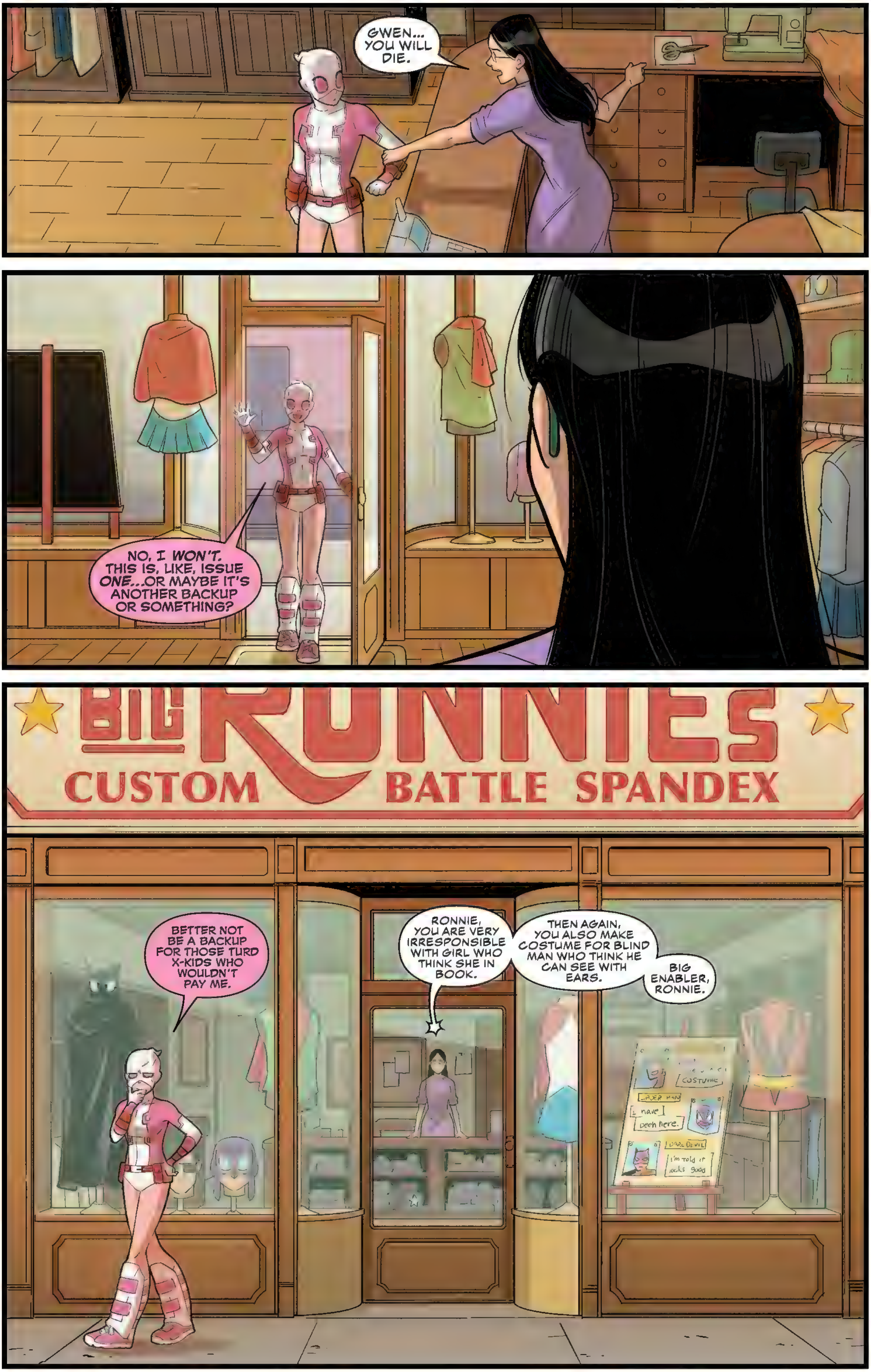

BZZAAAT
COME AT ME, RO-BRO!
IF SHE DIES, ARE WE GOING TO HAVE TO CALL THE X-MEN?
UGH... I HOPE NOT. THEY'LL PROBABLY MAKE US *SIGN UP FOR A MAILING LIST* OR GO TO THEIR SCHOOL OR SOMETHING...
BLECH.
WHUF
WHIFF
TCHT
REMOTE'S IN!
HOW DID YOU *DO* THAT?!
THEY USE THE SAME ATTACK PATTERNS AS THE OLD X-MEN ARCADE GAME!
NOW, WOULD YOU PLEASE MAKE THEM SELF-DESTRUCT?!
YOU SHOULD DRAW THEM AWAY FIRST--
THE PEOPLE ARE PAYING GOOD MONEY! GIVE THEM A SHOW!
YOUR *WEALTHY MUTANT CLIENTS* PROBABLY DON'T WANT YOU TO BLOW UP ROBOTS ON THEIR LAWN--
RIGHT. YOUR TRUMAN SHOW THING.
NOT THEM! THE PEOPLE WHO PAID $4.99 FOR THIS COMIC!

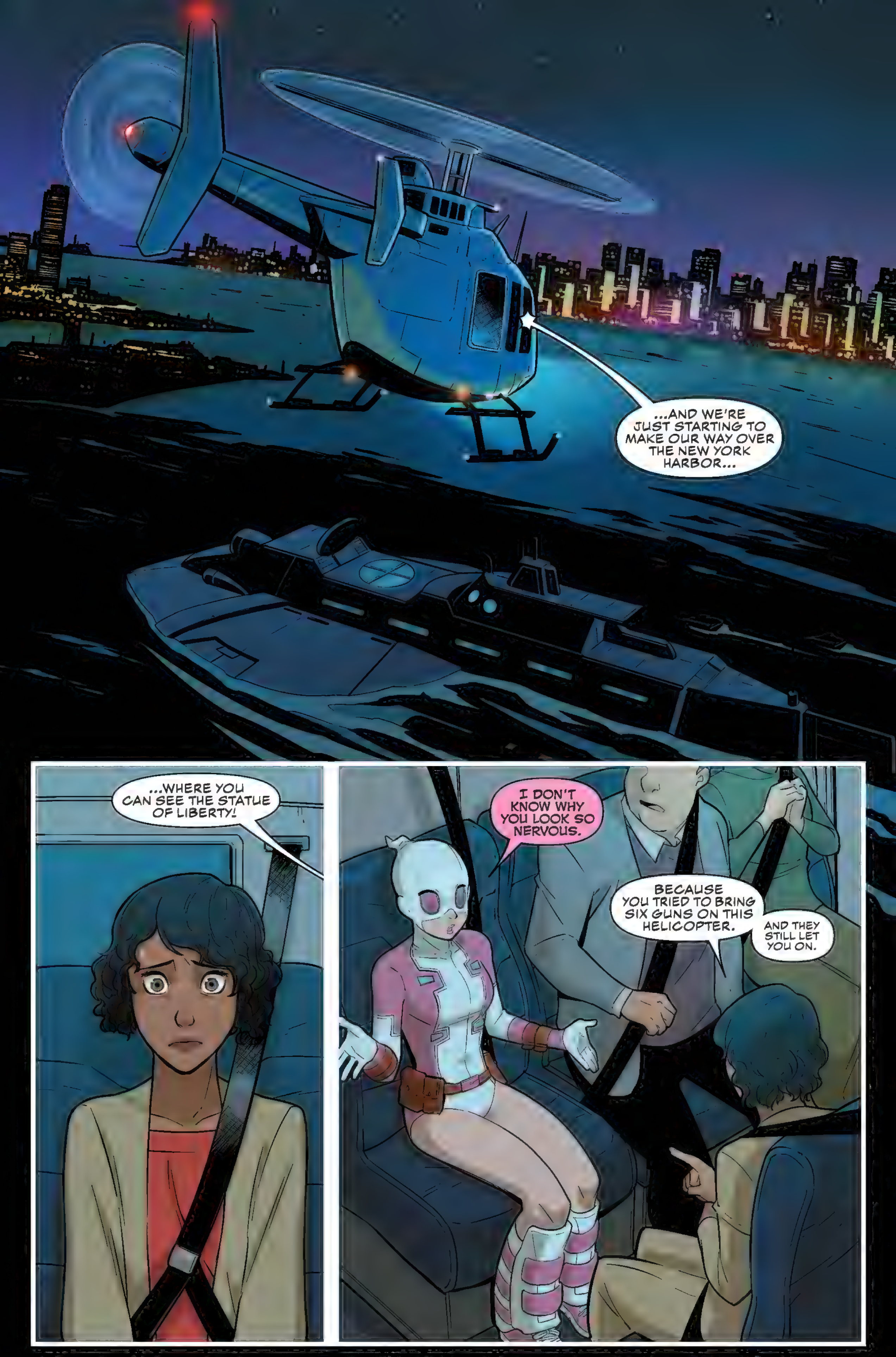

FINE.
B-B-BOOOM
CRAAAAS-H
EEEHHHH? PRETTY GOOD!

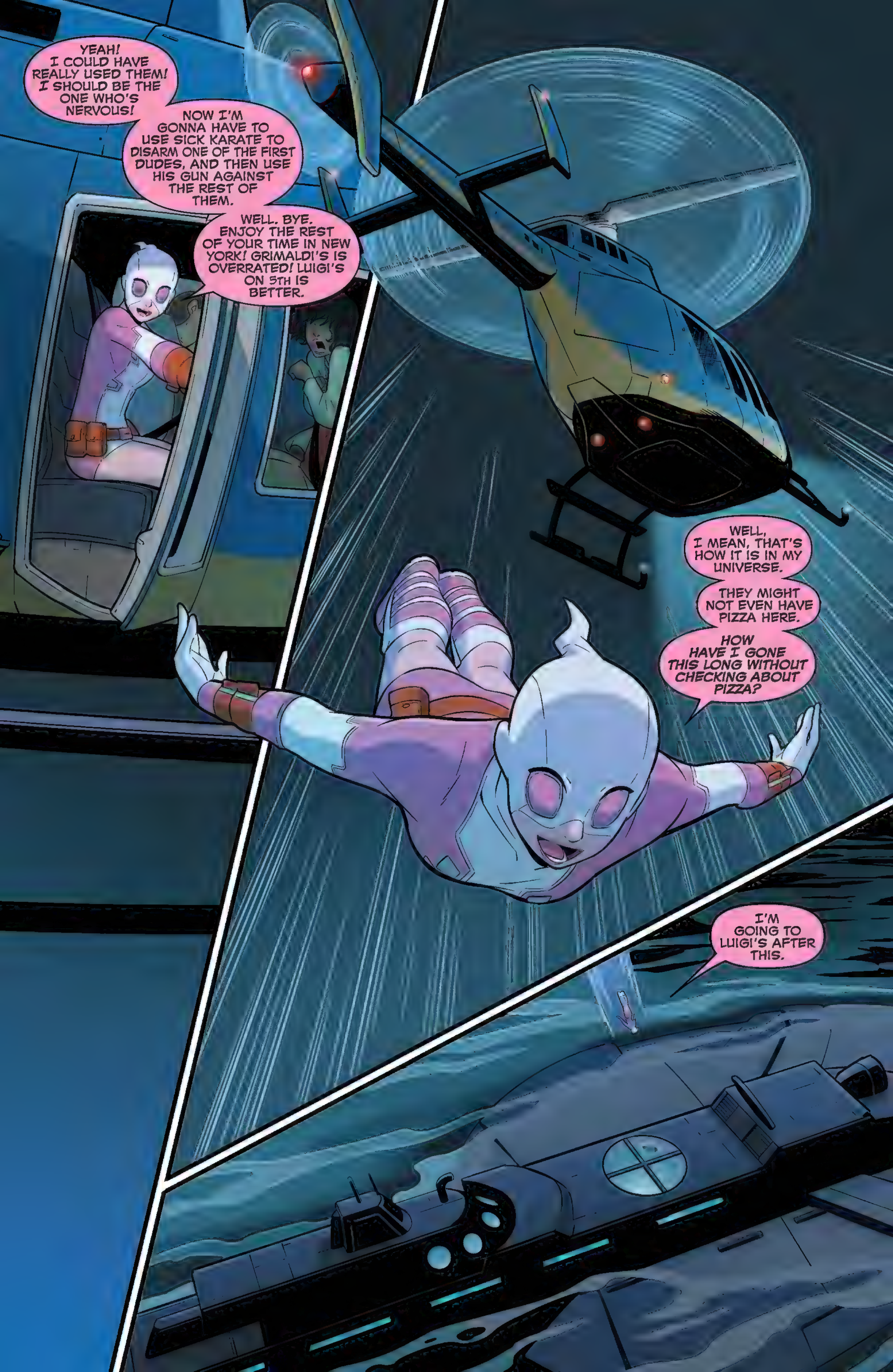

GWENPOOL. FREAK CLIENTS CALL. THEY WON'T PAY. WHAT DID YOU DO?
BIG RONNIE'S CUSTOM BATTLE SPANDEX
NEVERMIND THAT. WHAT CAN I GET *FOR THIS?*
THUNK
I DON'T WANT THIS.
NO, COME ON, THIS IS HOW IT WORKS. BUY, SELL, GOSSIP OPTIONS...PLEASE, SHOPKEEP.
THIS ISN'T PAWN SHOP. IT IS RESPECTABLE CUSTOM ACTION-WEAR STORE...
...AND BROKERAGE FOR FREELANCE VIOLENCE JOBS...
...THAT BIG RONNIE GETS A *CUT FROM.* YOU BLEW IT, WASTED RONNIE'S TIME.
GIVE ME THAT. YOU DON'T RESPECT *RONNIE'S HANDIWORK.*
I RESPECT IT FINE. ROBOT MISSILES WERE THE ONES WITH THE CRITIQUE.
MAYBE WORK SOME *ARMOR* INTO THIS OUTFIT AND IT WON'T BE AN ISSUE?
HA! FINISH A JOB, GET PAID, THEN *MAYBE* YOU CAN AFFORD ARMOR.
OKAY, GREAT. GIVE ME A NEW JOB.
HELL NO. RONNIE'S NOT REPPING YOU AFTER THIS. OPEN-CALL JOBS FOR YOU ONLY.
OPEN-CALL, *EH?* OKAY. THIS ONE'S FRESH. *"ELIMINATE GANG OF TEUTHIDAN WEAPONS DEALERS."*
NO! NOT THAT ONE.
RONNIE FEELS BAD. GET YOU NEW JOB. SECURITY! EASY!
WELL, NOW I *HAVE* TO DO THIS ONE.

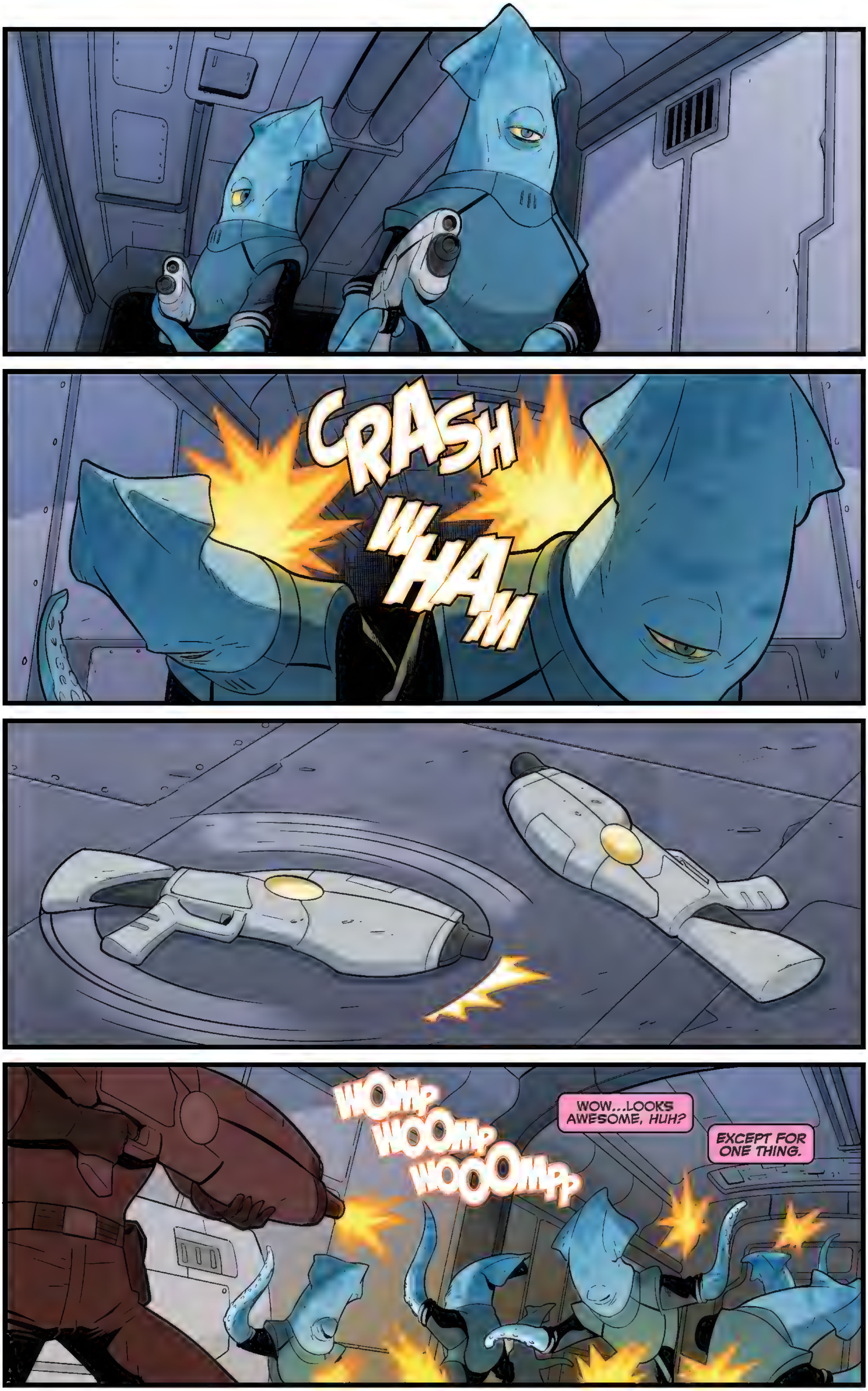

"NO, THEY ARE A *BILLION TIMES OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE.* ALIEN ARMS DEALERS. GUNS *JUST* EXPENSIVE ENOUGH TO STAY RARE ENOUGH, MOST DO-GOODERS DON'T NOTICE."
"LOOKS LIKE THEY ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO *PAY* TO KNOCK THEM OUT, THOUGH."
"JUST LET IT GO. THEY'RE ONLY HERE BRIEFLY BEFORE THEIR SHIP LEAVES NEW YORK.
"ARMED GUARDS ON SHIP.
"ARMED GUARDS ON WATER.
"ARMED GUARDS *UNDER* WATER.
"YOU WON'T GET NEAR THAT BOAT. AND YOU WOULDN'T BE FIRST TO TRY."

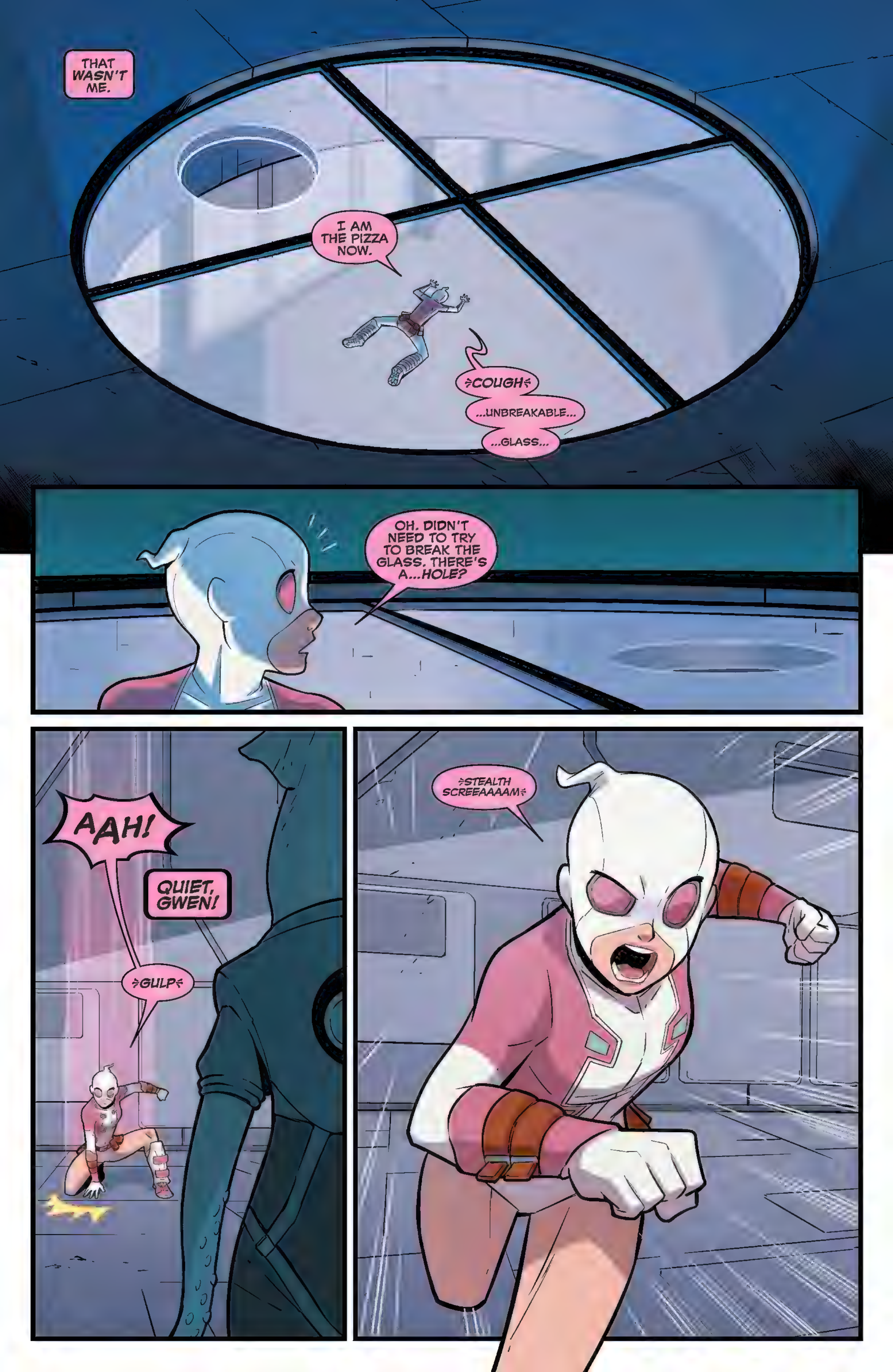

WHAT'S THE PAY?
HMMPH...
HERE.
NOW I HAVE TO CLEAN MASK AGAIN! STOP IT!
WELL, WHEN I'M DONE WITH THIS JOB, I'LL TIP YOU VERY NICELY FOR IT!

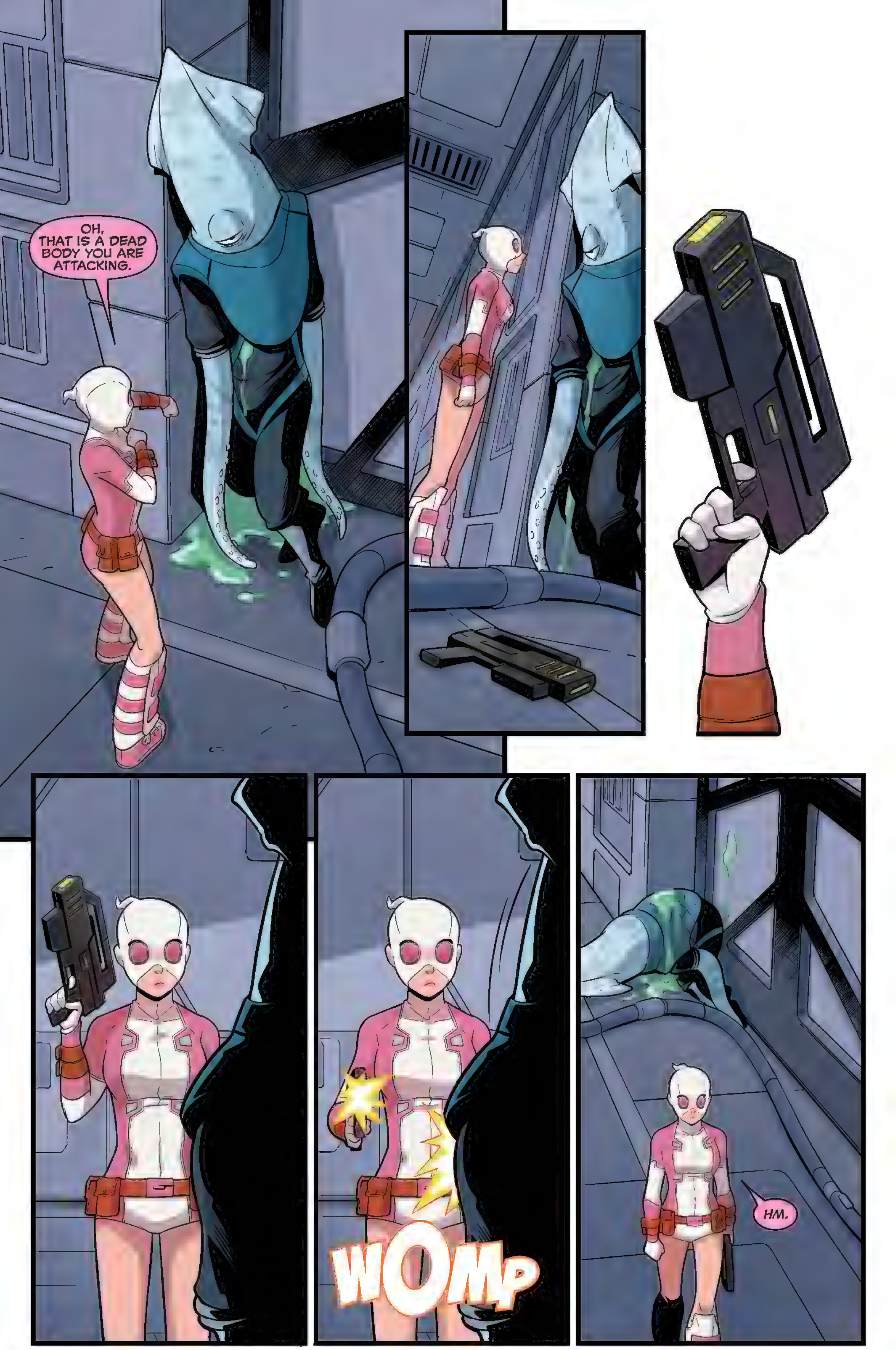

GWEN... YOU WILL DIE.
NO, I *WON'T.* THIS IS, LIKE, ISSUE *ONE*...OR MAYBE IT'S ANOTHER BACKUP OR SOMETHING?
BIG RONNIES
CUSTOM BATTLE SPANDEX
BETTER NOT BE A BACKUP FOR THOSE TURD X-KIDS WHO WOULDN'T PAY ME.
RONNIE, YOU ARE VERY IRRESPONSIBLE WITH GIRL WHO THINK SHE IN BOOK.
THEN AGAIN, YOU ALSO MAKE COSTUME FOR BLIND MAN WHO THINK HE CAN SEE WITH EARS.
BIG ENABLER, RONNIE.
COSTUME
SPIDER MAN
I have been here.
DARE DEVIL
I'm told it looks good

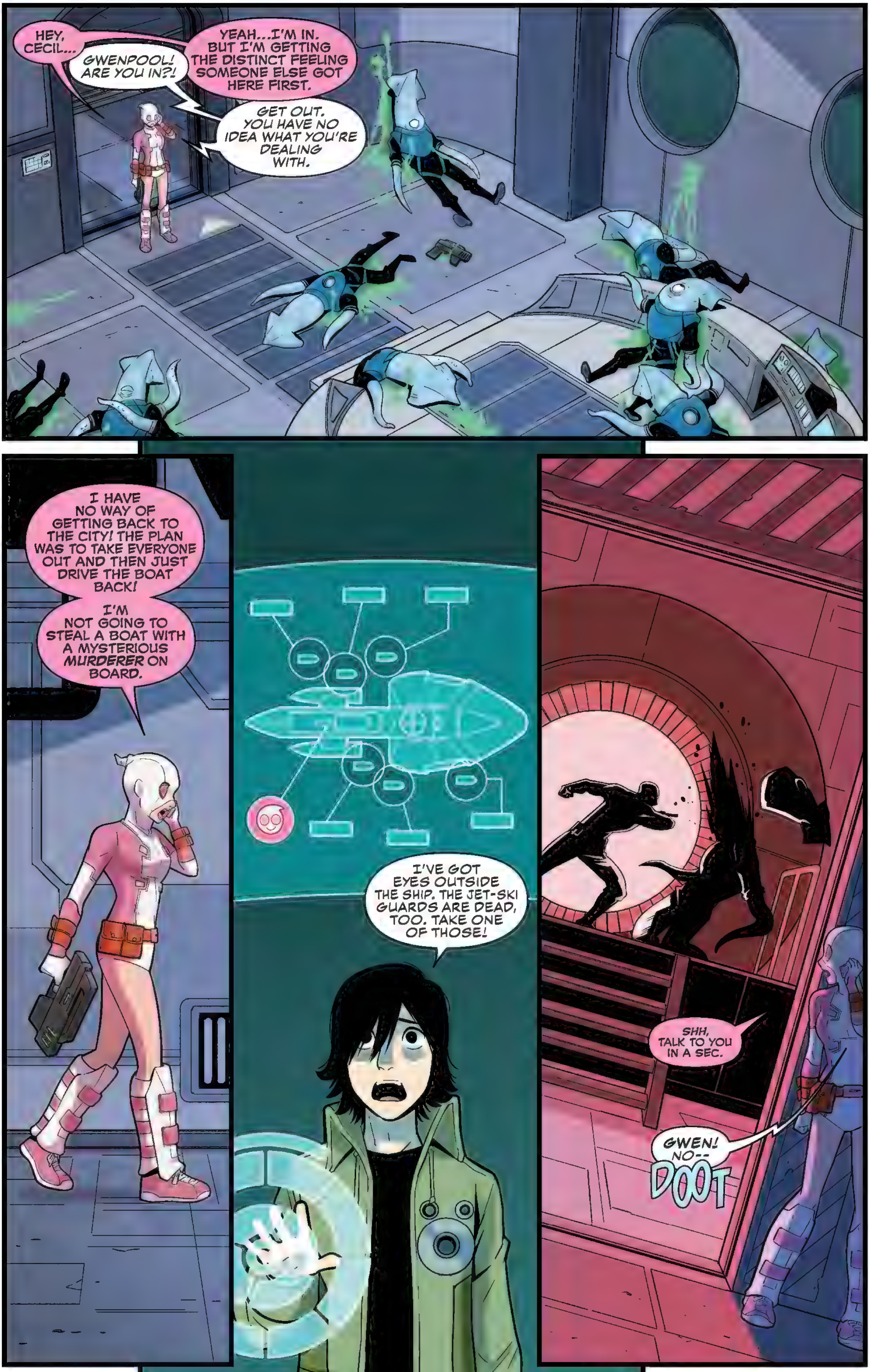

...AND WE'RE JUST STARTING TO MAKE OUR WAY OVER THE NEW YORK HARBOR...
...WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE STATUE OF LIBERTY!
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU LOOK SO NERVOUS.
BECAUSE YOU TRIED TO BRING SIX GUNS ON THIS HELICOPTER.
AND THEY STILL LET YOU ON.

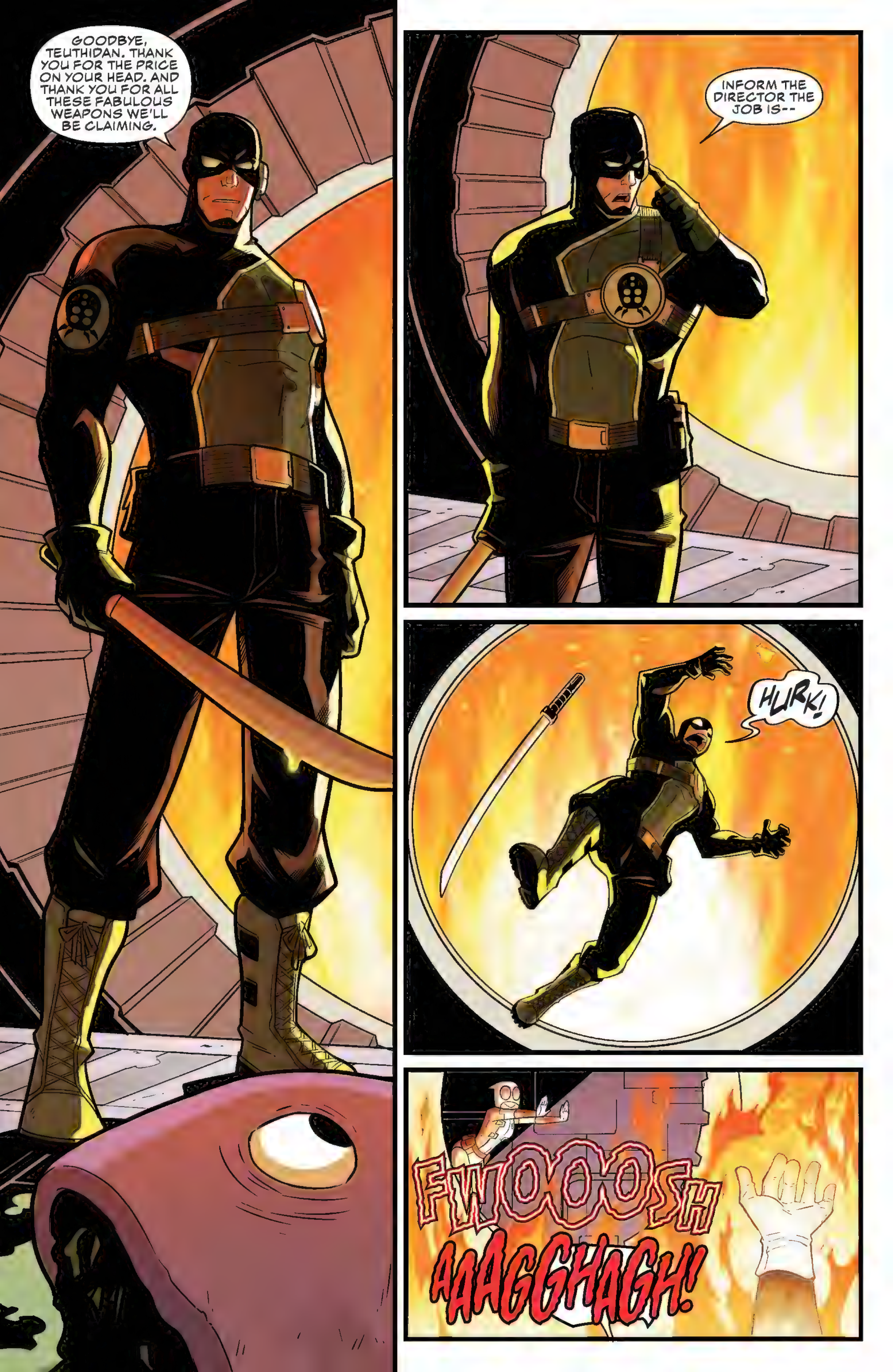

YEAH! I COULD HAVE REALLY USED THEM! I SHOULD BE THE ONE WHO'S NERVOUS!
NOW I'M GONNA HAVE TO USE SICK KARATE TO DISARM ONE OF THE FIRST DUDES, AND THEN USE HIS GUN AGAINST THE REST OF THEM.
WELL. BYE. ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR TIME IN NEW YORK! GRIMALDI'S IS OVERRATED! LUIGI'S ON 5TH IS BETTER.
WELL, I MEAN, THAT'S HOW IT IS IN MY UNIVERSE.
THEY MIGHT NOT EVEN HAVE PIZZA HERE.
HOW HAVE I GONE THIS LONG WITHOUT CHECKING ABOUT PIZZA?
I'M GOING TO LUIGI'S AFTER THIS.

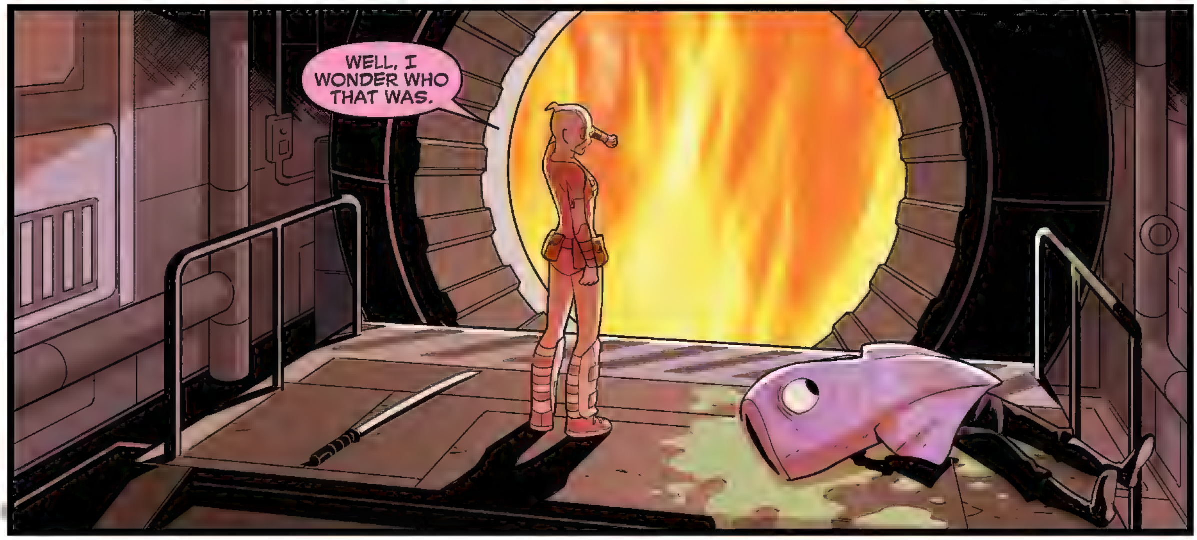

CRASH
WHAM
WOMP
WOOMP
WOOOMPP
WOW...LOOKS AWESOME, HUH?
EXCEPT FOR ONE THING.

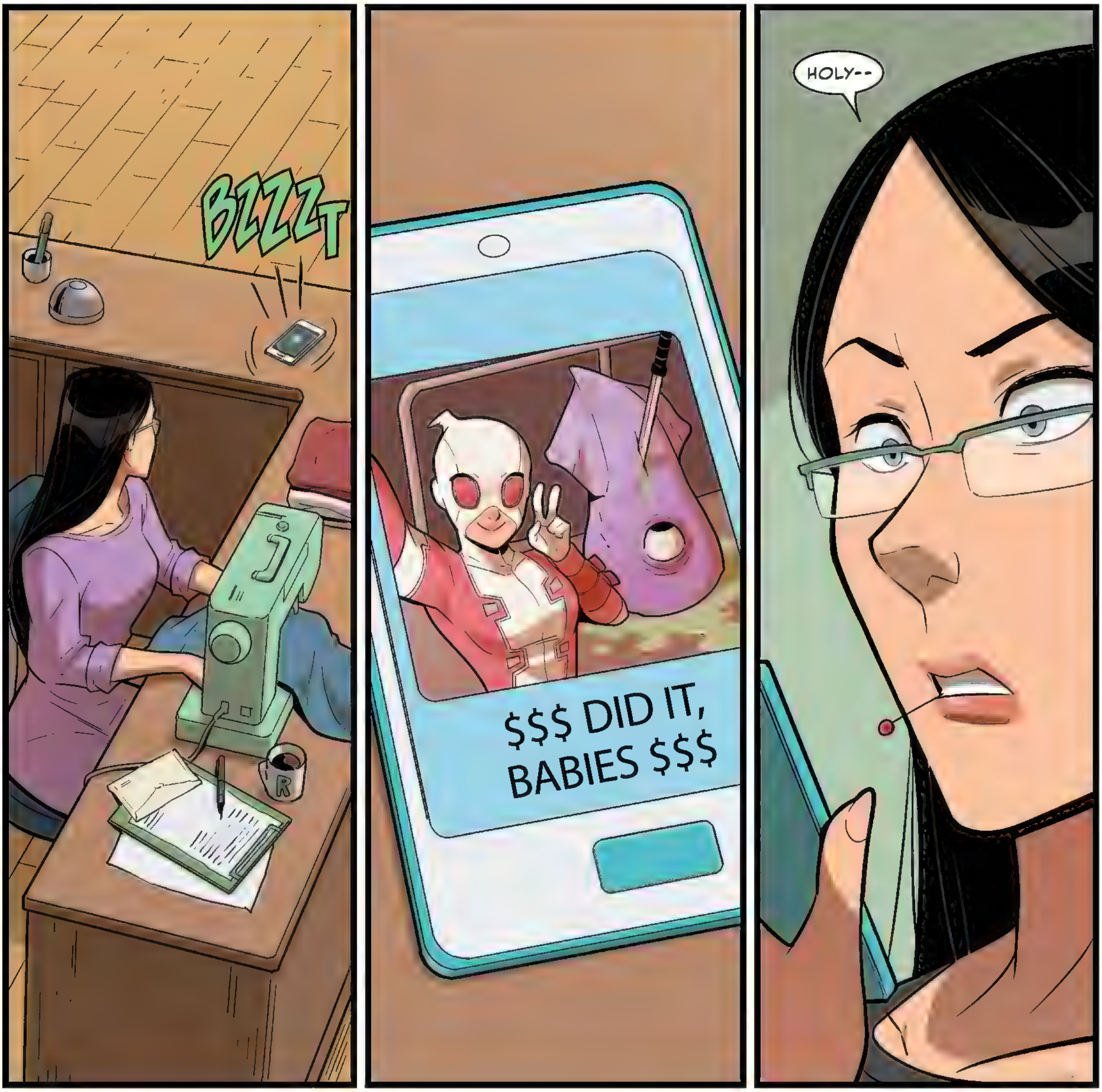

THAT WASN'T ME.
I AM THE PIZZA NOW.
COUGH
...UNBREAKABLE...
...GLASS...
OH. DIDN'T NEED TO TRY TO BREAK THE GLASS. THERE'S A...HOLE?
AAH!
QUIET, GWEN!
GULP
STEALTH SCREEAAAAAM

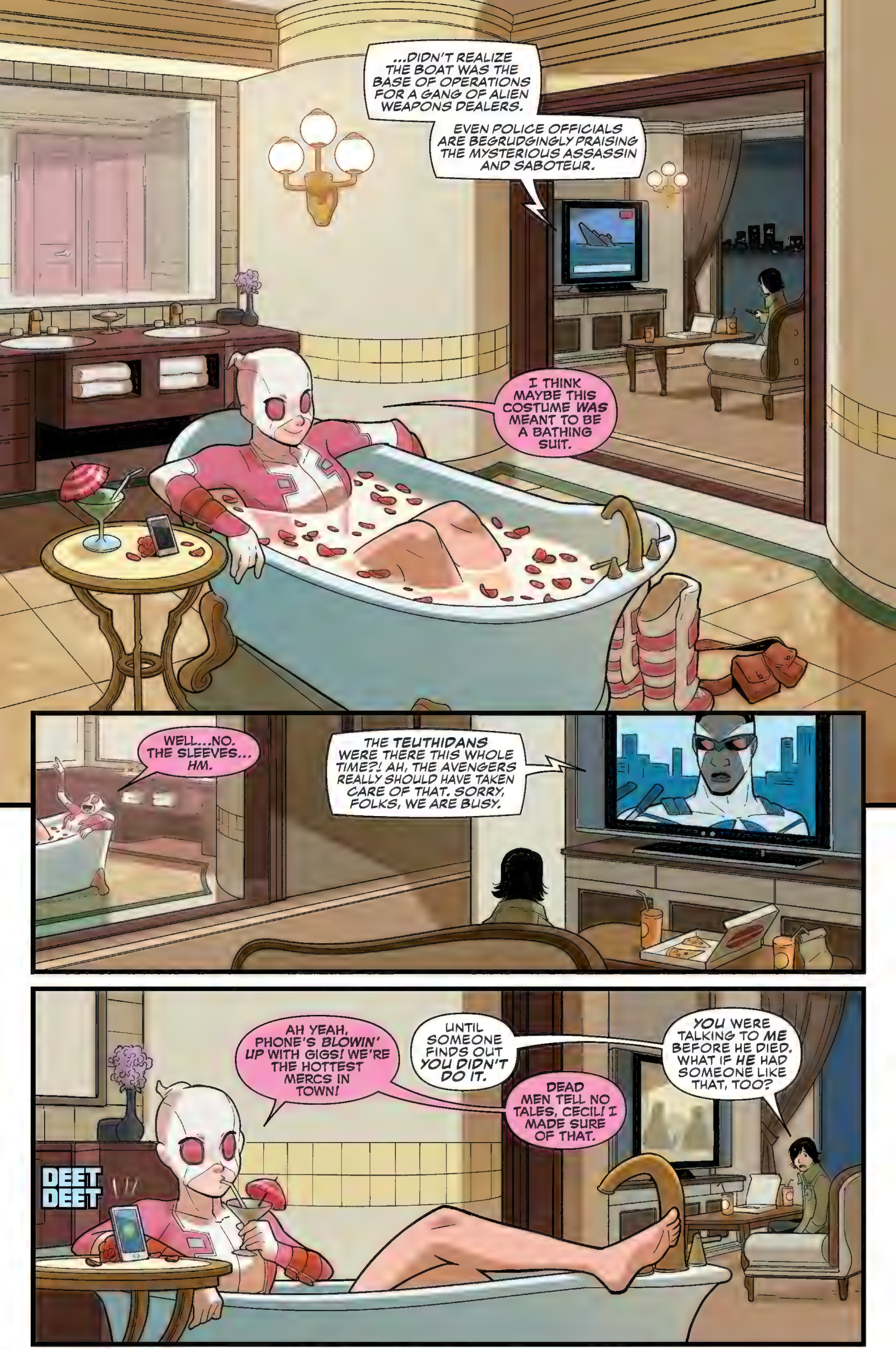

OH, THAT IS A DEAD BODY YOU ARE ATTACKING.
WOMP
HM.

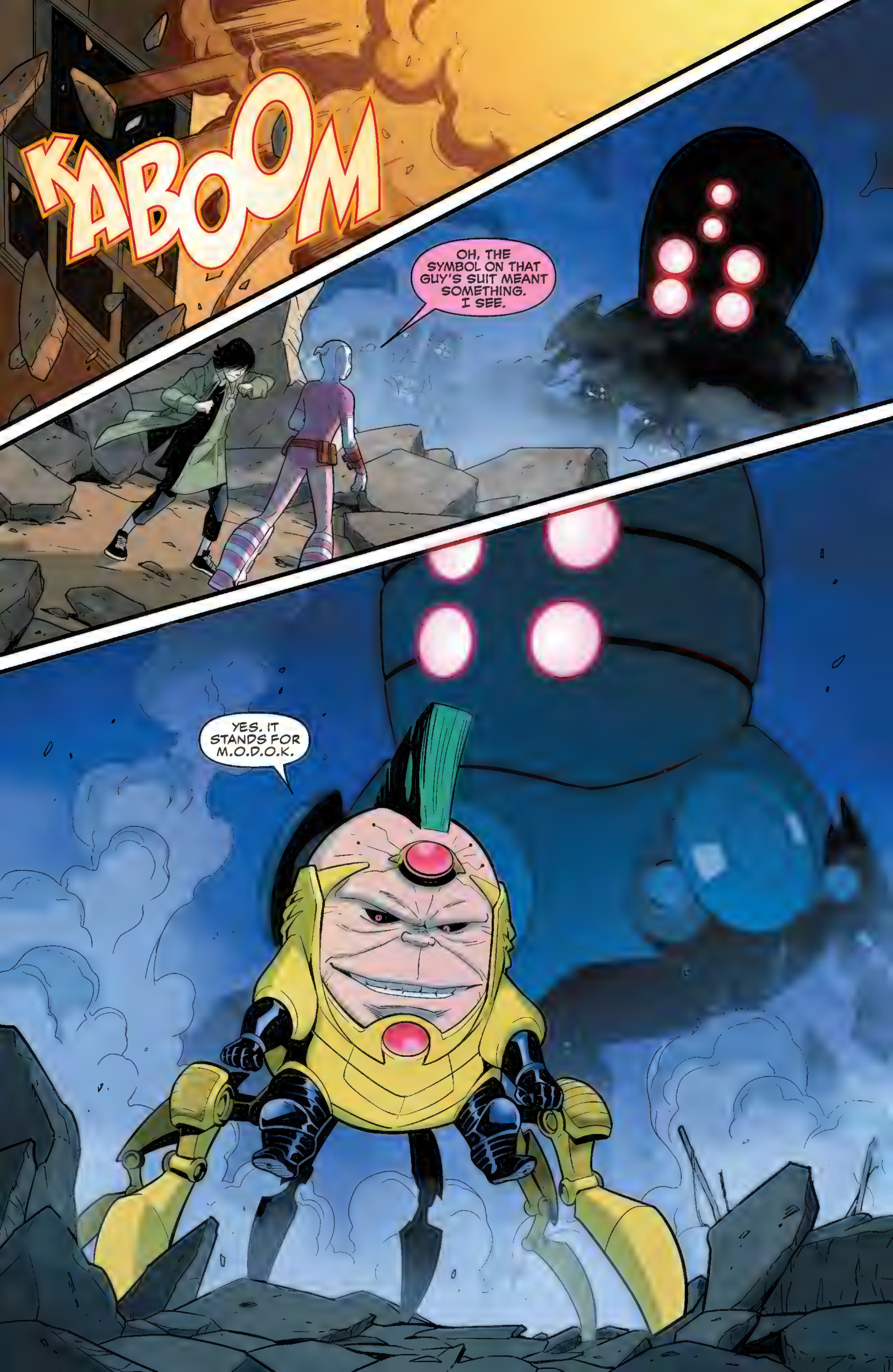

HEY, CECIL...
GWENPOOL! ARE YOU IN?!
YEAH...I'M IN. BUT I'M GETTING THE DISTINCT FEELING SOMEONE ELSE GOT HERE FIRST.
GET OUT. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH.
I HAVE NO WAY OF GETTING BACK TO THE CITY! THE PLAN WAS TO TAKE EVERYONE OUT AND THEN JUST DRIVE THE BOAT BACK!
I'M NOT GOING TO STEAL A BOAT WITH A MYSTERIOUS *MURDERER* ON BOARD.
I'VE GOT EYES OUTSIDE THE SHIP. THE JET-SKI GUARDS ARE DEAD, TOO. TAKE ONE OF THOSE!
SHH, TALK TO YOU IN A SEC.
GWEN! NO--
DOOT

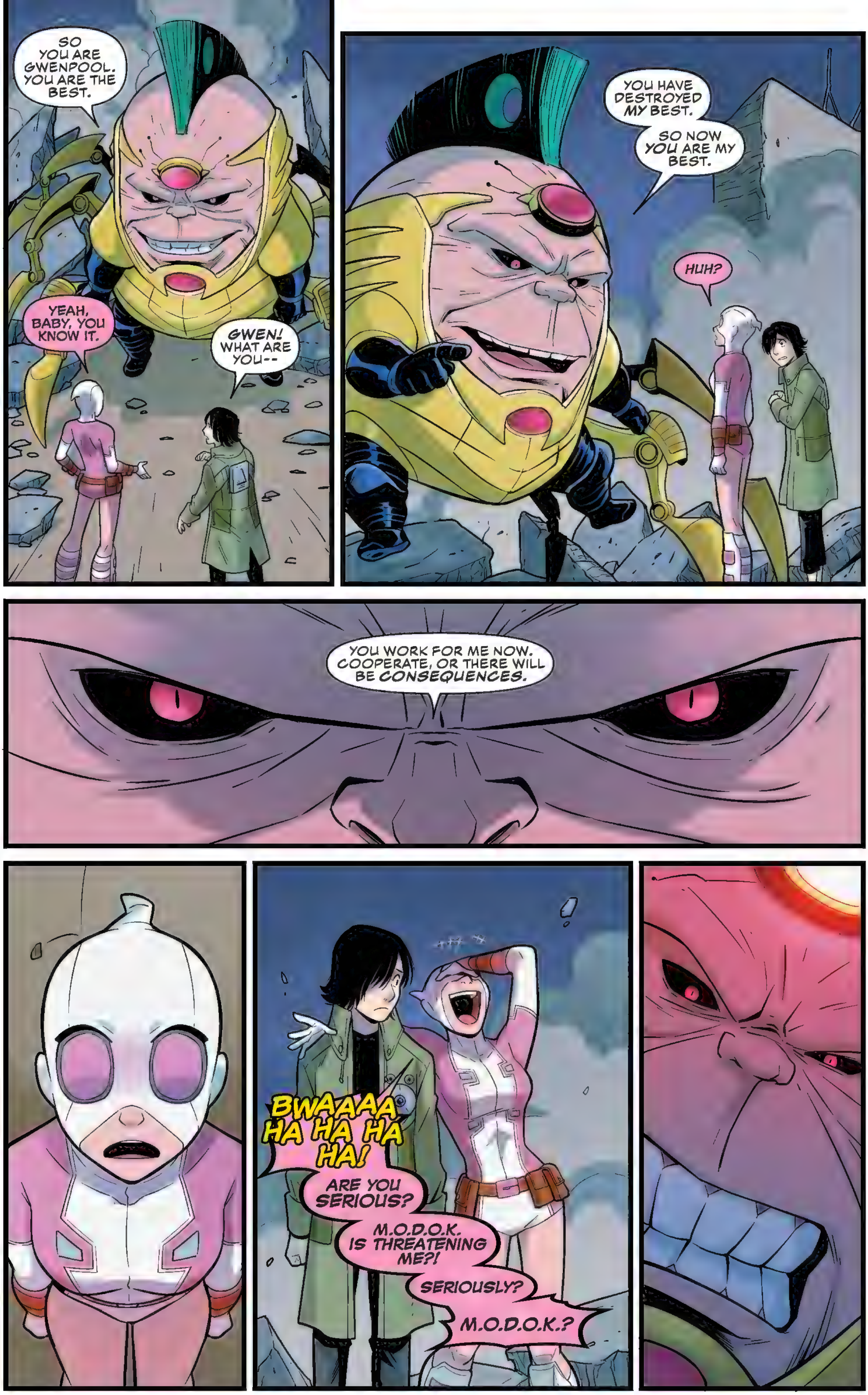

GOODBYE, TEUTHIDAN. THANK YOU FOR THE PRICE ON YOUR HEAD. AND THANK YOU FOR ALL THESE FABULOUS WEAPONS WE'LL BE CLAIMING.
INFORM THE DIRECTOR THE JOB IS--
HURK!
FWOOOSH
AAAGGHAGH!

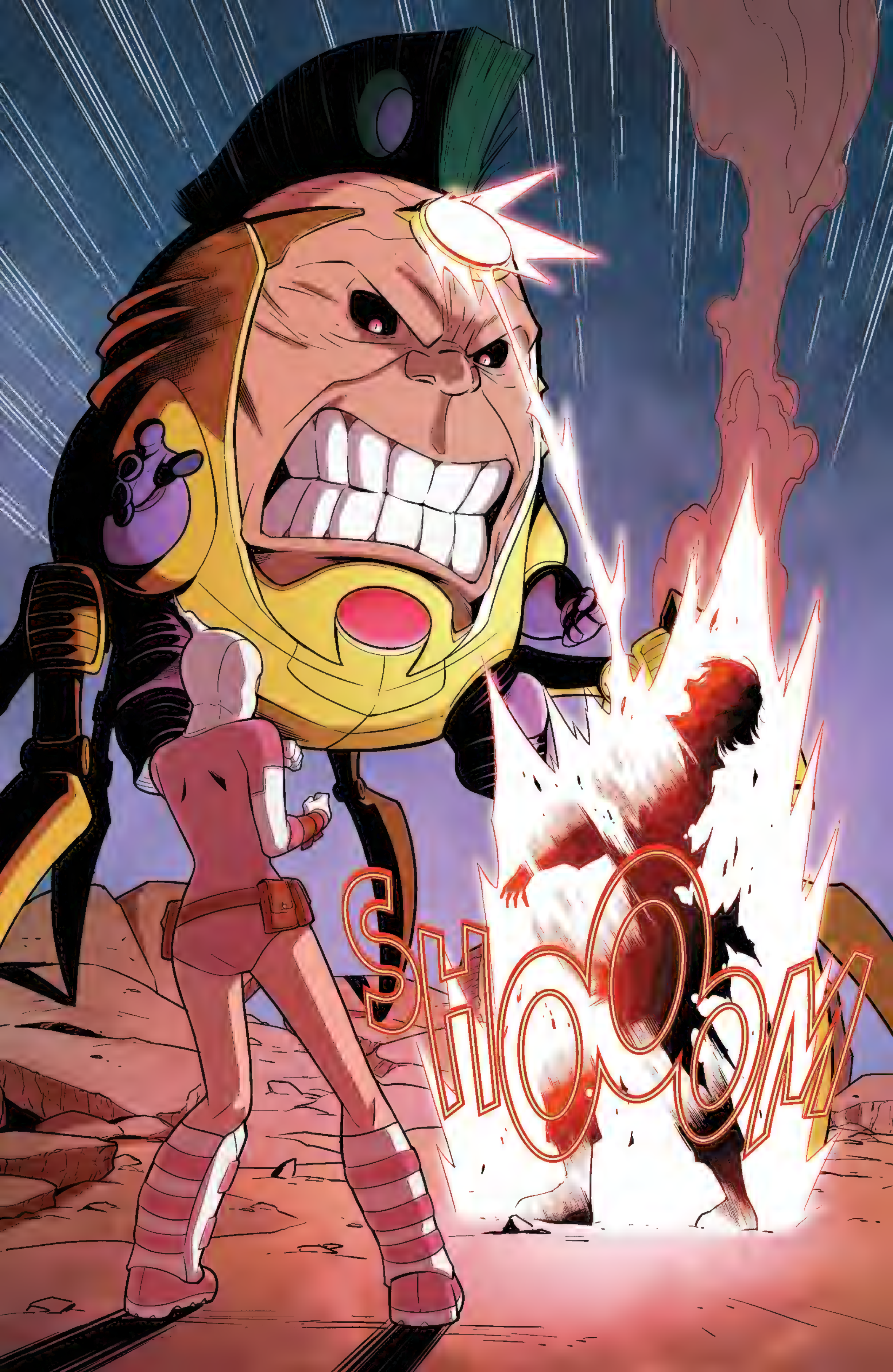

WELL, I WONDER WHO THAT WAS.

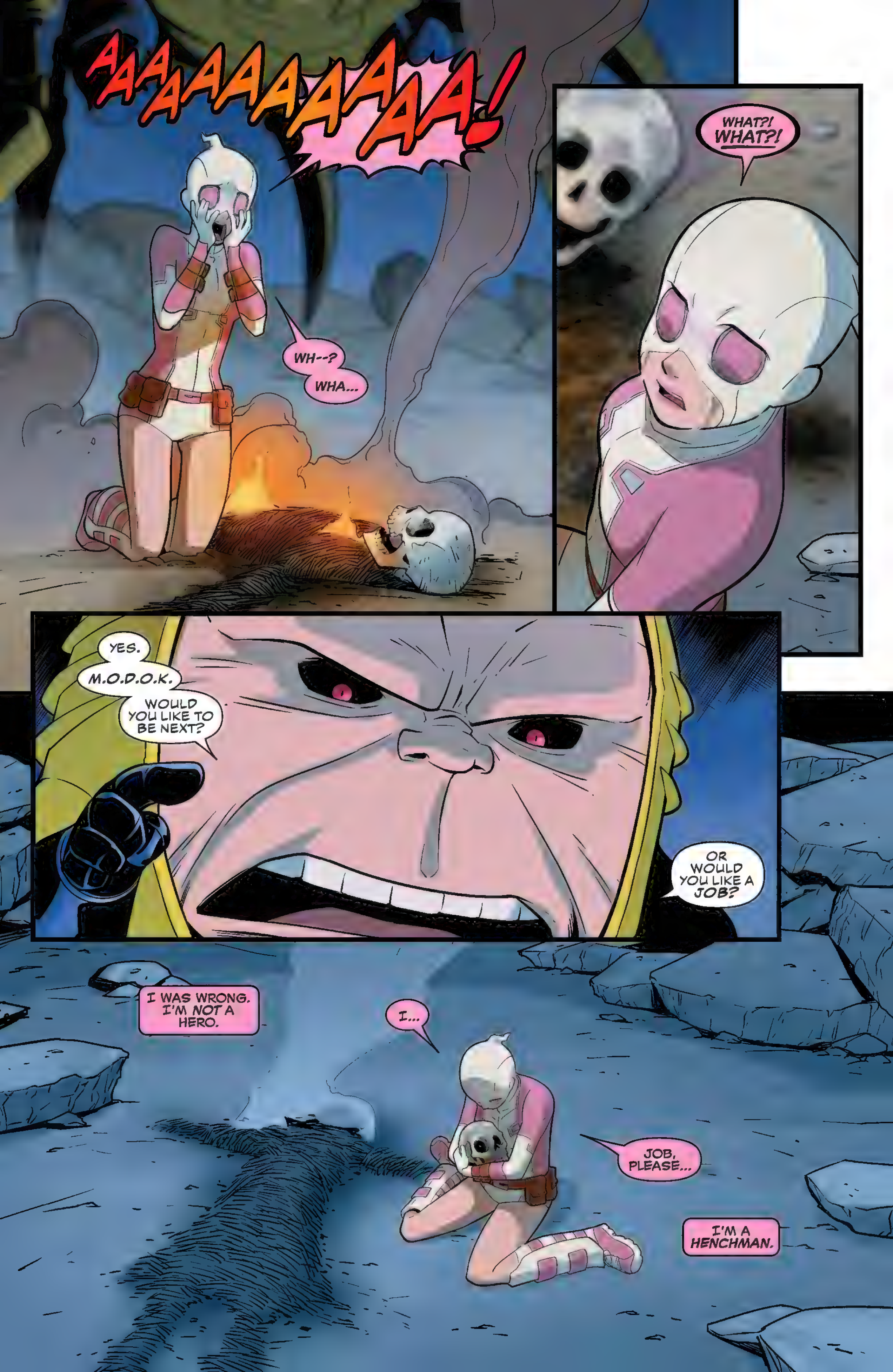

BZZZT
$$$ DID IT, BABIES $$$
HOLY--


...DIDN'T REALIZE THE BOAT WAS THE BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR A GANG OF ALIEN WEAPONS DEALERS.
EVEN POLICE OFFICIALS ARE BEGRUDGINGLY PRAISING THE MYSTERIOUS ASSASSIN AND SABOTEUR.
I THINK MAYBE THIS COSTUME *WAS* MEANT TO BE A BATHING SUIT.
WELL...NO. THE SLEEVES... HM.
THE **TEUTHIDANS** WERE THERE THIS WHOLE TIME?! AH, THE AVENGERS REALLY SHOULD HAVE TAKEN CARE OF THAT. SORRY, FOLKS, WE ARE BUSY.
DEET DEET
AH YEAH, PHONE'S *BLOWIN'* *UP* WITH GIGS! WE'RE THE HOTTEST MERCS IN TOWN!
UNTIL SOMEONE FINDS OUT *YOU DIDN'T DO IT.*
DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES, CECIL! I MADE SURE OF THAT.
YOU WERE TALKING TO *ME* BEFORE HE DIED. WHAT IF *HE* HAD SOMEONE LIKE THAT, TOO?

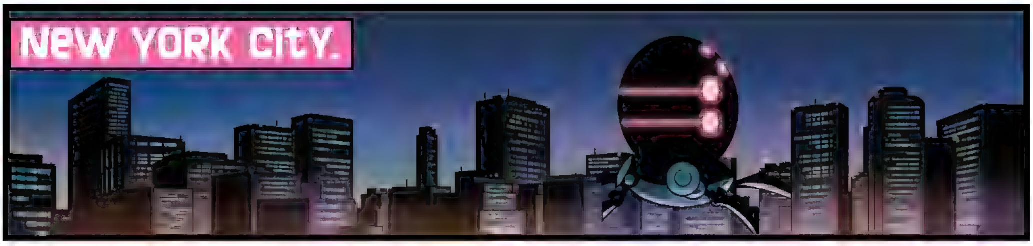

KABOOM
OH, THE SYMBOL ON THAT GUY'S SUIT MEANT SOMETHING. I SEE.
YES. IT STANDS FOR M.O.D.O.K.

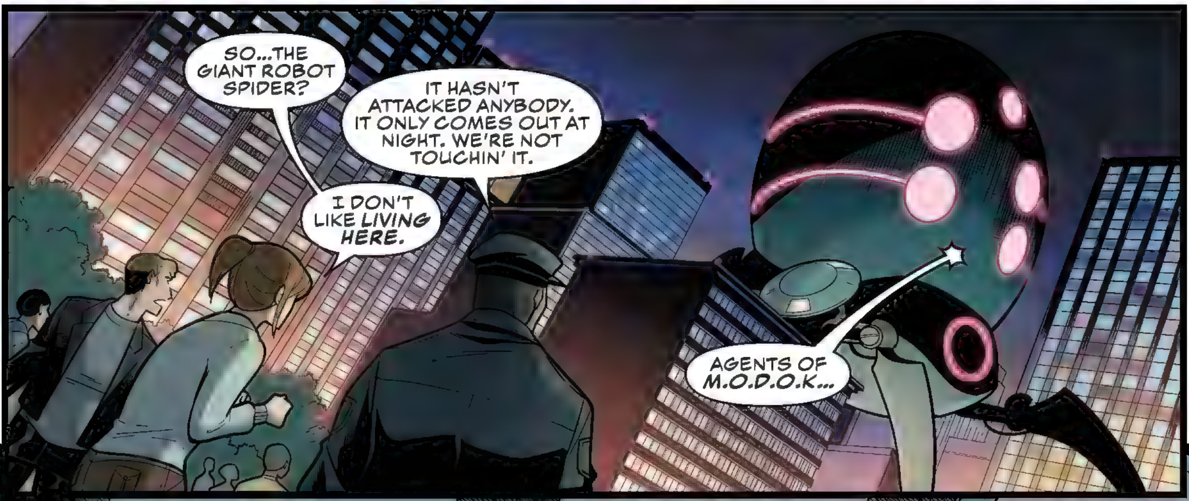

SO YOU ARE GWENPOOL. YOU ARE THE BEST.
YEAH, BABY, YOU KNOW IT.
GWEN! WHAT ARE YOU--
YOU HAVE DESTROYED MY BEST.
SO NOW YOU ARE MY BEST.
HUH?
YOU WORK FOR ME NOW. COOPERATE, OR THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES.
BWAAAA HA HA HA HA!
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
M.O.D.O.K. IS THREATENING ME?!
SERIOUSLY?
M.O.D.O.K.?

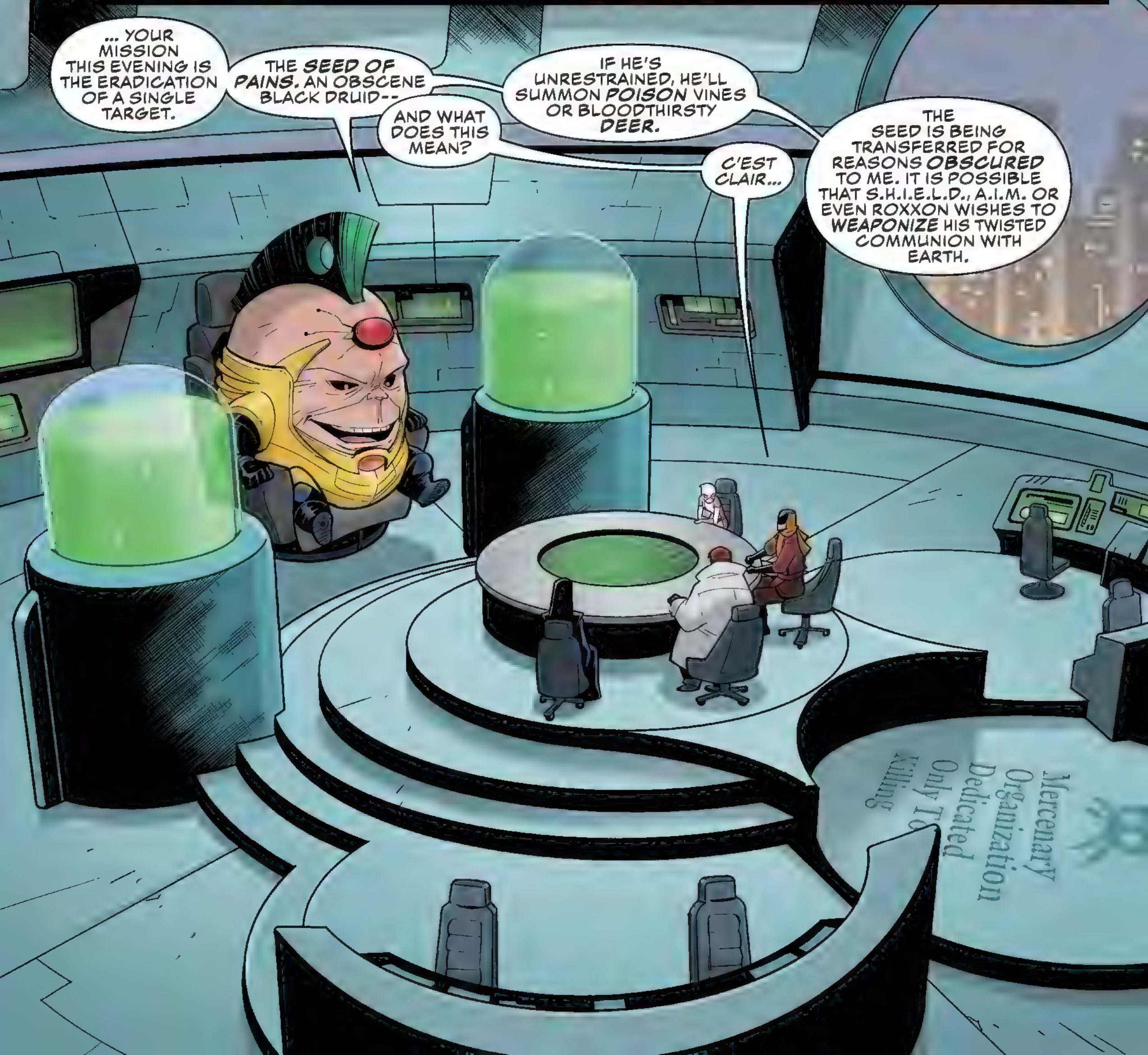

SHOOOOM

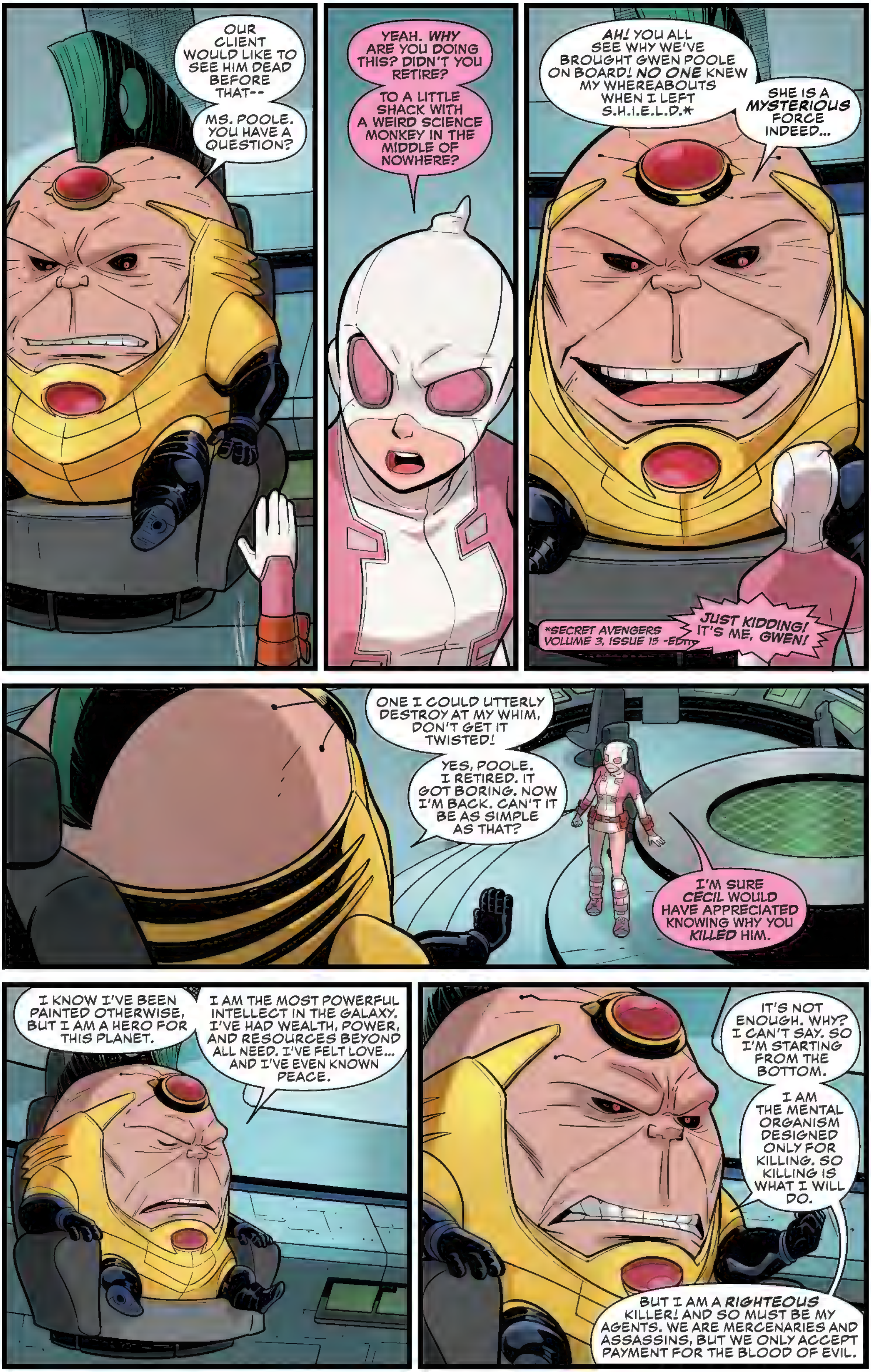

AAAAAAAAAAA!
WH--?
WHA...
WHAT?! WHAT?!
YES.
M.O.D.O.K.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE NEXT?
OR WOULD YOU LIKE A JOB?
I WAS WRONG. I'M NOT A HERO.
I...
JOB, PLEASE...
I'M A HENCHMAN.

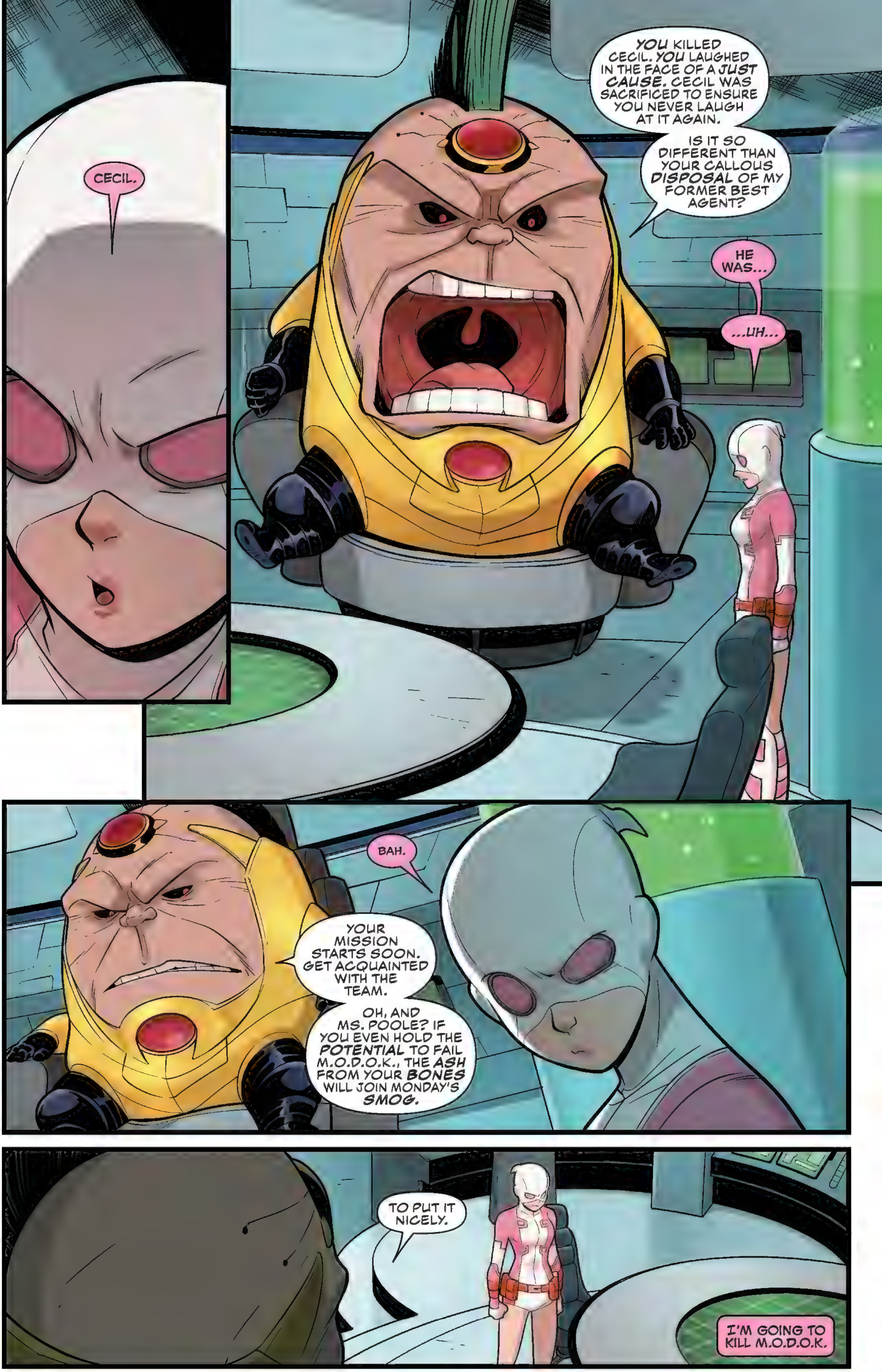
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #2

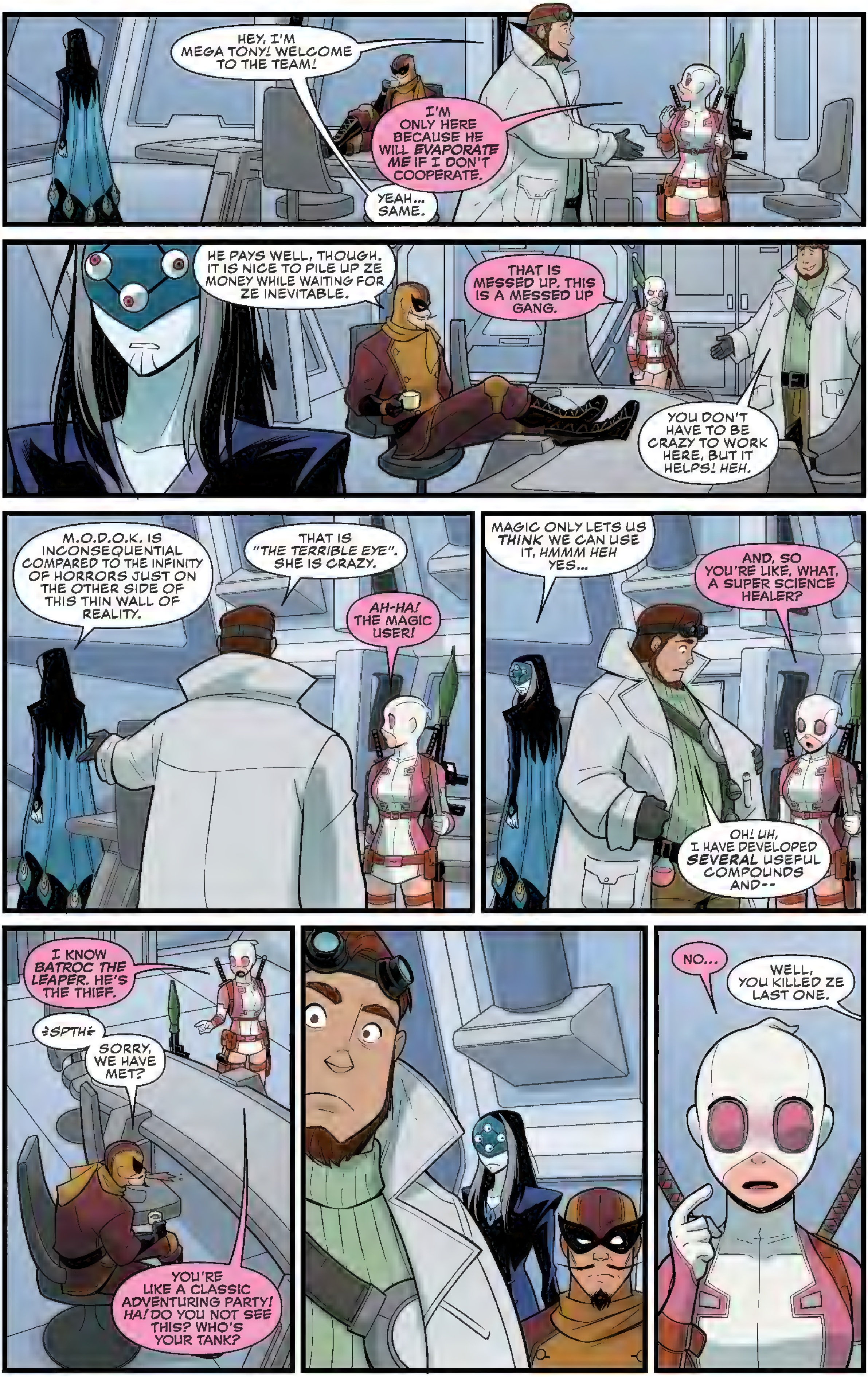

NEW YORK CITY.

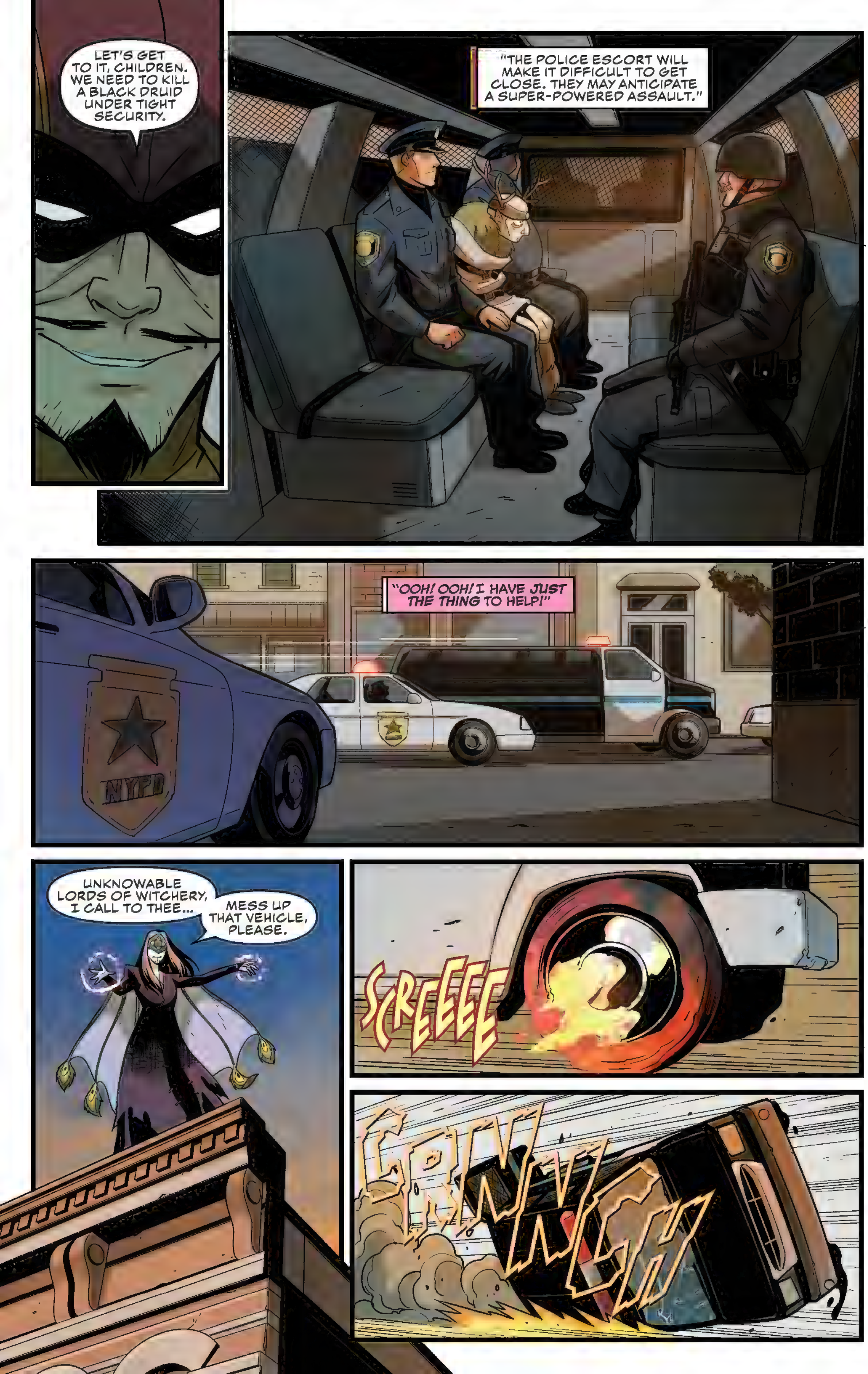

SO...THE GIANT ROBOT SPIDER?
IT HASN'T ATTACKED ANYBODY. IT ONLY COMES OUT AT NIGHT. WE'RE NOT TOUCHIN' IT.
I DON'T LIKE *LIVING HERE.*
AGENTS OF M.O.D.O.K...

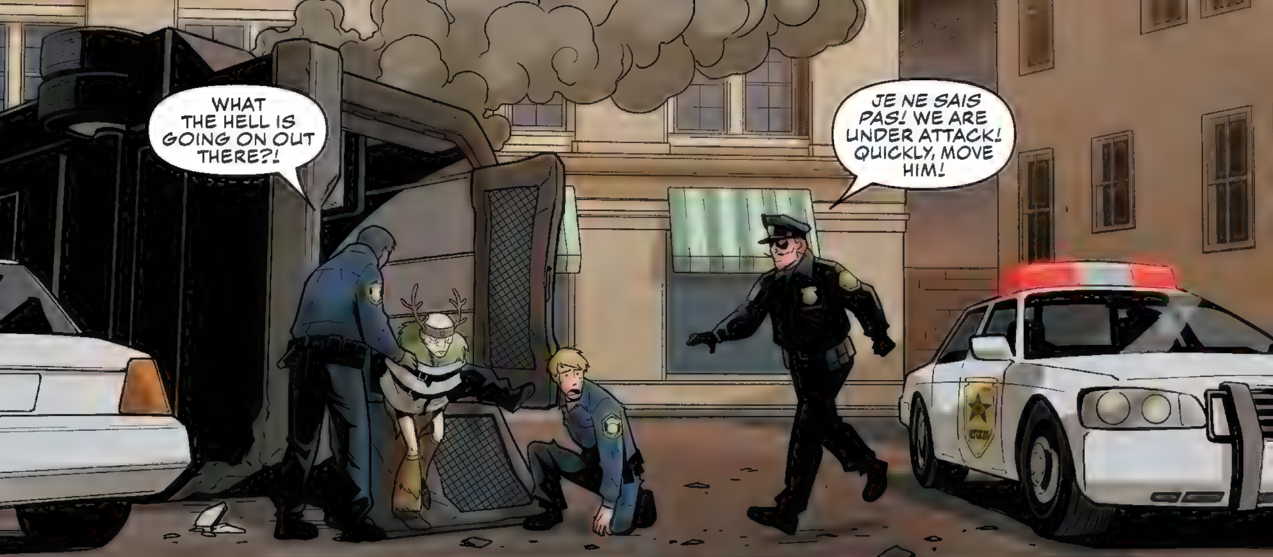

...YOUR MISSION THIS EVENING IS THE ERADICATION OF A SINGLE TARGET.
THE *SEED OF PAINS.* AN OBSCENE BLACK DRUID--
IF HE'S UNRESTRAINED, HE'LL SUMMON *POISON* VINES OR BLOODTHIRSTY *DEER.*
AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
C'EST CLAIR...
THE SEED IS BEING TRANSFERRED FOR REASONS *OBSCURED* TO ME. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT S.H.I.E.L.D., A.I.M. OR EVEN ROXXON WISHES TO *WEAPONIZE* HIS TWISTED COMMUNION WITH EARTH.
Mercenary
Organization
Dedicated
Only T
Killing

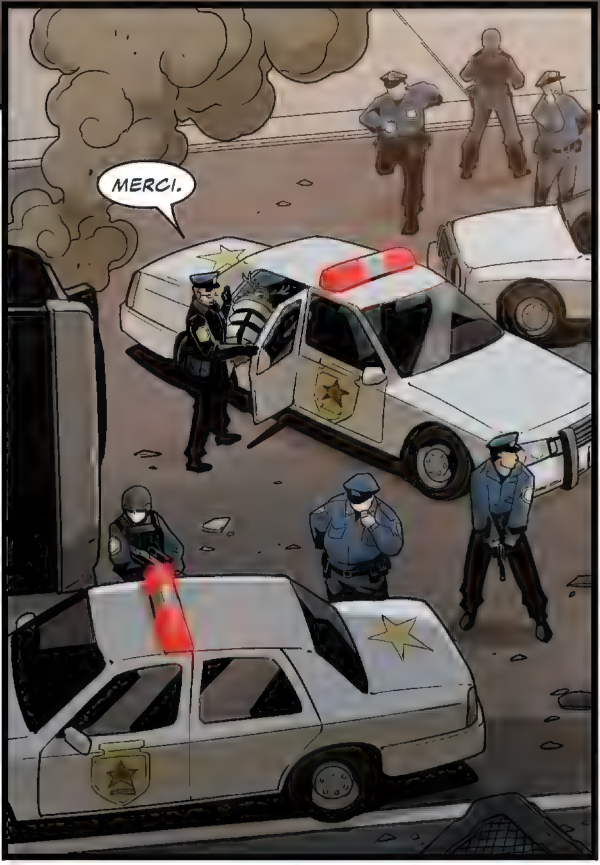

OUR CLIENT WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM DEAD BEFORE THAT--
MS. POOLE. YOU HAVE A QUESTION?
YEAH. *WHY* ARE YOU DOING THIS? DIDN'T YOU RETIRE?
TO A LITTLE SHACK WITH A WEIRD SCIENCE MONKEY IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE?
AH! YOU ALL SEE WHY WE'VE BROUGHT GWEN POOLE ON BOARD! *NO ONE* KNEW MY WHEREABOUTS WHEN I LEFT S.H.I.E.L.D.*
SHE IS A *MYSTERIOUS* FORCE INDEED...
*SECRET AVENGERS VOLUME 3, ISSUE 15 -EDITY
JUST KIDDING! IT'S ME, GWEN!
ONE I COULD UTTERLY DESTROY AT MY WHIM, DON'T GET IT TWISTED!
YES, POOLE. I RETIRED. IT GOT BORING. NOW I'M BACK. CAN'T IT BE AS SIMPLE AS THAT?
I'M SURE *CECIL* WOULD HAVE APPRECIATED KNOWING WHY YOU *KILLED* HIM.
I KNOW I'VE BEEN PAINTED OTHERWISE, BUT I AM A HERO FOR THIS PLANET.
I AM THE MOST POWERFUL INTELLECT IN THE GALAXY. I'VE HAD WEALTH, POWER, AND RESOURCES BEYOND ALL NEED. I'VE FELT LOVE... AND I'VE EVEN KNOWN PEACE.
IT'S NOT ENOUGH. WHY? I CAN'T SAY. SO I'M STARTING FROM THE BOTTOM.
I AM THE MENTAL ORGANISM DESIGNED ONLY FOR KILLING. SO KILLING IS WHAT I WILL DO.
BUT I AM A *RIGHTEOUS* KILLER! AND SO MUST BE MY AGENTS. WE ARE MERCENARIES AND ASSASSINS, BUT WE ONLY ACCEPT PAYMENT FOR THE BLOOD OF EVIL.

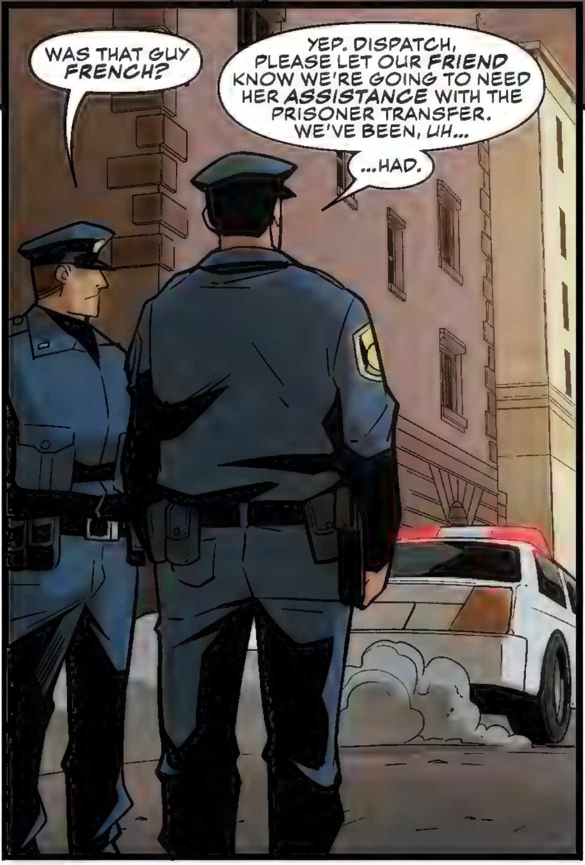

CECIL.
YOU KILLED CECIL. YOU LAUGHED IN THE FACE OF A JUST CAUSE. CECIL WAS SACRIFICED TO ENSURE YOU NEVER LAUGH AT IT AGAIN.
IS IT SO DIFFERENT THAN YOUR CALLOUS DISPOSAL OF MY FORMER BEST AGENT?
HE WAS...
...UH...
BAH.
YOUR MISSION STARTS SOON. GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE TEAM.
OH, AND MS. POOLE? IF YOU EVEN HOLD THE POTENTIAL TO FAIL M.O.D.O.K., THE ASH FROM YOUR BONES WILL JOIN MONDAY'S SMOG.
TO PUT IT NICELY.
I'M GOING TO KILL M.O.D.O.K.

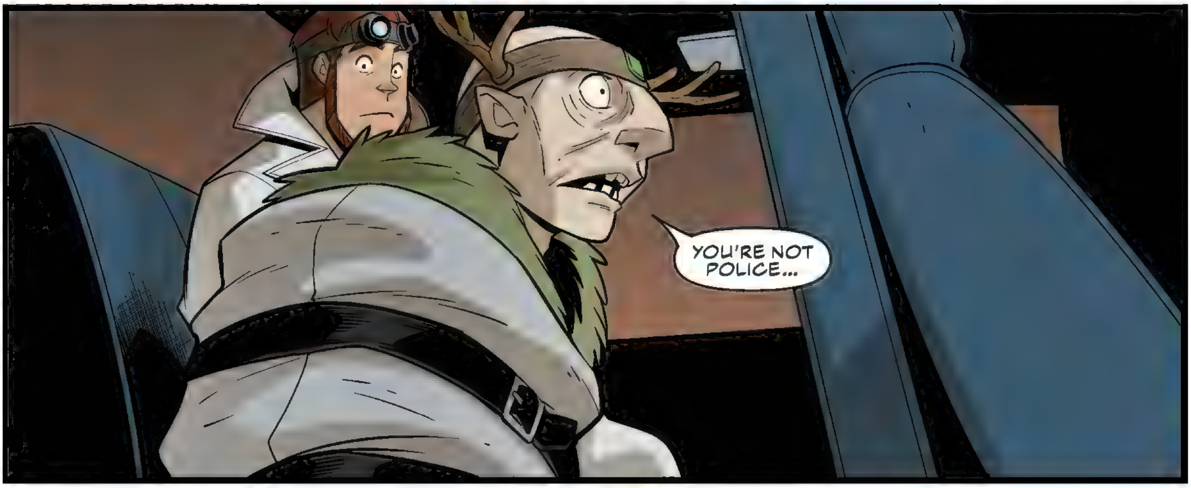

HEY, I'M MEGA TONY! WELCOME TO THE TEAM!
I'M ONLY HERE BECAUSE HE WILL *EVAPORATE ME* IF I DON'T COOPERATE.
YEAH... SAME.
HE PAYS WELL, THOUGH. IT IS NICE TO PILE UP ZE MONEY WHILE WAITING FOR ZE INEVITABLE.
THAT IS MESSED UP. THIS IS A MESSED UP GANG.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO WORK HERE, BUT IT HELPS! HEH.
M.O.D.O.K. IS INCONSEQUENTIAL COMPARED TO THE INFINITY OF HORRORS JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS THIN WALL OF REALITY.
THAT IS *"THE TERRIBLE EYE"*. SHE IS CRAZY.
AH-HA! THE MAGIC USER!
MAGIC ONLY LETS US *THINK* WE CAN USE IT, HMMM HEH YES...
AND, SO YOU'RE LIKE, WHAT, A SUPER SCIENCE HEALER?
OH! UH, I HAVE DEVELOPED *SEVERAL* USEFUL COMPOUNDS AND--
I KNOW *BATROC THE LEAPER.* HE'S THE THIEF.
SPTH
SORRY, WE HAVE MET?
YOU'RE LIKE A CLASSIC ADVENTURING PARTY! *HA!* DO YOU NOT SEE THIS? WHO'S YOUR TANK?
NO...
WELL, YOU KILLED ZE LAST ONE.

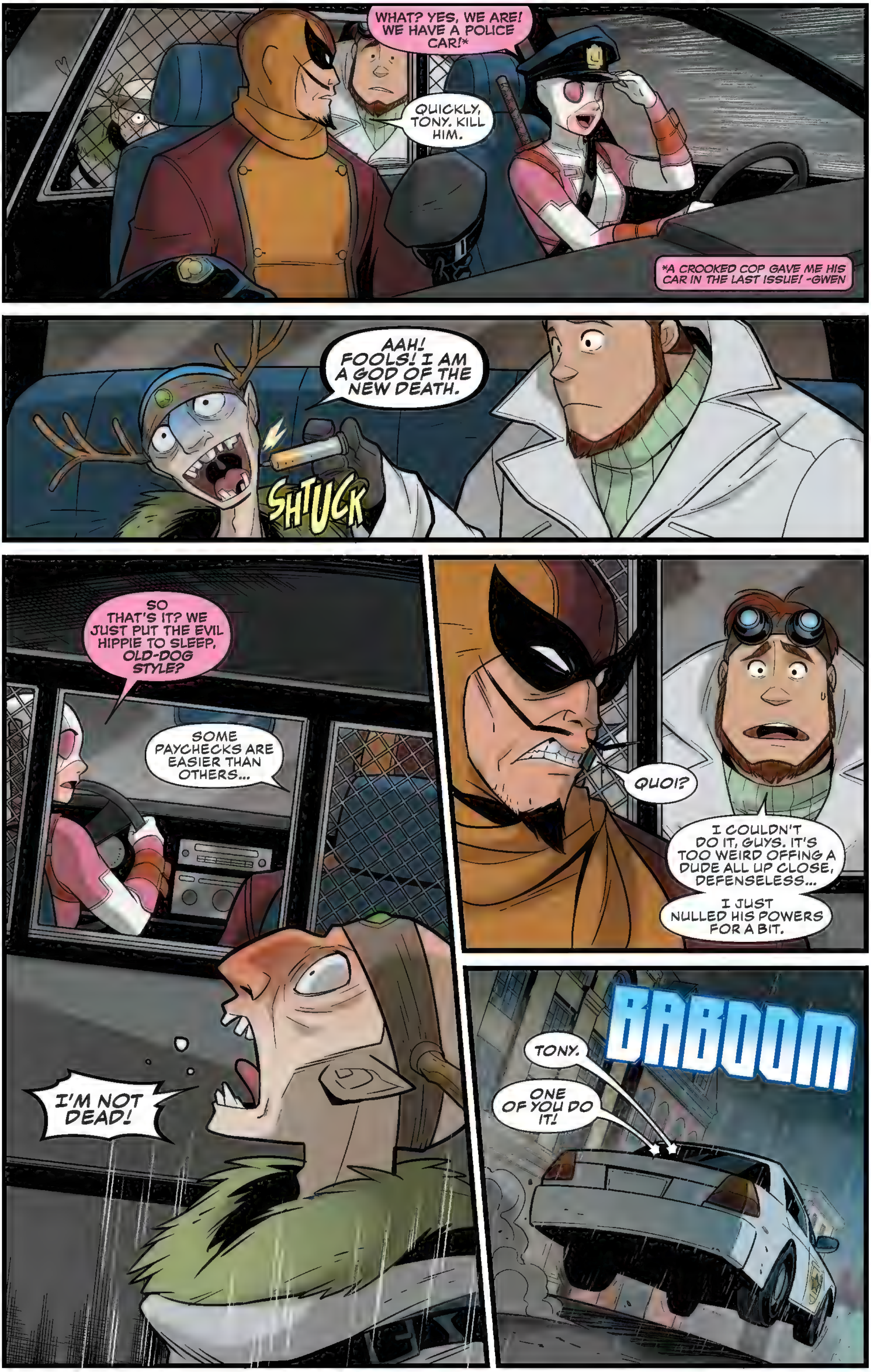

LET'S GET TO IT, CHILDREN. WE NEED TO KILL A BLACK DRUID UNDER TIGHT SECURITY.
"THE POLICE ESCORT WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO GET CLOSE. THEY MAY ANTICIPATE A SUPER-POWERED ASSAULT."
"OOH! OOH! I HAVE JUST THE THING TO HELP!"
NYPD
UNKNOWABLE LORDS OF WITCHERY, I CALL TO THEE...
MESS UP THAT VEHICLE, PLEASE.
SCREEEE
CRNNCH

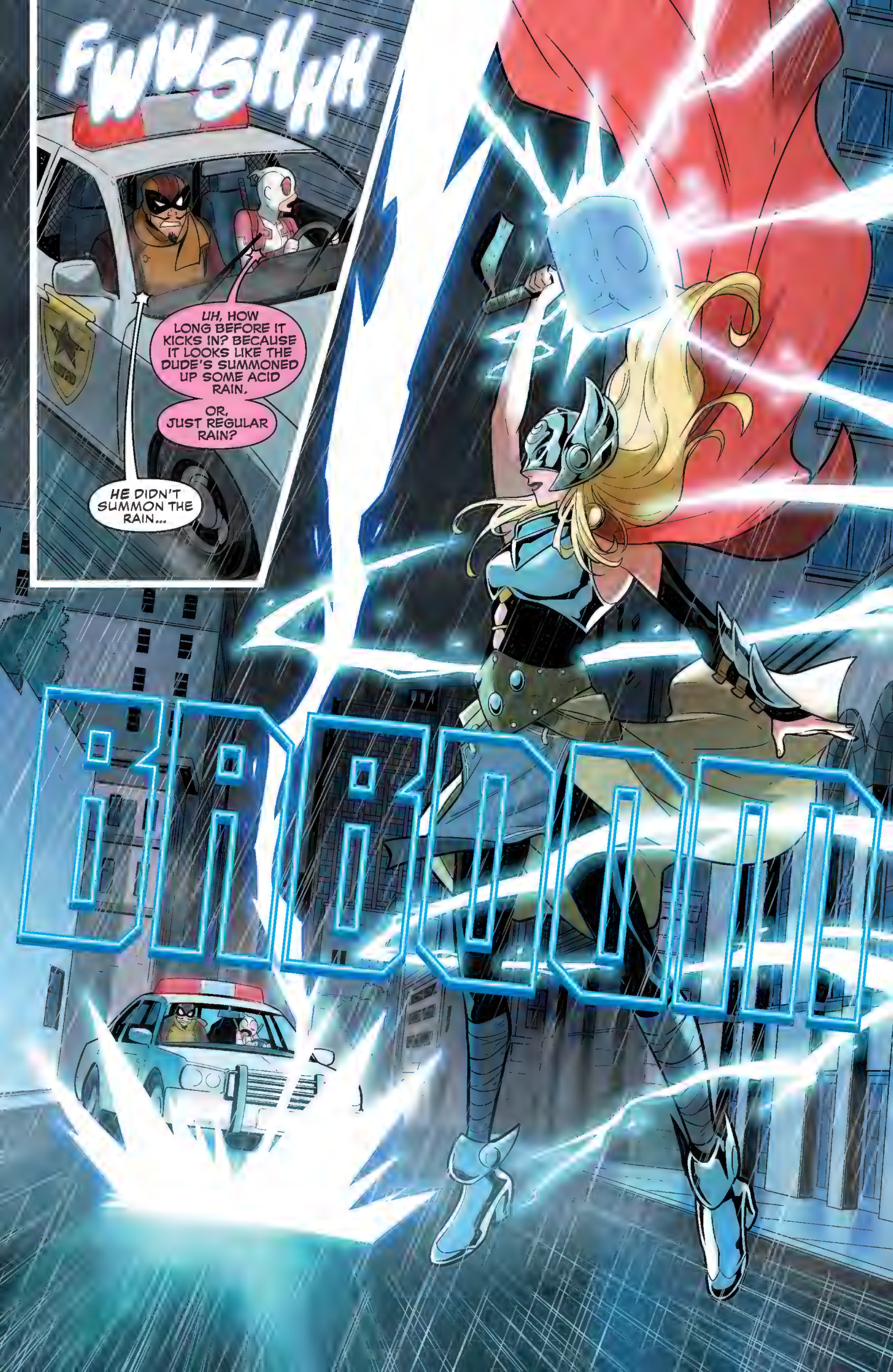

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OUT THERE?!
JE NE SAIS PAS! WE ARE UNDER ATTACK! QUICKLY, MOVE HIM!

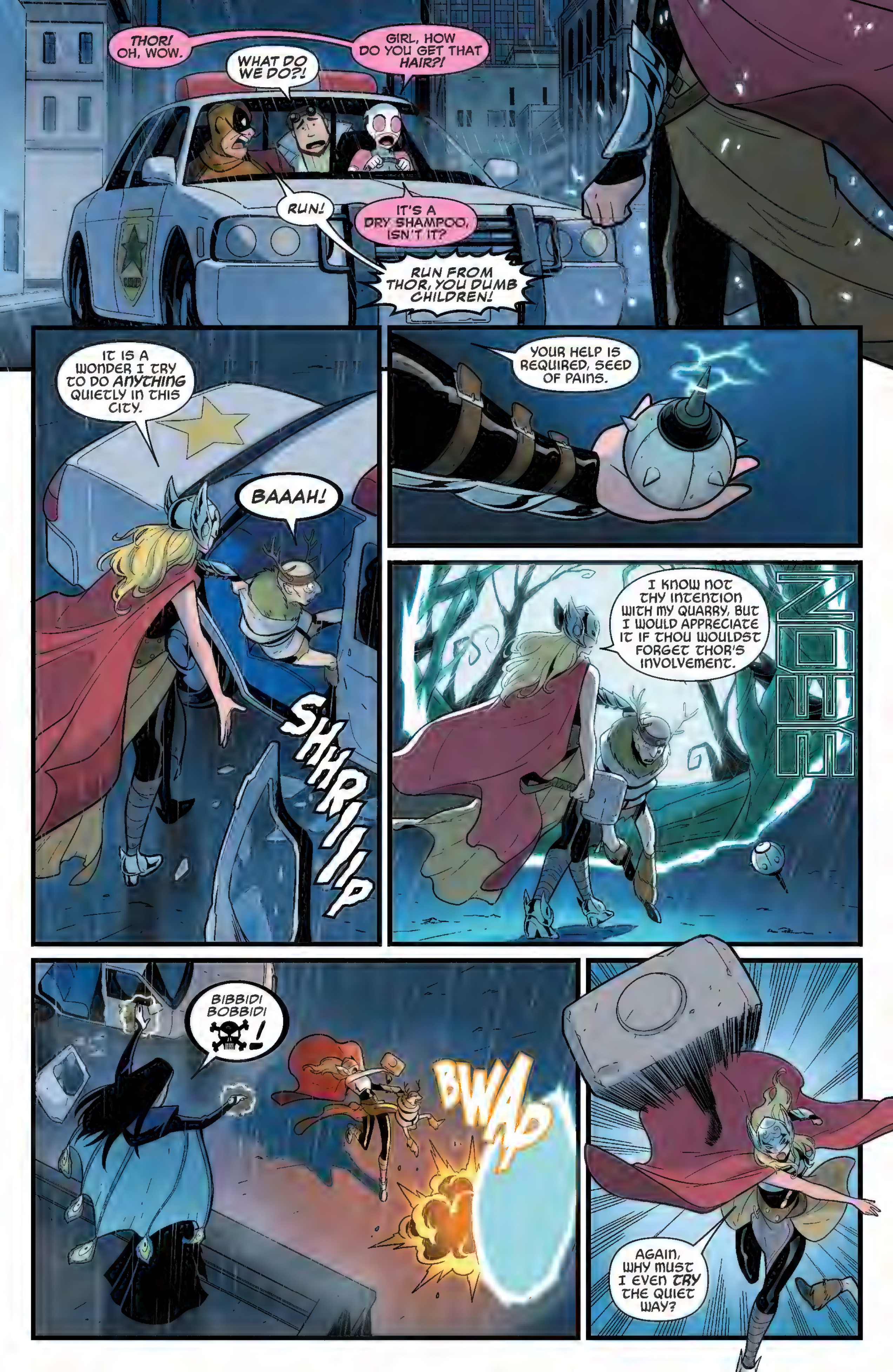

MERCI.

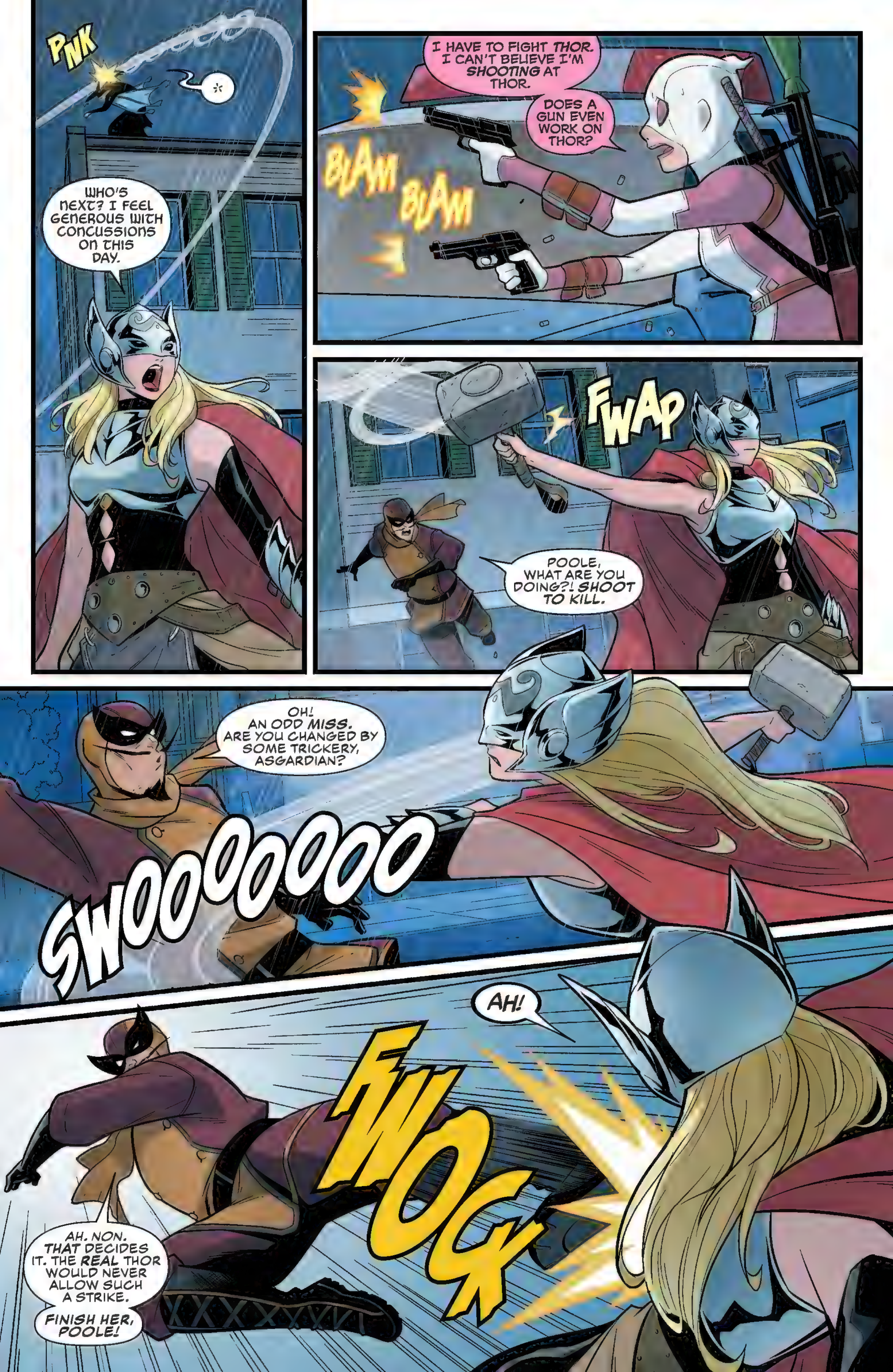

WAS THAT GUY *FRENCH?*
YEP. DISPATCH, PLEASE LET OUR **FRIEND** KNOW WE'RE GOING TO NEED HER ***ASSISTANCE*** WITH THE PRISONER TRANSFER. WE'VE BEEN, *UH*...
...HAD.

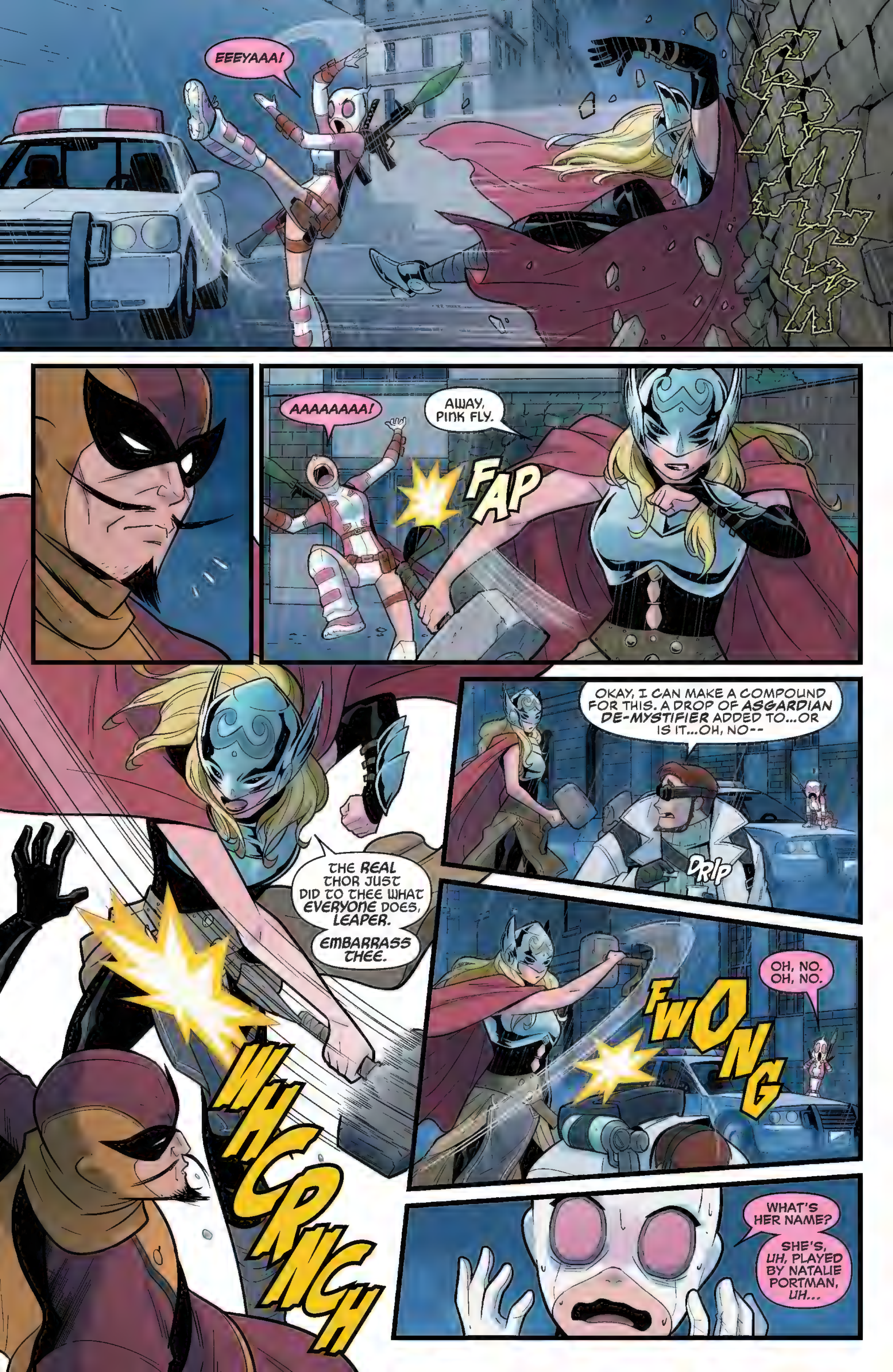

YOU'RE NOT POLICE...

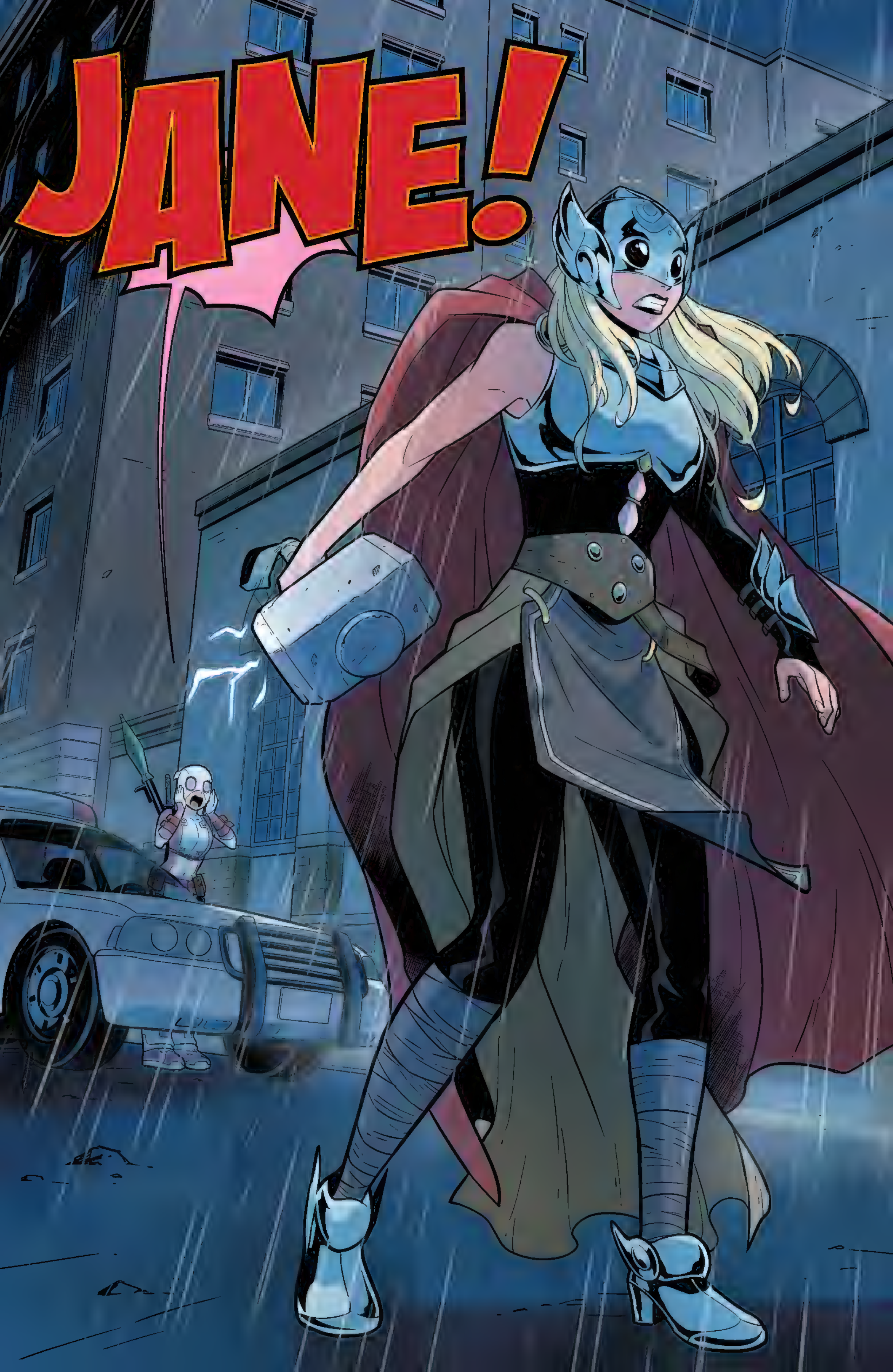

WHAT? YES, WE ARE! WE HAVE A POLICE CAR!*
QUICKLY, TONY. KILL HIM.
*A CROOKED COP GAVE ME HIS CAR IN THE LAST ISSUE! -GWEN
AAH! FOOLS! I AM A GOD OF THE NEW DEATH.
SHTUCK
SO THAT'S IT? WE JUST PUT THE EVIL HIPPIE TO SLEEP, OLD-DOG STYLE?
SOME PAYCHECKS ARE EASIER THAN OTHERS...
I'M NOT DEAD!
QUOI?
I COULDN'T DO IT, GUYS. IT'S TOO WEIRD OFFING A DUDE ALL UP CLOSE, DEFENSELESS...
I JUST NULLED HIS POWERS FOR A BIT.
BABOOM
TONY.
ONE OF YOU DO IT!

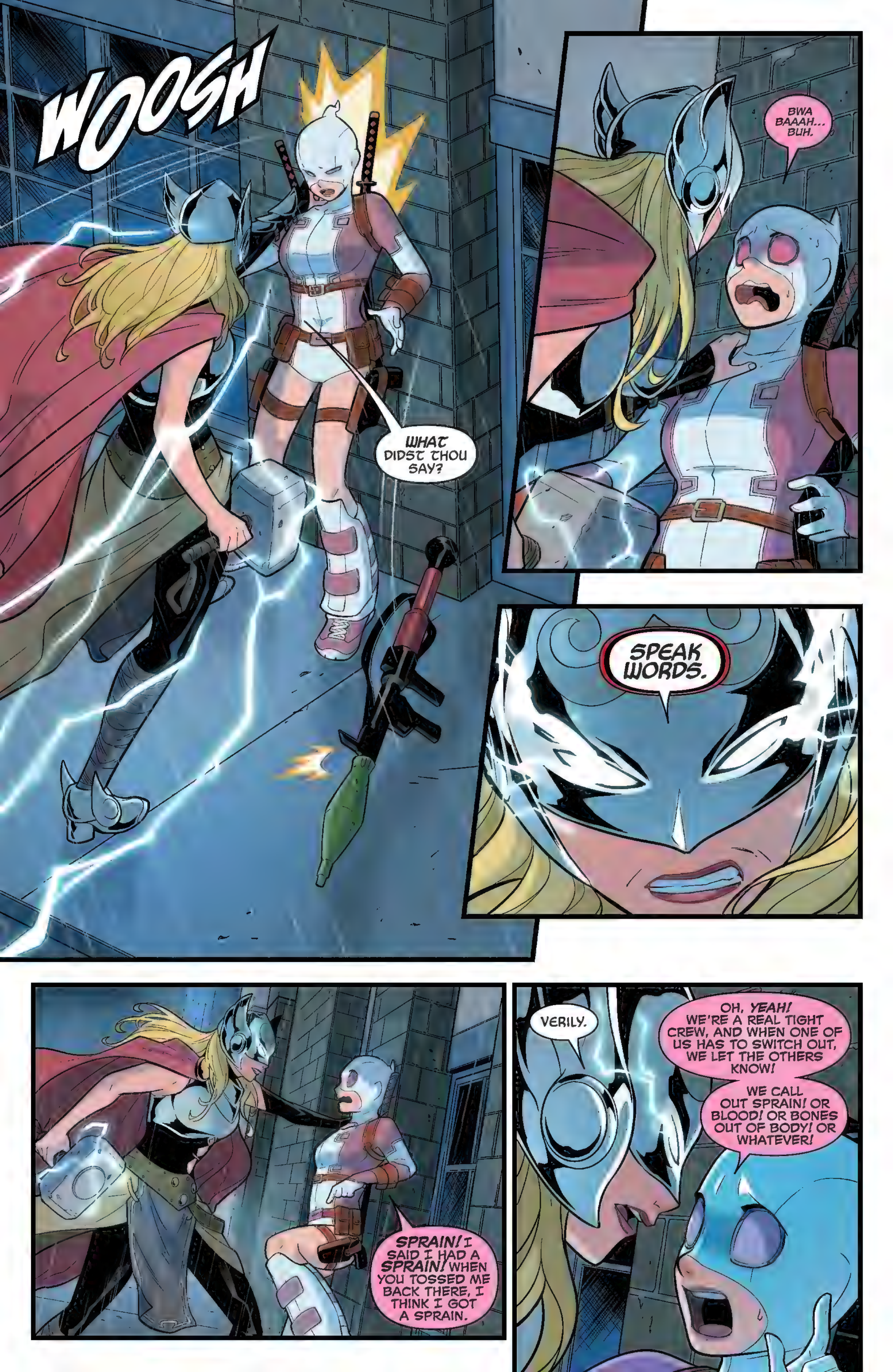

FWSHHH
UH, HOW LONG BEFORE IT KICKS IN? BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE THE DUDE'S SUMMONED UP SOME ACID RAIN.
OR, JUST REGULAR RAIN?
HE DIDN'T SUMMON THE RAIN...
BRROOO

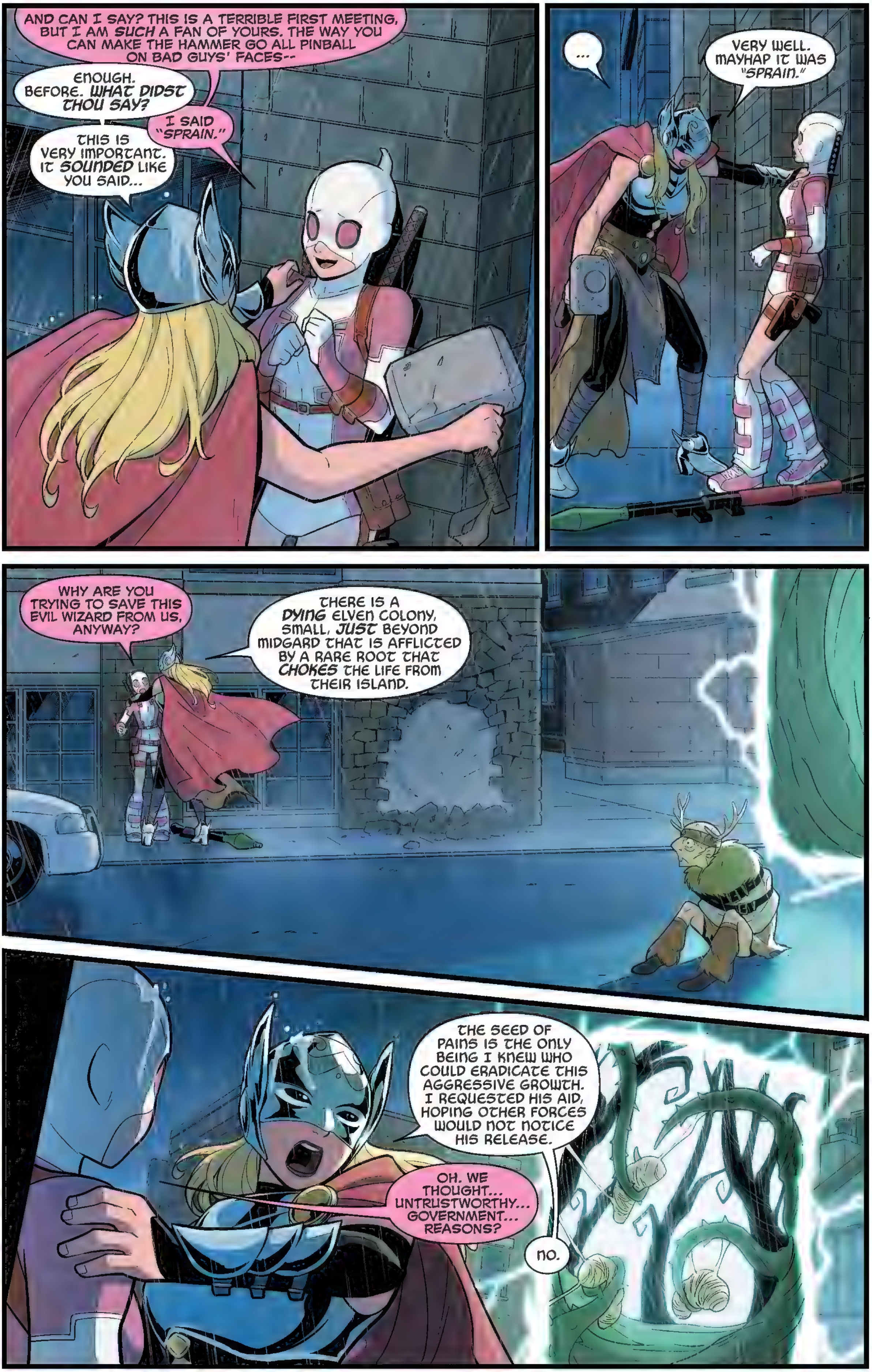

THOR! OH, WOW.
GIRL, HOW DO YOU GET THAT HAIR?!
WHAT DO WE DO?!
RUN!
IT'S A DRY SHAMPOO, ISN'T IT?
RUN FROM THOR, YOU DUMB CHILDREN!
IT IS A WONDER I TRY TO DO *ANYTHING* QUIETLY IN THIS CITY.
BAAAH!
SHHRIIIIP
YOUR HELP IS REQUIRED, SEED OF PAINS.
I KNOW NOT THY INTENTION WITH MY QUARRY, BUT I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF THOU WOULDST FORGET THOR'S INVOLVEMENT.
BIBBIDI BOBBIDI ☠!
BWAP
AGAIN, WHY MUST I EVEN *TRY* THE QUIET WAY?

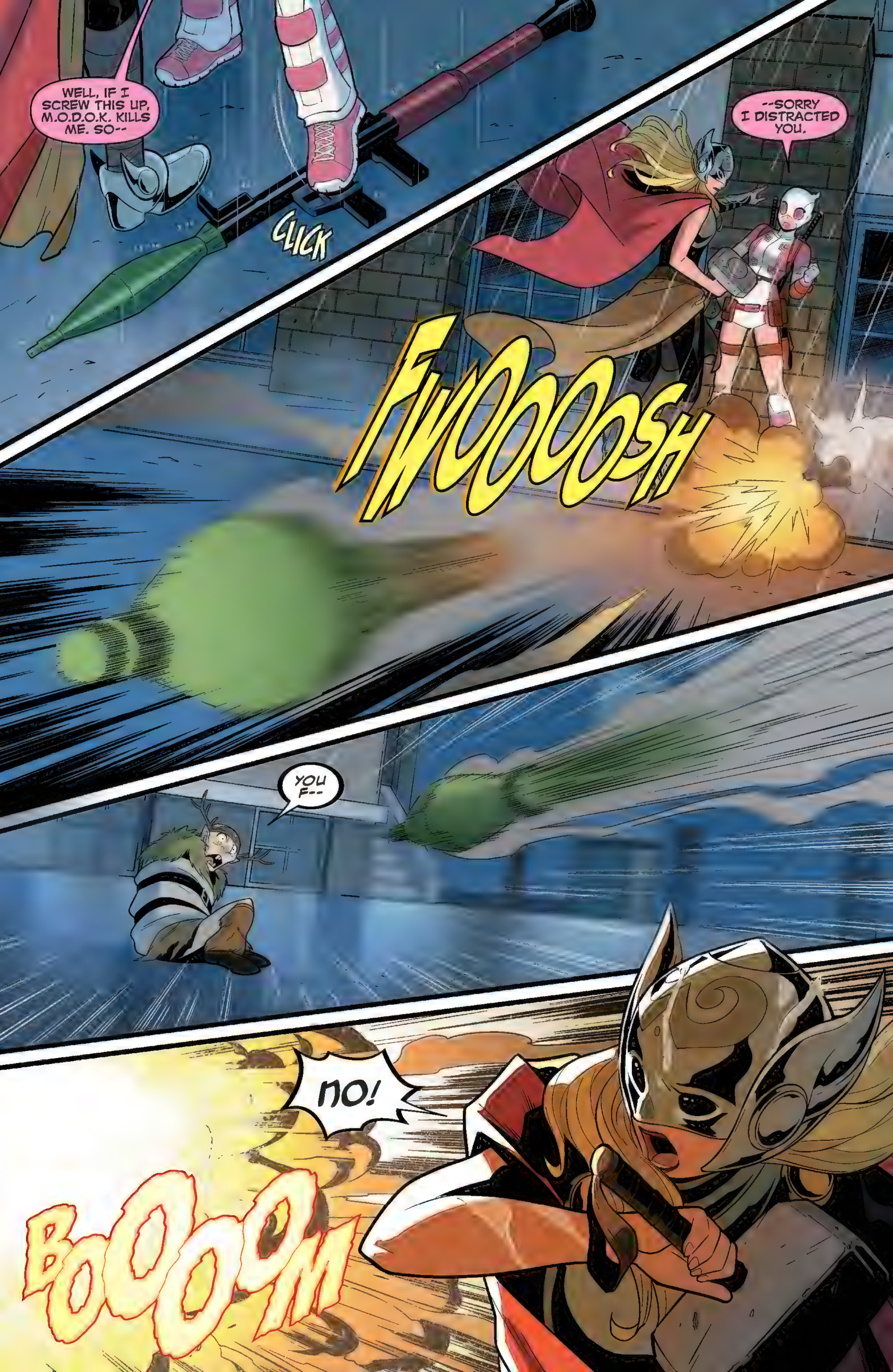

PNK
WHO'S NEXT? I FEEL GENEROUS WITH CONCUSSIONS ON THIS DAY.
I HAVE TO FIGHT THOR. I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SHOOTING AT THOR.
DOES A GUN EVEN WORK ON THOR?
BLAM
BLAM
FWAP
POOLE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! SHOOT TO KILL.
OH! AN ODD MISS. ARE YOU CHANGED BY SOME TRICKERY, ASGARDIAN?
SWOOOOOOOO
AH!
FWOCK
AH. NON. THAT DECIDES IT. THE REAL THOR WOULD NEVER ALLOW SUCH A STRIKE.
FINISH HER, POOLE!

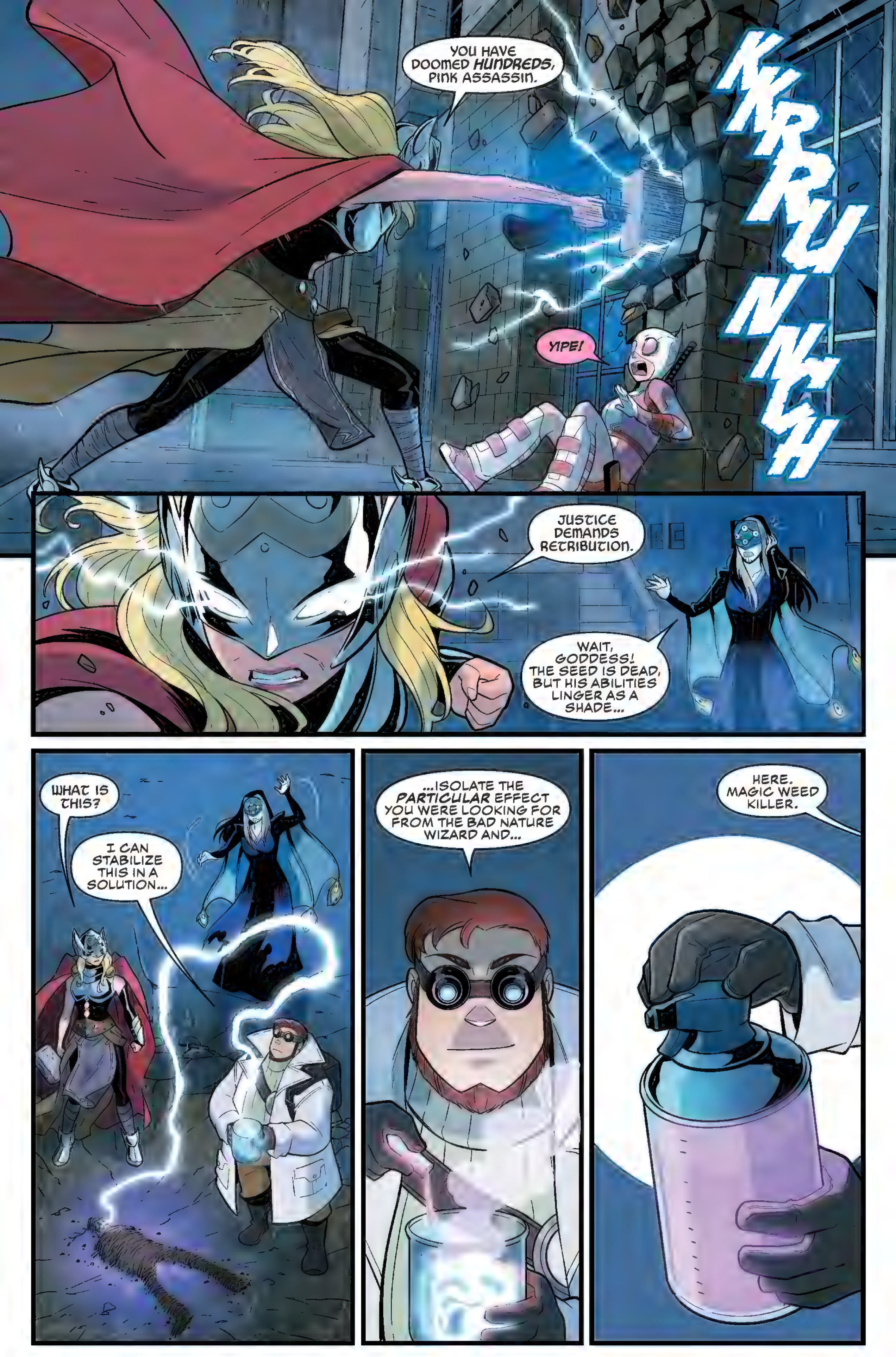

EEEYAAA!
CRACK
AAAAAAAA!
AWAY, PINK FLY.
FAP
THE **REAL** THOR JUST DID TO THEE WHAT **EVERYONE** DOES, **LEAPER.**
EMBARRASS THEE.
WHCRNCH
OKAY, I CAN MAKE A COMPOUND FOR THIS. A DROP OF **ASGARDIAN DE-MYSTIFIER** ADDED TO...OR IS IT...OH, NO--
DRIP
OH, NO. OH, NO.
FWONG
WHAT'S HER NAME?
SHE'S, *UH,* PLAYED BY NATALIE PORTMAN, *UH...*

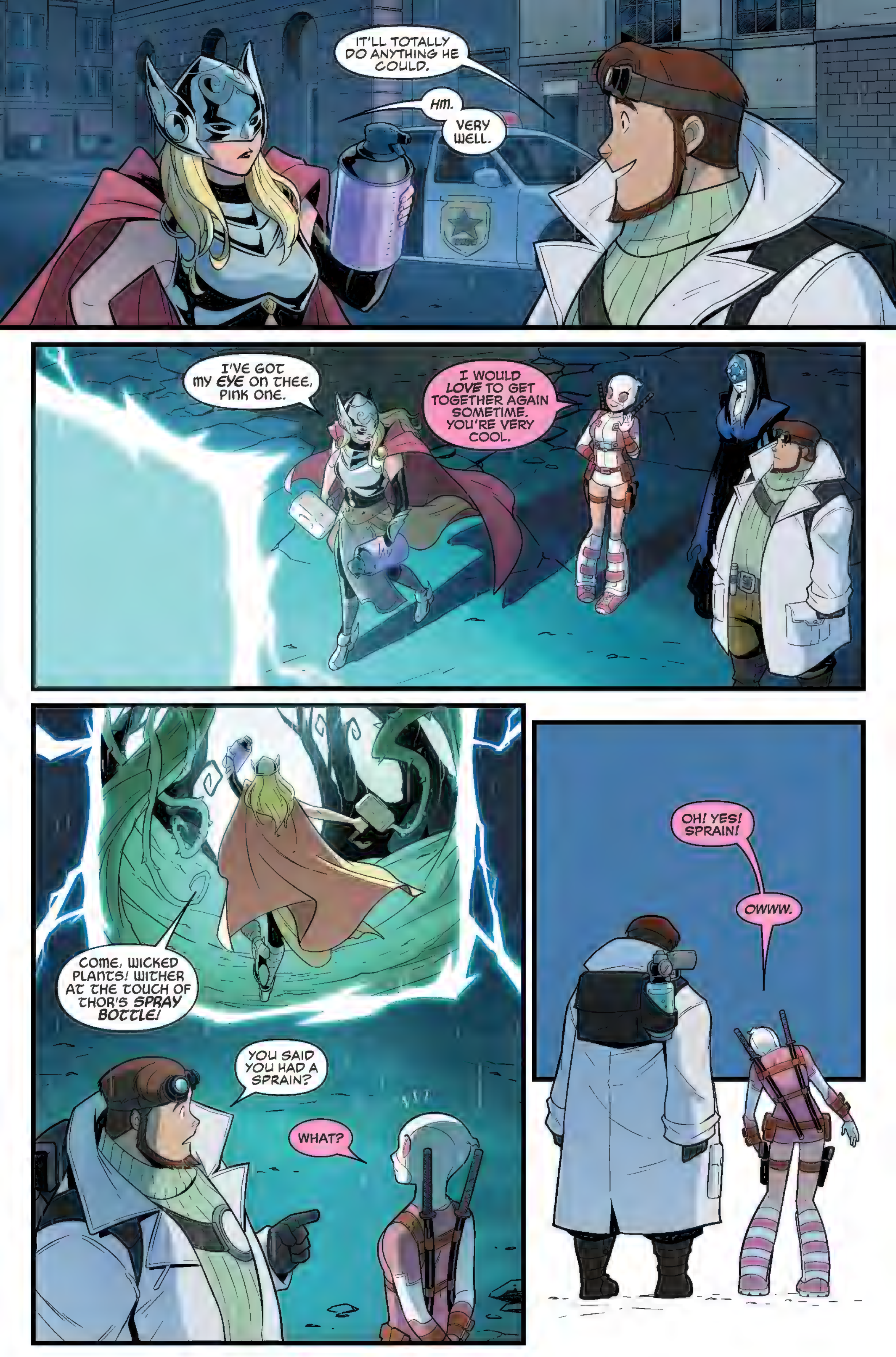

JANE!

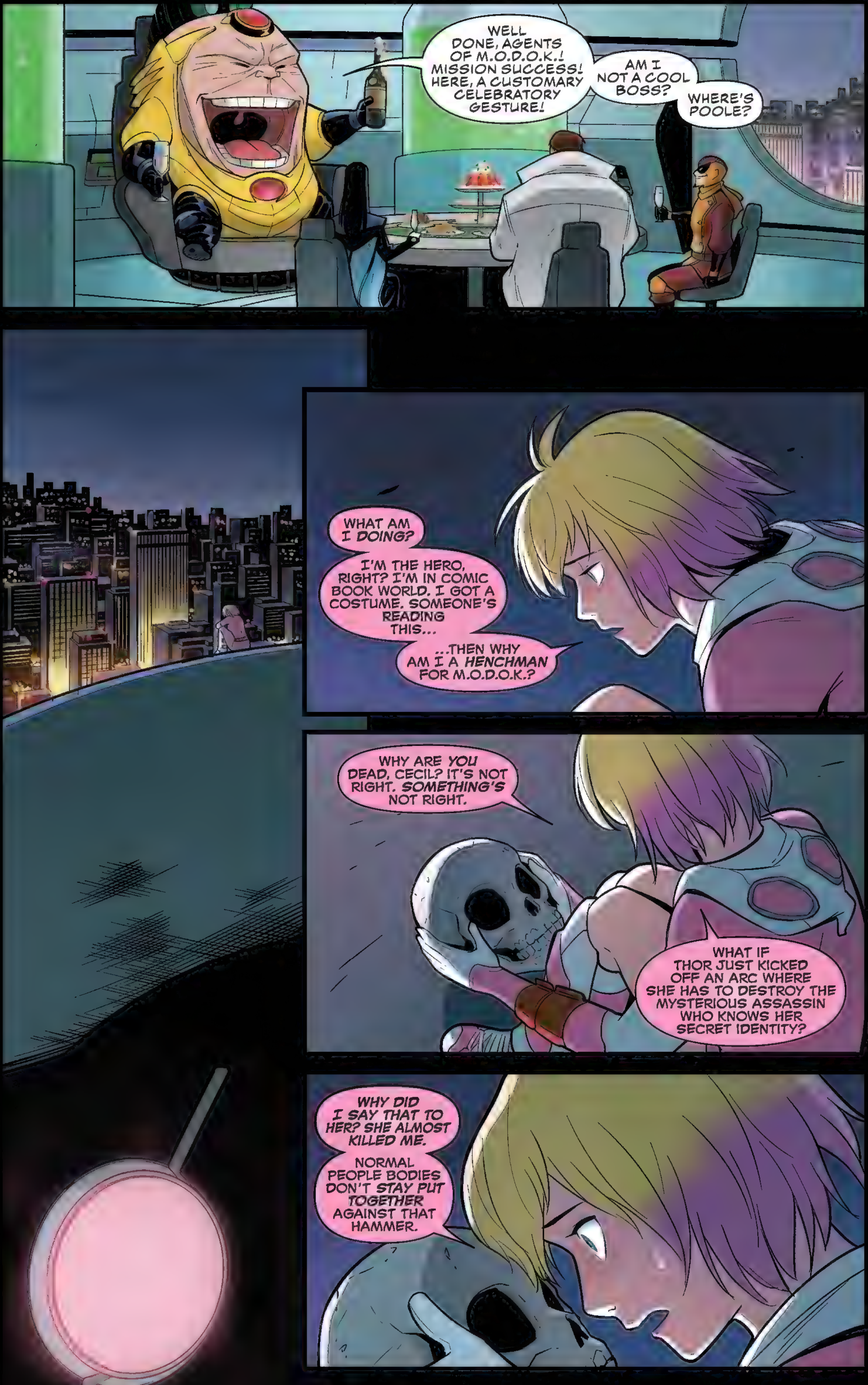

WOOSH
WHAT DIDST THOU SAY?
BWA BAAAH... BUH.
SPEAK WORDS.
SPRAIN! I SAID I HAD A SPRAIN! WHEN YOU TOSSED ME BACK THERE, I THINK I GOT A SPRAIN.
VERILY.
OH, YEAH! WE'RE A REAL TIGHT CREW, AND WHEN ONE OF US HAS TO SWITCH OUT, WE LET THE OTHERS KNOW!
WE CALL OUT SPRAIN! OR BLOOD! OR BONES OUT OF BODY! OR WHATEVER!

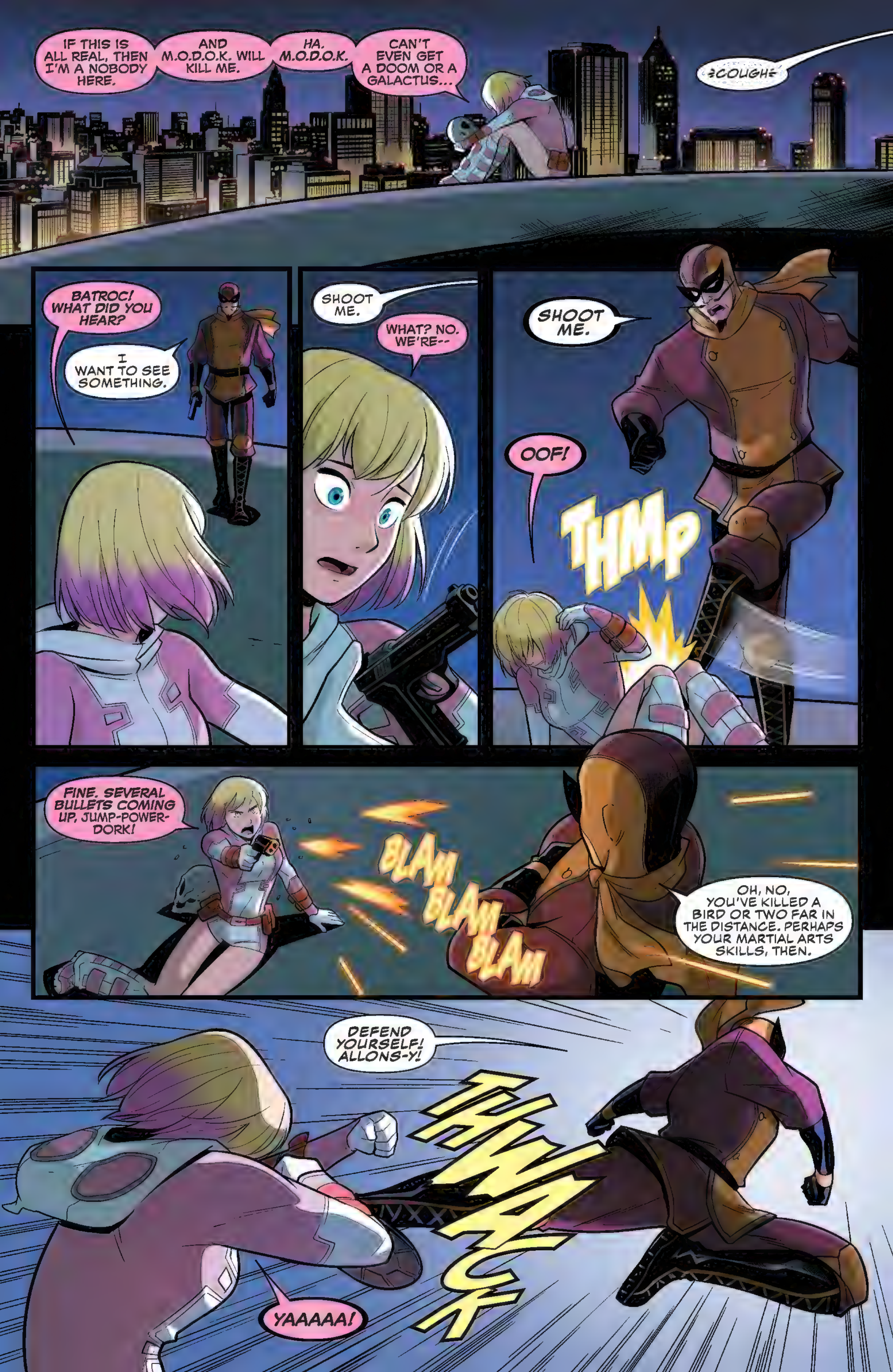

AND CAN I SAY? THIS IS A TERRIBLE FIRST MEETING, BUT I AM *SUCH* A FAN OF YOURS. THE WAY YOU CAN MAKE THE HAMMER GO ALL PINBALL ON BAD GUYS' FACES--
ENOUGH. BEFORE. *WHAT DIDST THOU SAY?*
THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. IT *SOUNDED* LIKE YOU SAID...
I SAID "SPRAIN."
...
VERY WELL. MAYHAP IT WAS "*SPRAIN.*"
WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO SAVE THIS EVIL WIZARD FROM US, ANYWAY?
THERE IS A *DYING* ELVEN COLONY, SMALL, *JUST* BEYOND MIDGARD THAT IS AFFLICTED BY A RARE ROOT THAT *CHOKES* THE LIFE FROM THEIR ISLAND.
THE SEED OF PAINS IS THE ONLY BEING I KNEW WHO COULD ERADICATE THIS AGGRESSIVE GROWTH. I REQUESTED HIS AID, HOPING OTHER FORCES WOULD NOT NOTICE HIS RELEASE.
OH. WE THOUGHT... UNTRUSTWORTHY... GOVERNMENT... REASONS?
NO.

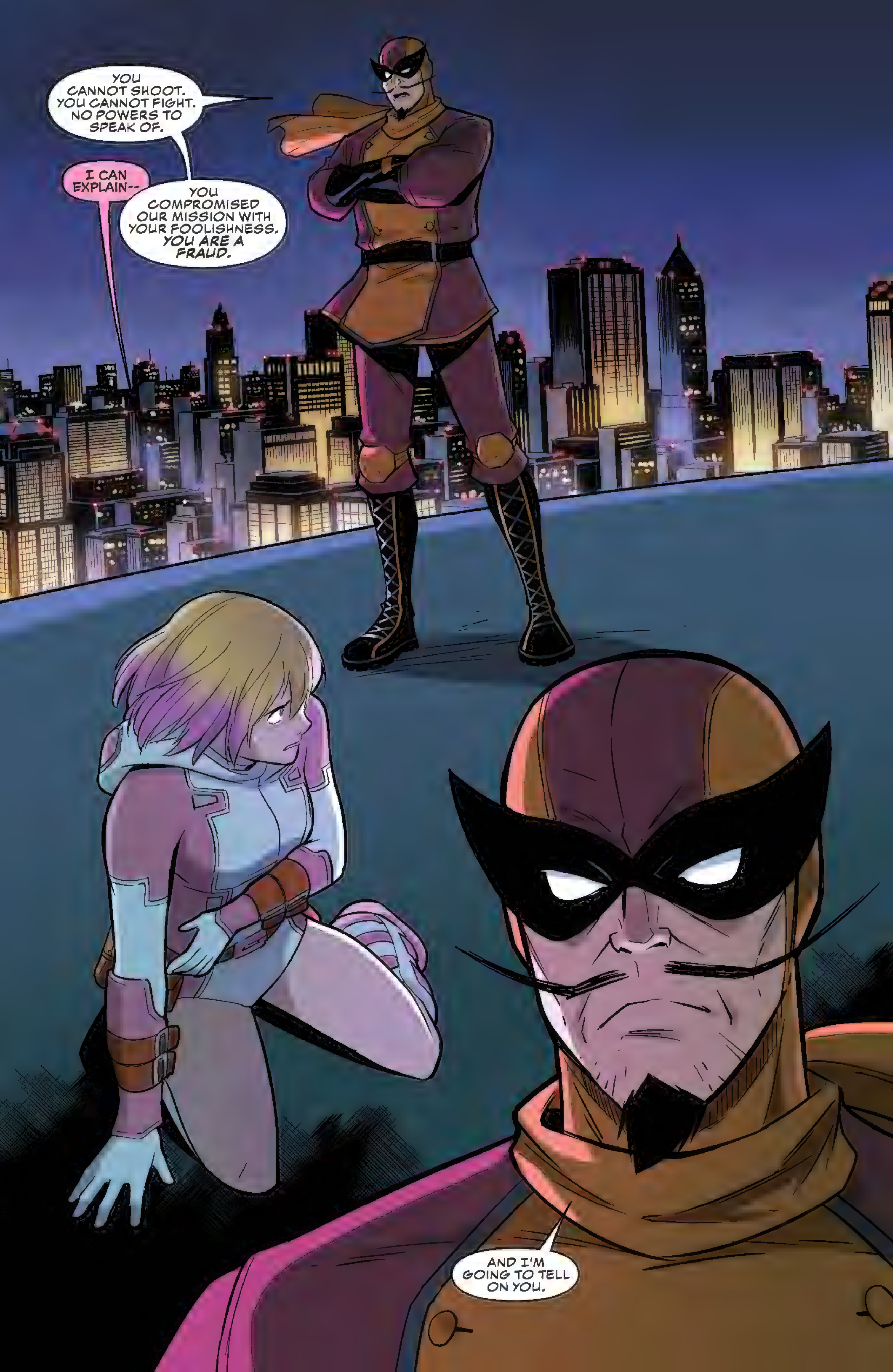

WELL, IF I SCREW THIS UP, M.O.D.O.K. KILLS ME. SO--
CLICK
--SORRY I DISTRACTED YOU.
FWOOOOSH
YOU F--
NO!
BOOOOM

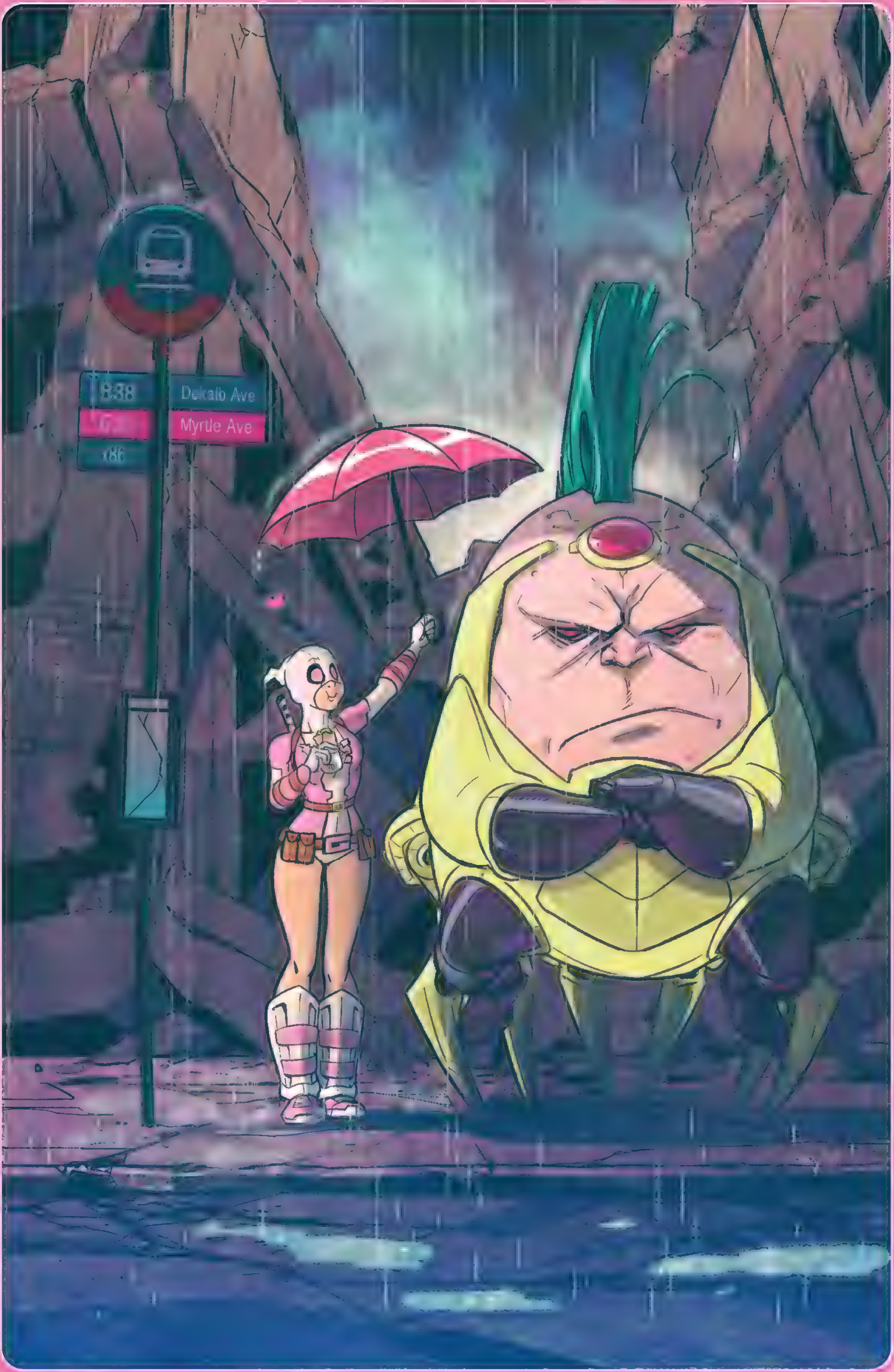

YOU HAVE DOOMED *HUNDREDS*, PINK ASSASSIN.
KKRUNNCH
YIPE!
JUSTICE DEMANDS RETRIBUTION.
WAIT, GODDESS! THE SEED IS DEAD, BUT HIS ABILITIES LINGER AS A SHADE...
WHAT IS THIS?
I CAN STABILIZE THIS IN A SOLUTION...
...ISOLATE THE *PARTICULAR* EFFECT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR FROM THE BAD NATURE WIZARD AND...
HERE. MAGIC WEED KILLER.


IT'LL TOTALLY DO ANYTHING HE COULD.
HM.
VERY WELL.
I'VE GOT MY *EYE* ON THEE, PINK ONE.
I WOULD *LOVE* TO GET TOGETHER AGAIN SOMETIME. YOU'RE VERY COOL.
COME, WICKED PLANTS! WITHER AT THE TOUCH OF THOR'S *SPRAY BOTTLE!*
YOU SAID YOU HAD A SPRAIN?
WHAT?
OH! YES! SPRAIN!
OWWW.

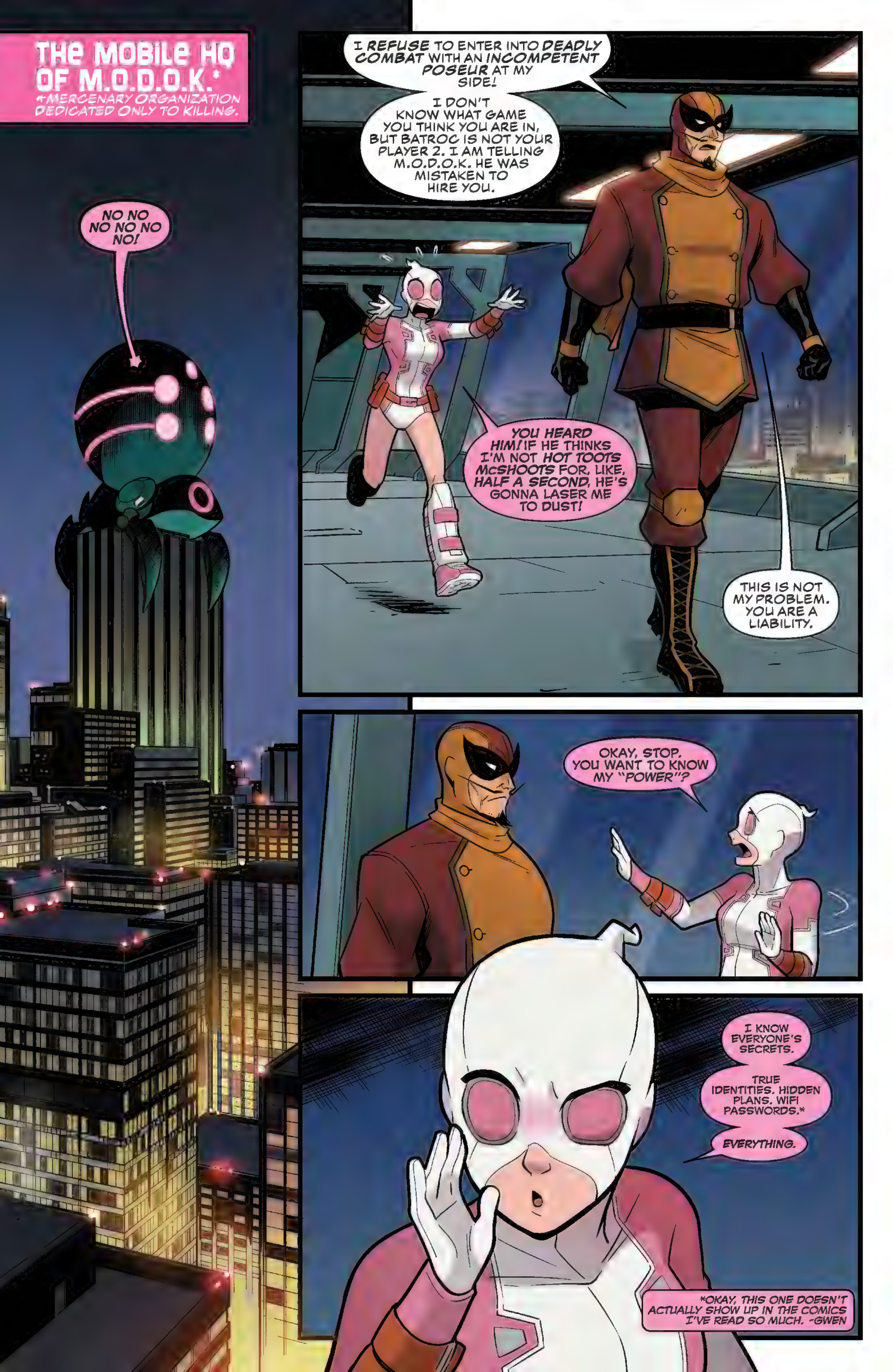

WELL DONE, AGENTS OF M.O.D.O.K.! MISSION SUCCESS! HERE, A CUSTOMARY CELEBRATORY GESTURE!
AM I NOT A COOL BOSS?
WHERE'S POOLE?
WHAT AM I *DOING?*
I'M THE HERO, RIGHT? I'M IN COMIC BOOK WORLD. I GOT A COSTUME. SOMEONE'S READING THIS...
...THEN WHY AM I A *HENCHMAN* FOR M.O.D.O.K.?
WHY ARE *YOU* DEAD, CECIL? IT'S NOT RIGHT. *SOMETHING'S* NOT RIGHT.
WHAT IF THOR JUST KICKED OFF AN ARC WHERE SHE HAS TO DESTROY THE MYSTERIOUS ASSASSIN WHO KNOWS HER SECRET IDENTITY?
WHY DID I SAY THAT TO HER? SHE ALMOST KILLED ME.
NORMAL PEOPLE BODIES DON'T *STAY PUT TOGETHER* AGAINST THAT HAMMER.

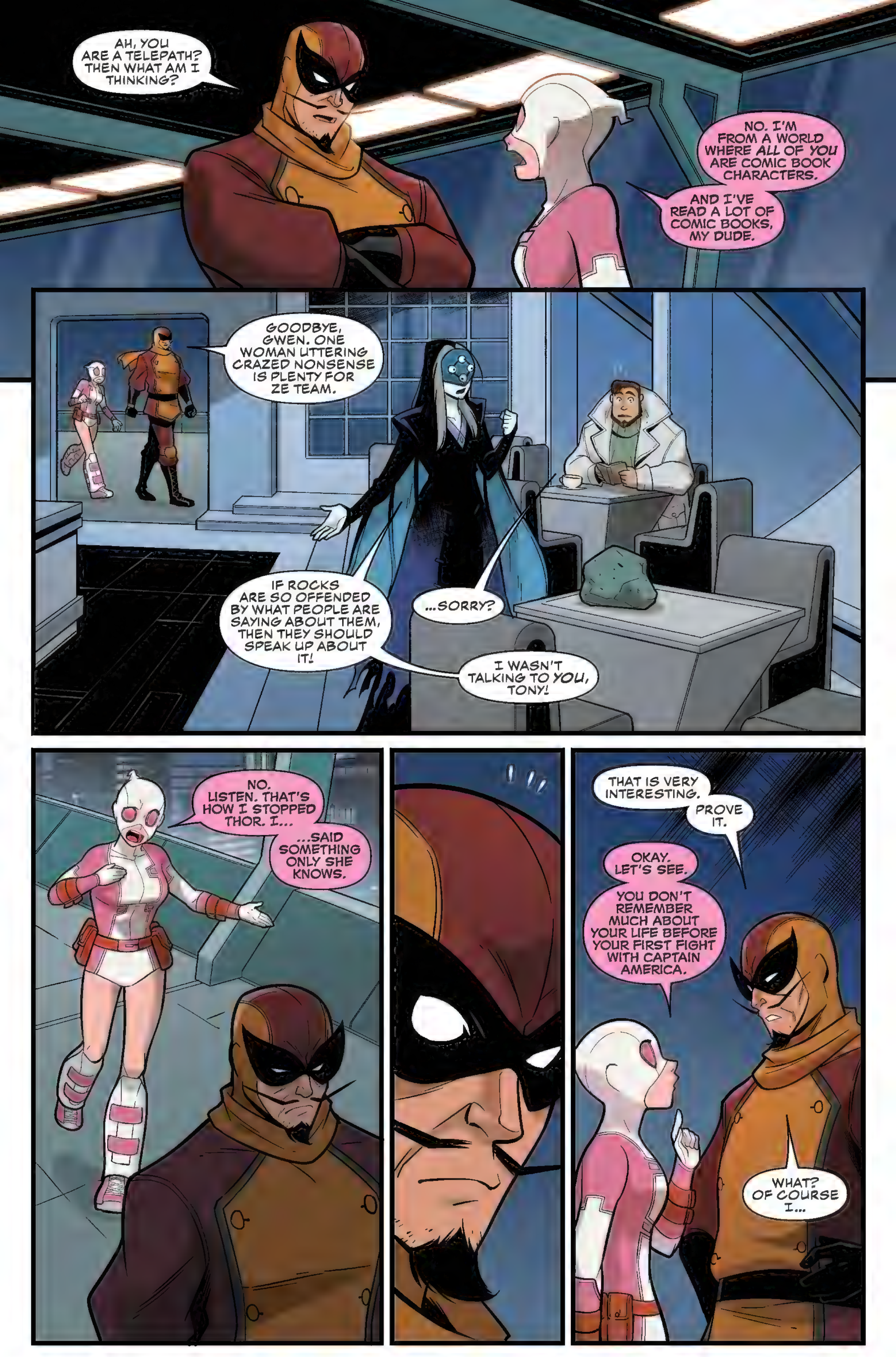

IF THIS IS ALL REAL, THEN I'M A NOBODY HERE.
AND M.O.D.O.K. WILL KILL ME.
HA. M.O.D.O.K.
CAN'T EVEN GET A DOOM OR A GALACTUS...
COUGH
BATROC! WHAT DID YOU HEAR?
I WANT TO SEE SOMETHING.
SHOOT ME.
WHAT? NO. WE'RE--
SHOOT ME.
OOF!
THMP
FINE. SEVERAL BULLETS COMING UP, JUMP-POWER-DORK!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
OH, NO, YOU'VE KILLED A BIRD OR TWO FAR IN THE DISTANCE. PERHAPS YOUR MARTIAL ARTS SKILLS, THEN.
DEFEND YOURSELF! ALLONS-Y!
THWACK
YAAAAA!

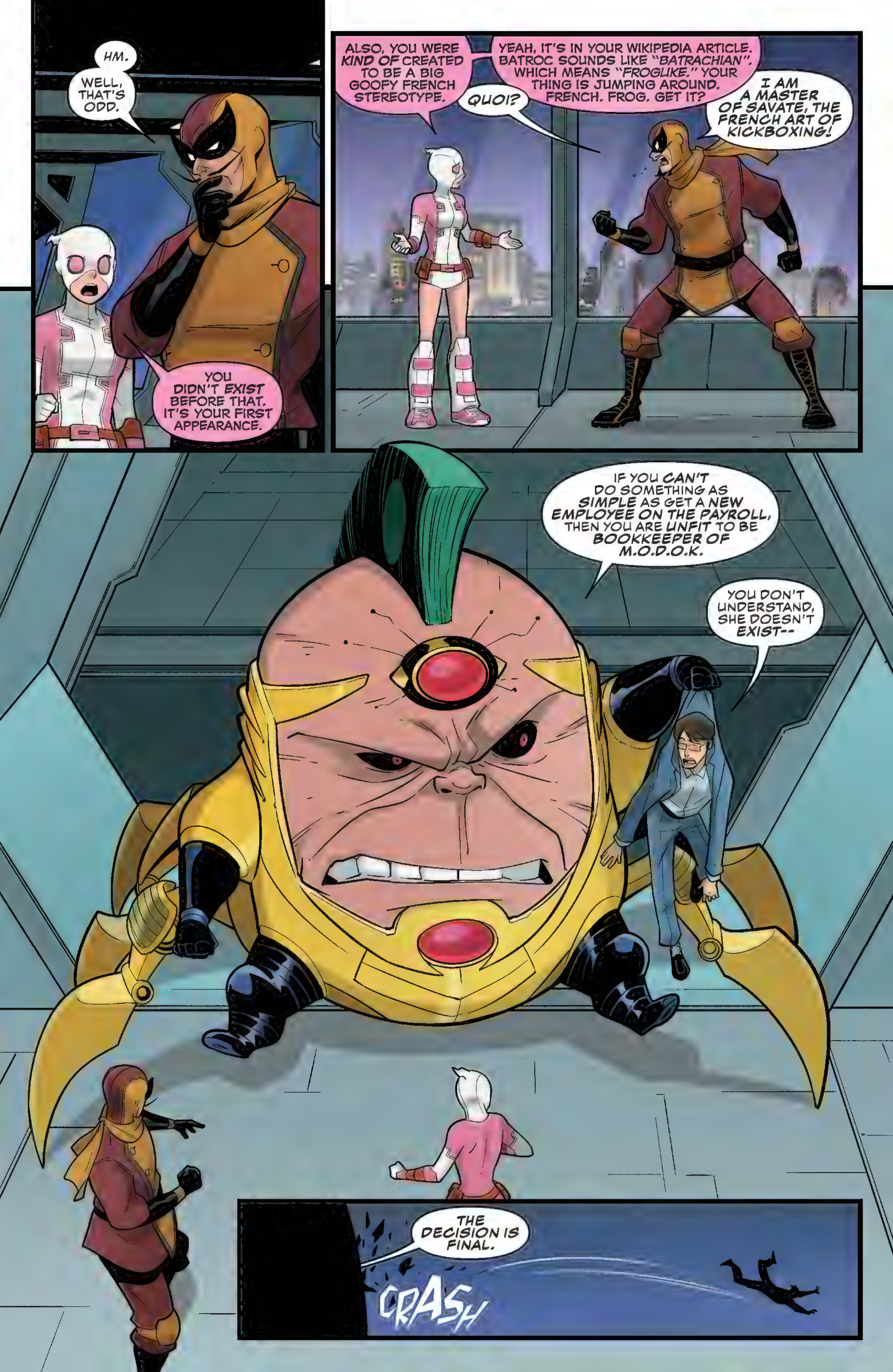

YOU CANNOT SHOOT. YOU CANNOT FIGHT. NO POWERS TO SPEAK OF.
I CAN EXPLAIN--
YOU COMPROMISED OUR MISSION WITH YOUR FOOLISHNESS. *YOU ARE A FRAUD.*
AND I'M GOING TO TELL ON YOU.

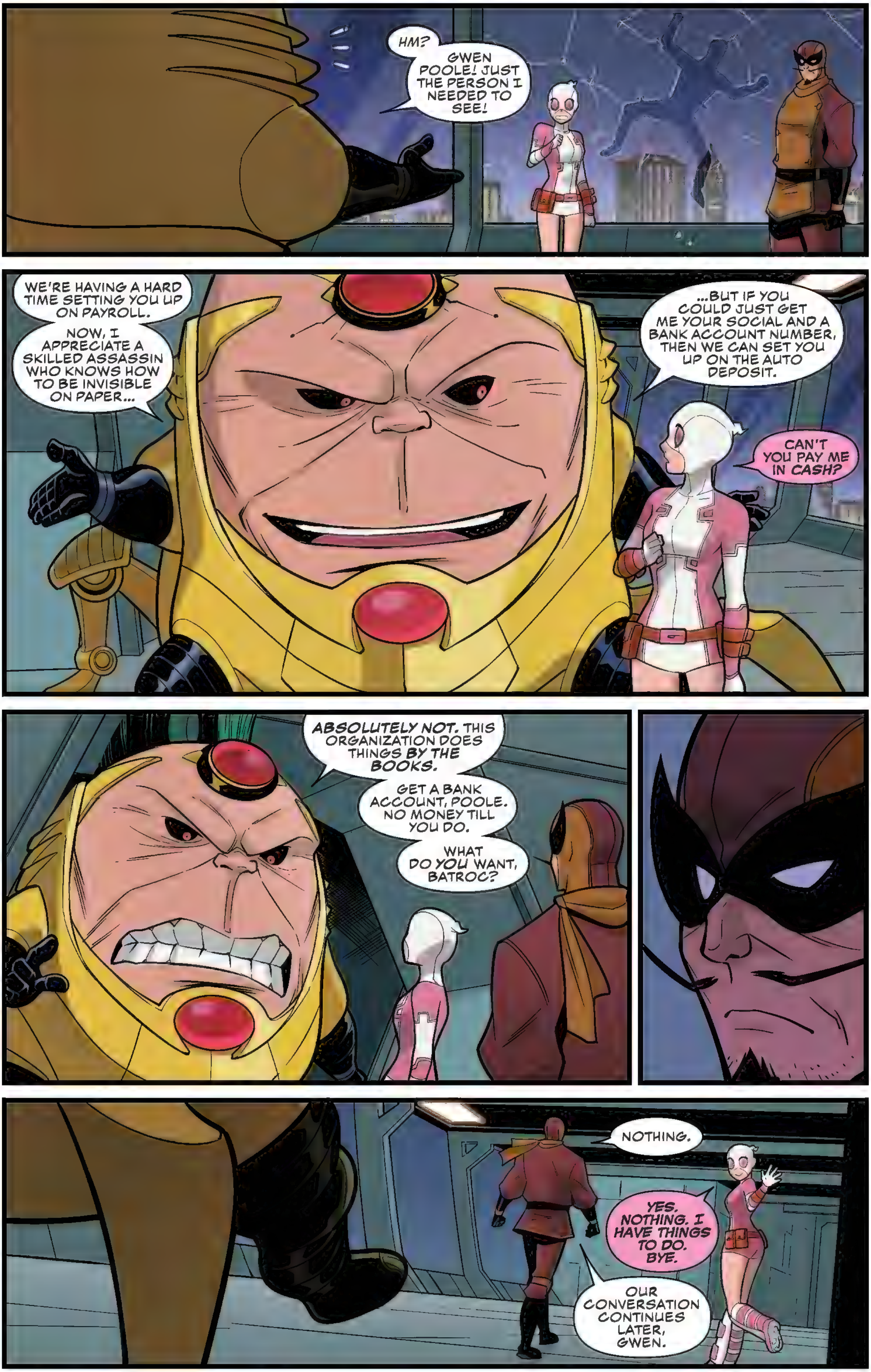

B38
Dekalb Ave
Myrtle Ave

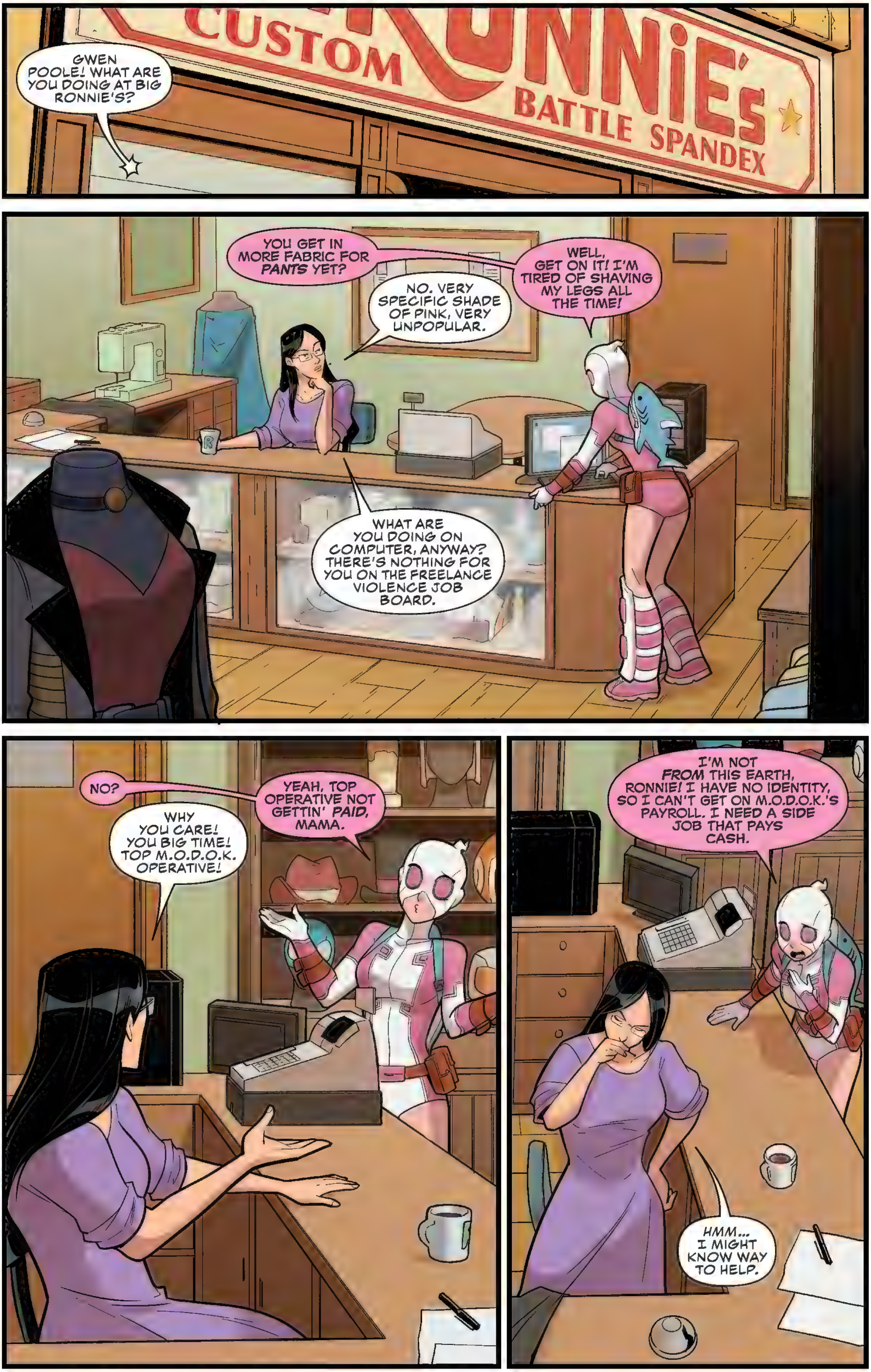
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #3

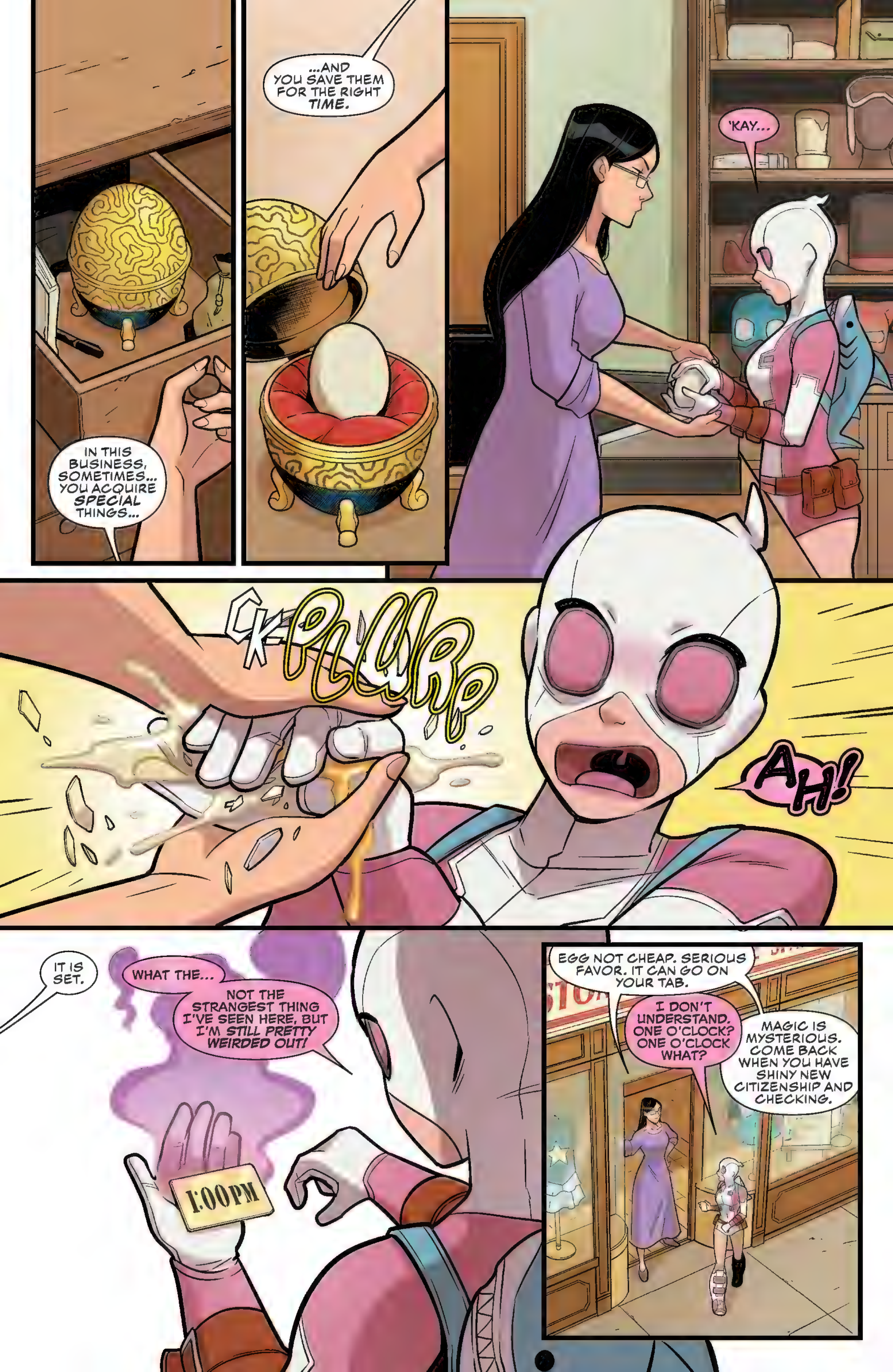

THE MOBILE HQ OF M.O.D.O.K.*
*MERCENARY ORGANIZATION DEDICATED ONLY TO KILLING.
NO NO NO NO NO NO!
I REFUSE TO ENTER INTO DEADLY COMBAT WITH AN INCOMPETENT POSEUR AT MY SIDE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT GAME YOU THINK YOU ARE IN, BUT BATROC IS NOT YOUR PLAYER 2. I AM TELLING M.O.D.O.K. HE WAS MISTAKEN TO HIRE YOU.
YOU HEARD HIM! IF HE THINKS I'M NOT HOT TOOTS McSHOOTS FOR, LIKE, HALF A SECOND, HE'S GONNA LASER ME TO DUST!
THIS IS NOT MY PROBLEM. YOU ARE A LIABILITY.
OKAY, STOP. YOU WANT TO KNOW MY "POWER"?
I KNOW EVERYONE'S SECRETS.
TRUE IDENTITIES. HIDDEN PLANS. WIFI PASSWORDS.*
EVERYTHING.
*OKAY, THIS ONE DOESN'T ACTUALLY SHOW UP IN THE COMICS I'VE READ SO MUCH. -GWEN

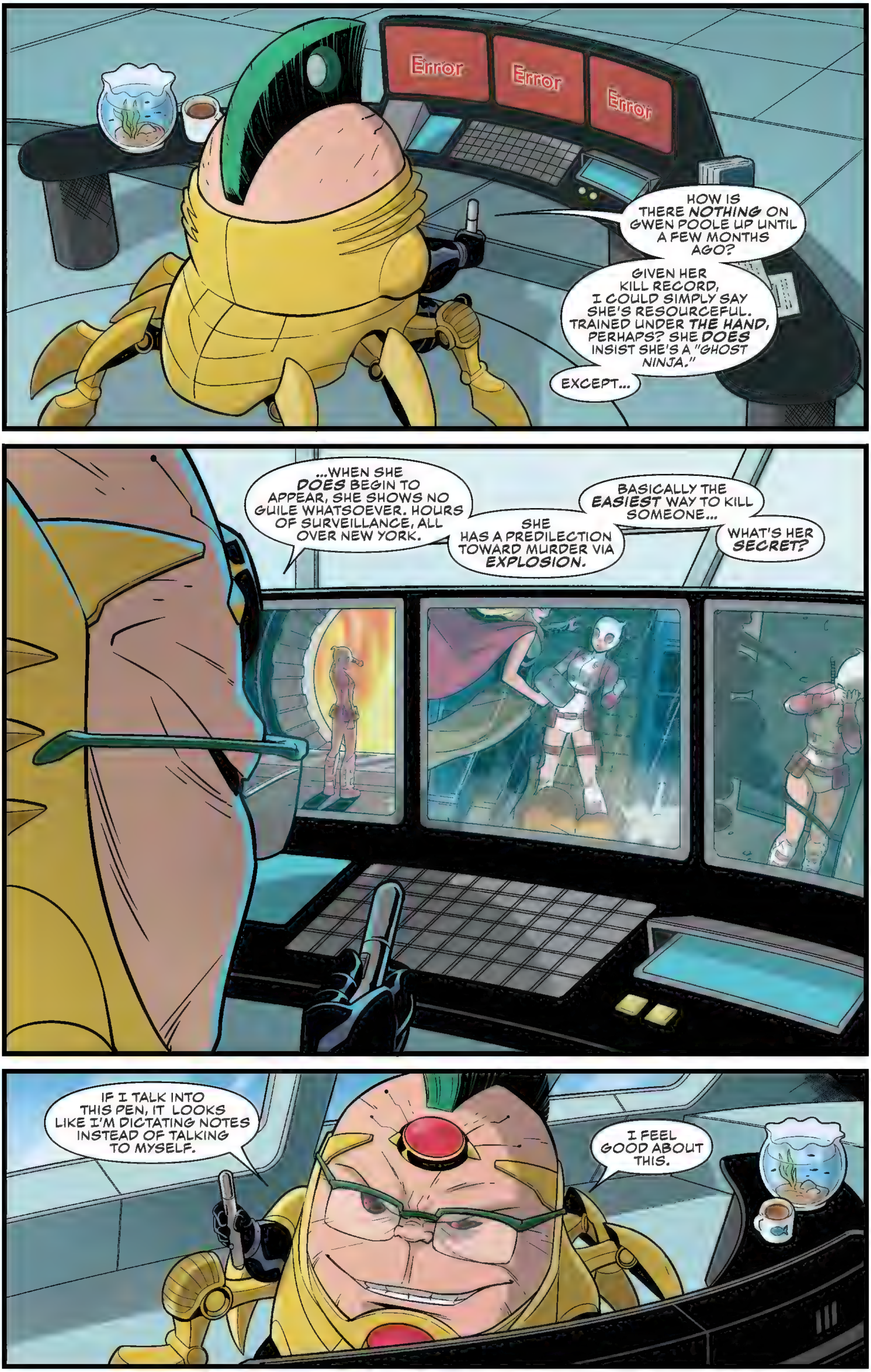

AH, YOU ARE A TELEPATH? THEN WHAT AM I THINKING?
NO. I'M FROM A WORLD WHERE ALL OF YOU ARE COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS.
AND I'VE READ A LOT OF COMIC BOOKS, MY DUDE.
GOODBYE, GWEN. ONE WOMAN UTTERING CRAZED NONSENSE IS PLENTY FOR ZE TEAM.
IF ROCKS ARE SO OFFENDED BY WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THEM, THEN THEY SHOULD SPEAK UP ABOUT IT!
...SORRY?
I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU, TONY!
NO. LISTEN. THAT'S HOW I STOPPED THOR. I...
...SAID SOMETHING ONLY SHE KNOWS.
THAT IS VERY INTERESTING.
PROVE IT.
OKAY. LET'S SEE.
YOU DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT YOUR LIFE BEFORE YOUR FIRST FIGHT WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA.
WHAT? OF COURSE I...


HM.
WELL, THAT'S ODD.
YOU DIDN'T EXIST BEFORE THAT. IT'S YOUR FIRST APPEARANCE.
ALSO, YOU WERE KIND OF CREATED TO BE A BIG GOOFY FRENCH STEREOTYPE.
YEAH, IT'S IN YOUR WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE. BATROC SOUNDS LIKE "BATRACHIAN", WHICH MEANS "FROGLIKE." YOUR THING IS JUMPING AROUND. FRENCH. FROG. GET IT?
QUOI?
I AM A MASTER OF SAVATE, THE FRENCH ART OF KICKBOXING!
IF YOU CAN'T DO SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS GET A NEW EMPLOYEE ON THE PAYROLL, THEN YOU ARE UNFIT TO BE BOOKKEEPER OF M.O.D.O.K.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, SHE DOESN'T EXIST--
THE DECISION IS FINAL.
CRASH


HM?
GWEN POOLE! JUST THE PERSON I NEEDED TO SEE!
WE'RE HAVING A HARD TIME SETTING YOU UP ON PAYROLL.
NOW, I APPRECIATE A SKILLED ASSASSIN WHO KNOWS HOW TO BE INVISIBLE ON PAPER...
...BUT IF YOU COULD JUST GET ME YOUR SOCIAL AND A BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER, THEN WE CAN SET YOU UP ON THE AUTO DEPOSIT.
CAN'T YOU PAY ME IN CASH?
ABSOLUTELY NOT. THIS ORGANIZATION DOES THINGS BY THE BOOKS.
GET A BANK ACCOUNT, POOLE. NO MONEY TILL YOU DO.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, BATROC?
NOTHING.
YES. NOTHING. I HAVE THINGS TO DO. BYE.
OUR CONVERSATION CONTINUES LATER, GWEN.


RONNIE'S CUSTOM BATTLE SPANDEX
GWEN POOLE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT BIG RONNIE'S?
YOU GET IN MORE FABRIC FOR *PANTS* YET?
NO. VERY SPECIFIC SHADE OF PINK, VERY UNPOPULAR.
WELL, GET ON IT! I'M TIRED OF SHAVING MY LEGS ALL THE TIME!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON COMPUTER, ANYWAY? THERE'S NOTHING FOR YOU ON THE FREELANCE VIOLENCE JOB BOARD.
NO?
WHY YOU CARE! YOU BIG TIME! TOP M.O.D.O.K. OPERATIVE!
YEAH, TOP OPERATIVE NOT GETTIN' *PAID,* MAMA.
I'M NOT *FROM* THIS EARTH, RONNIE! I HAVE NO IDENTITY, SO I CAN'T GET ON M.O.D.O.K.'S PAYROLL. I NEED A SIDE JOB THAT PAYS CASH.
HMM... I MIGHT KNOW WAY TO HELP.


IN THIS BUSINESS, SOMETIMES... YOU ACQUIRE *SPECIAL* THINGS...
...AND YOU SAVE THEM FOR THE RIGHT *TIME.*
'KAY...
CK-PLURP
AH!
IT IS SET.
WHAT THE...
NOT THE STRANGEST THING I'VE SEEN HERE, BUT I'M *STILL* PRETTY *WEIRDED OUT!*
1:00PM
EGG NOT CHEAP. SERIOUS FAVOR. IT CAN GO ON YOUR TAB.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. ONE O'CLOCK? ONE O'CLOCK WHAT?
MAGIC IS MYSTERIOUS. COME BACK WHEN YOU HAVE SHINY NEW CITIZENSHIP AND CHECKING.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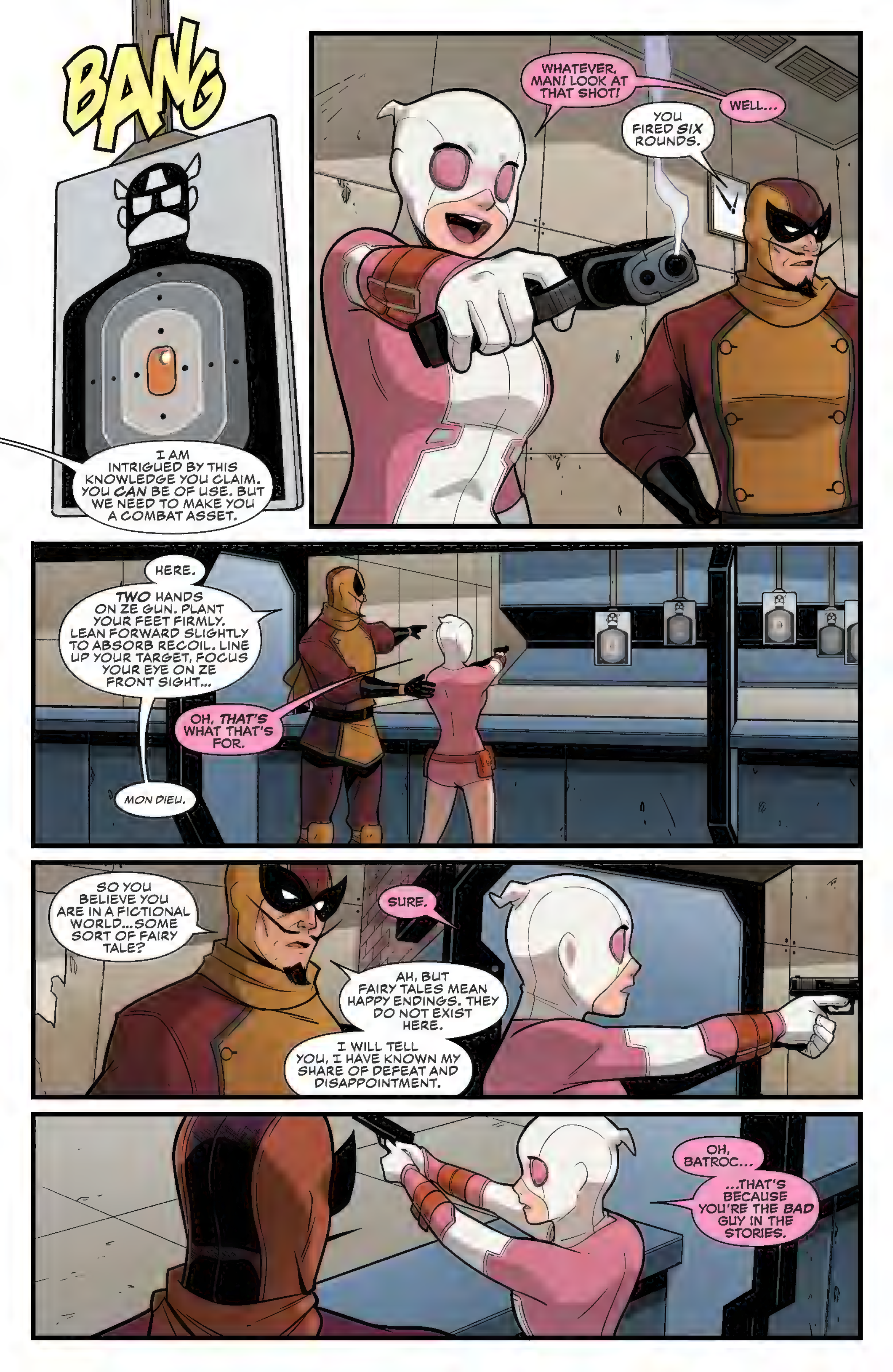
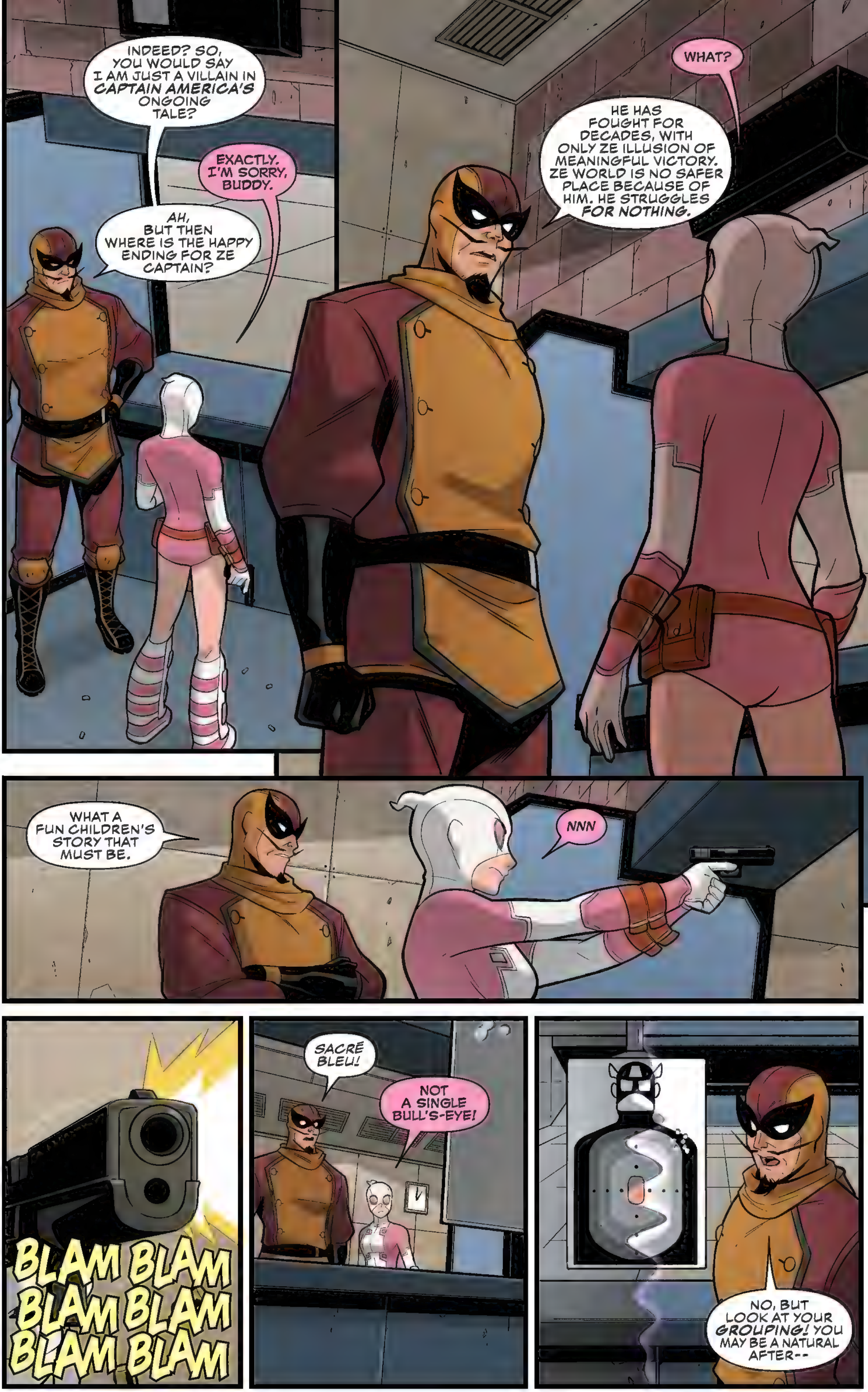
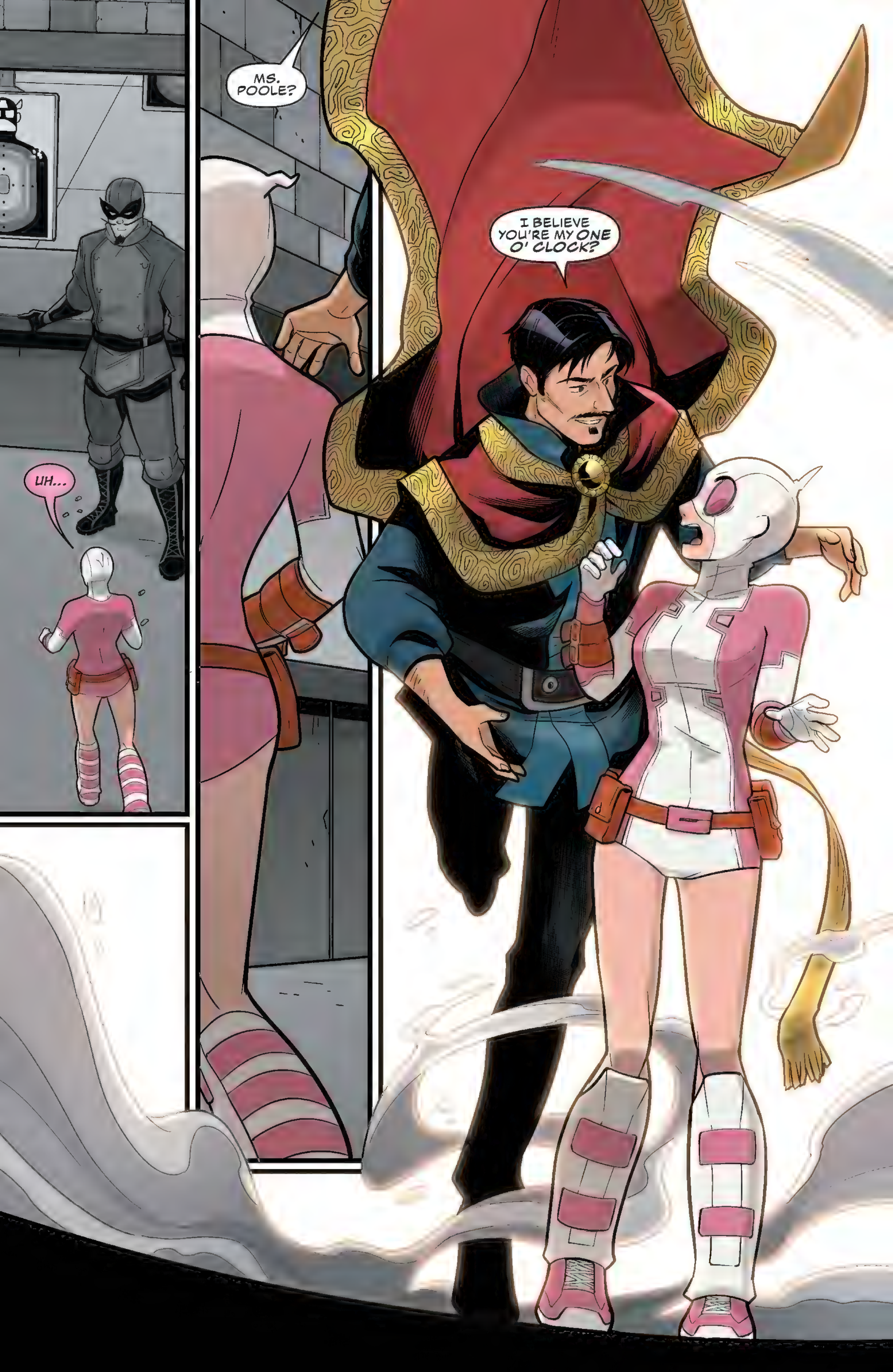
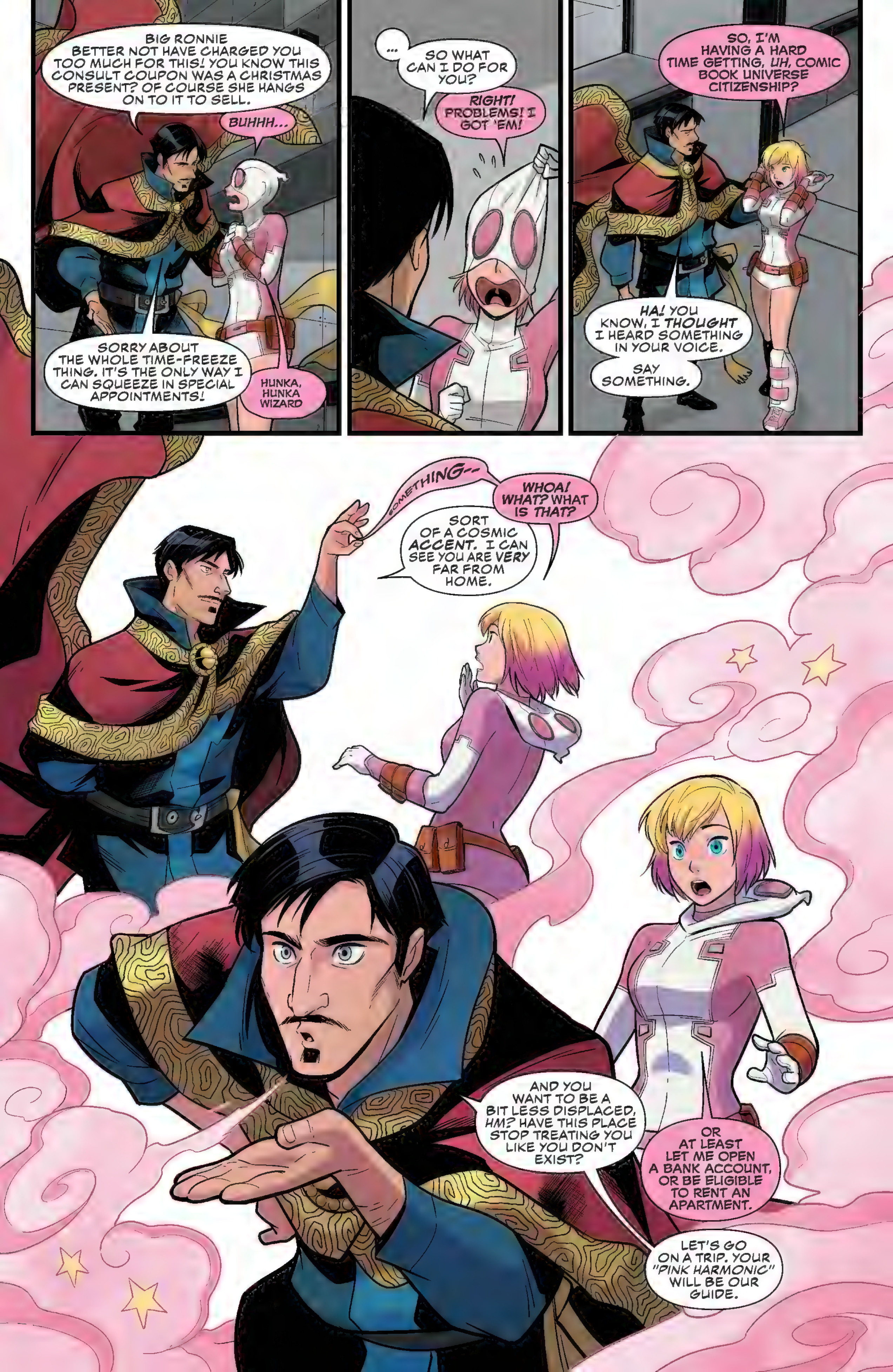
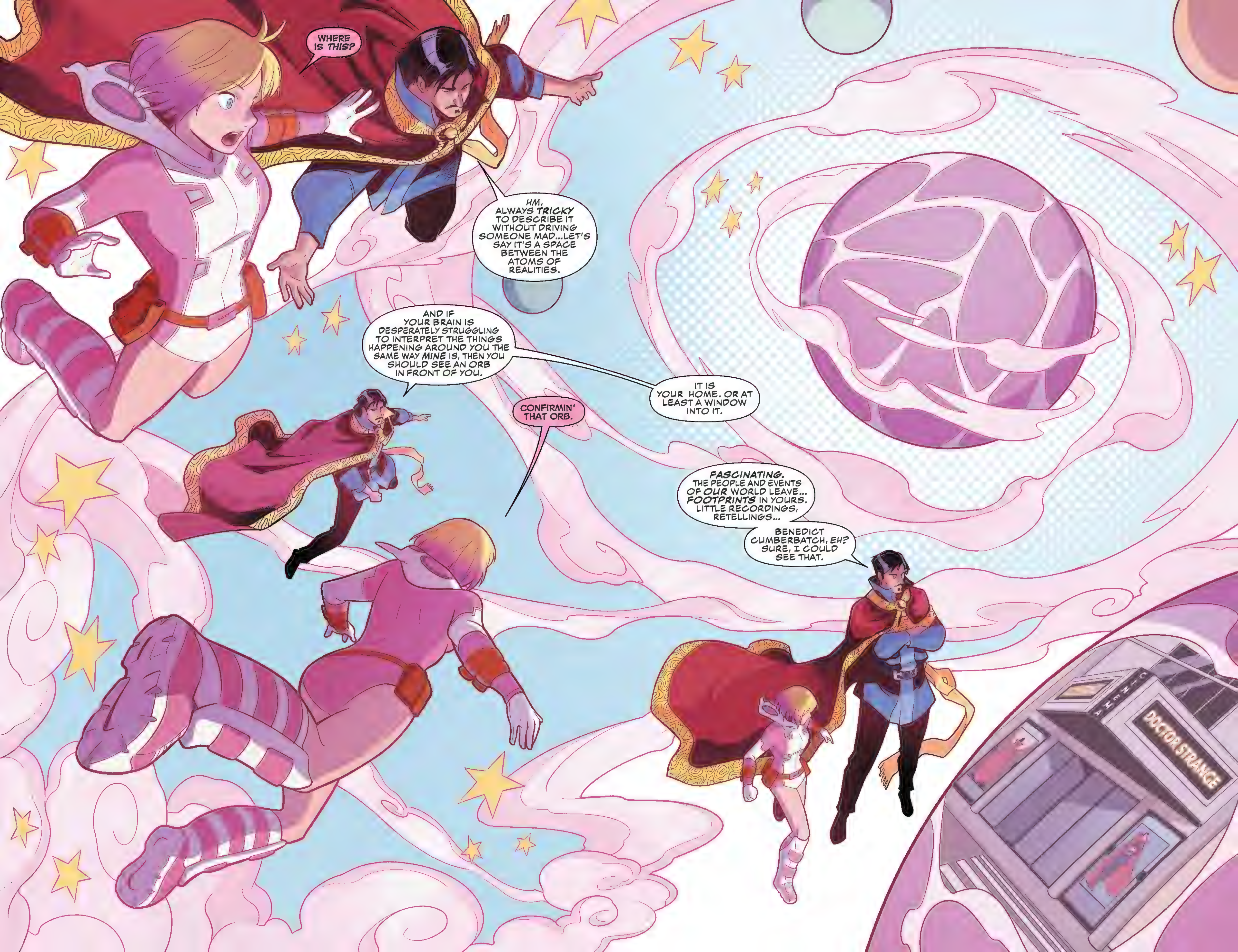
HOW IS THERE *NOTHING* ON GWEN POOLE UP UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AGO?
GIVEN HER KILL RECORD, I COULD SIMPLY SAY SHE'S RESOURCEFUL. TRAINED UNDER *THE HAND*, PERHAPS? SHE *DOES* INSIST SHE'S A "GHOST NINJA."
EXCEPT...
...WHEN SHE *DOES* BEGIN TO APPEAR, SHE SHOWS NO GUILE WHATSOEVER. HOURS OF SURVEILLANCE, ALL OVER NEW YORK.
SHE HAS A PREDILECTION TOWARD MURDER VIA *EXPLOSION*.
BASICALLY THE *EASIEST* WAY TO KILL SOMEONE...
WHAT'S HER *SECRET?*
IF I TALK INTO THIS PEN, IT LOOKS LIKE I'M DICTATING NOTES INSTEAD OF TALKING TO MYSELF.
I FEEL GOOD ABOUT THIS.

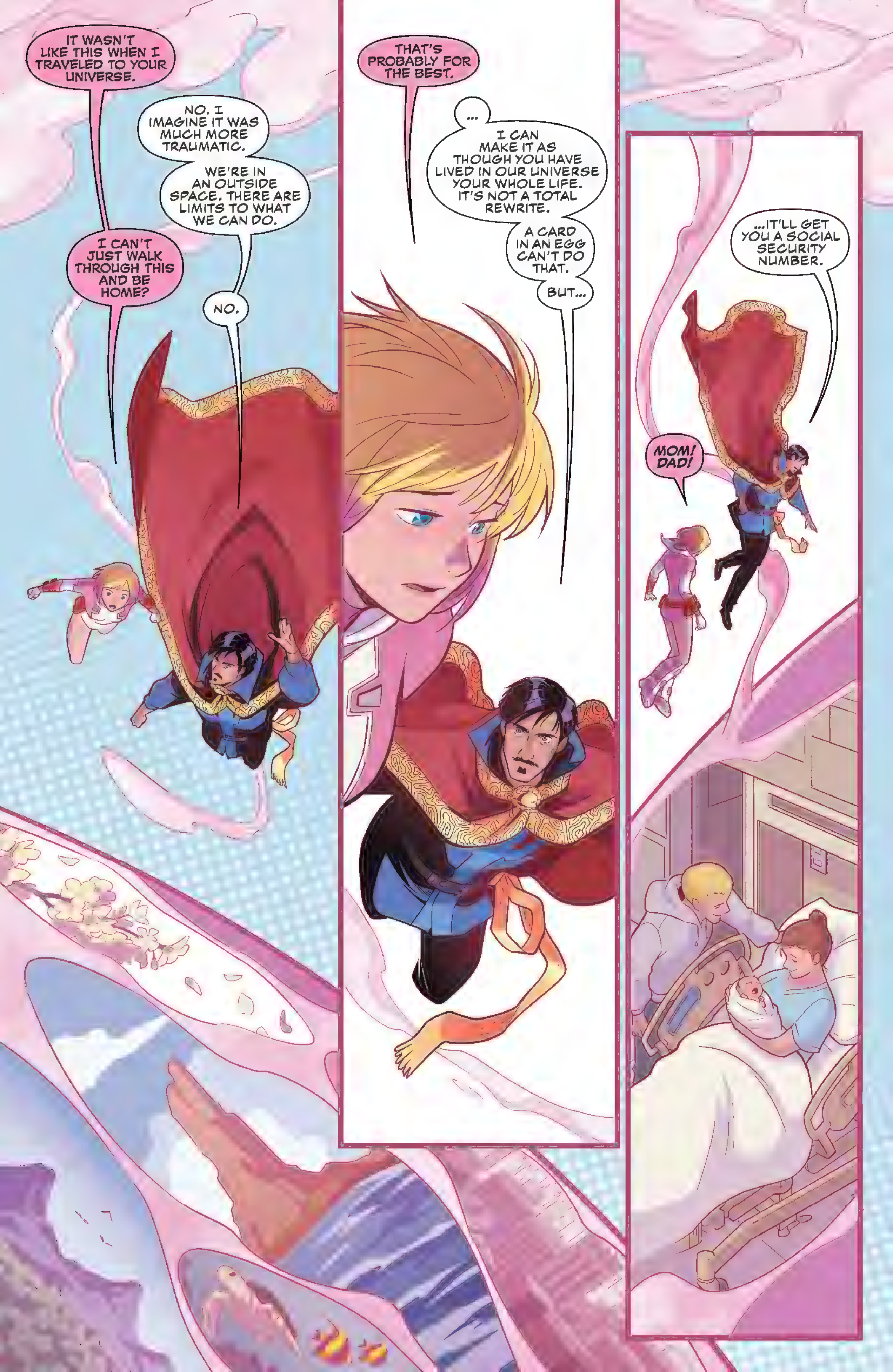

BANG
WHATEVER, MAN! LOOK AT THAT SHOT!
WELL...
YOU FIRED SIX ROUNDS.
I AM INTRIGUED BY THIS KNOWLEDGE YOU CLAIM. YOU CAN BE OF USE. BUT WE NEED TO MAKE YOU A COMBAT ASSET.
HERE.
TWO HANDS ON ZE GUN. PLANT YOUR FEET FIRMLY. LEAN FORWARD SLIGHTLY TO ABSORB RECOIL. LINE UP YOUR TARGET, FOCUS YOUR EYE ON ZE FRONT SIGHT...
OH, THAT'S WHAT THAT'S FOR.
MON DIEU.
SO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE IN A FICTIONAL WORLD...SOME SORT OF FAIRY TALE?
SURE.
AH, BUT FAIRY TALES MEAN HAPPY ENDINGS. THEY DO NOT EXIST HERE.
I WILL TELL YOU, I HAVE KNOWN MY SHARE OF DEFEAT AND DISAPPOINTMENT.
OH, BATROC...
...THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE THE BAD GUY IN THE STORIES.

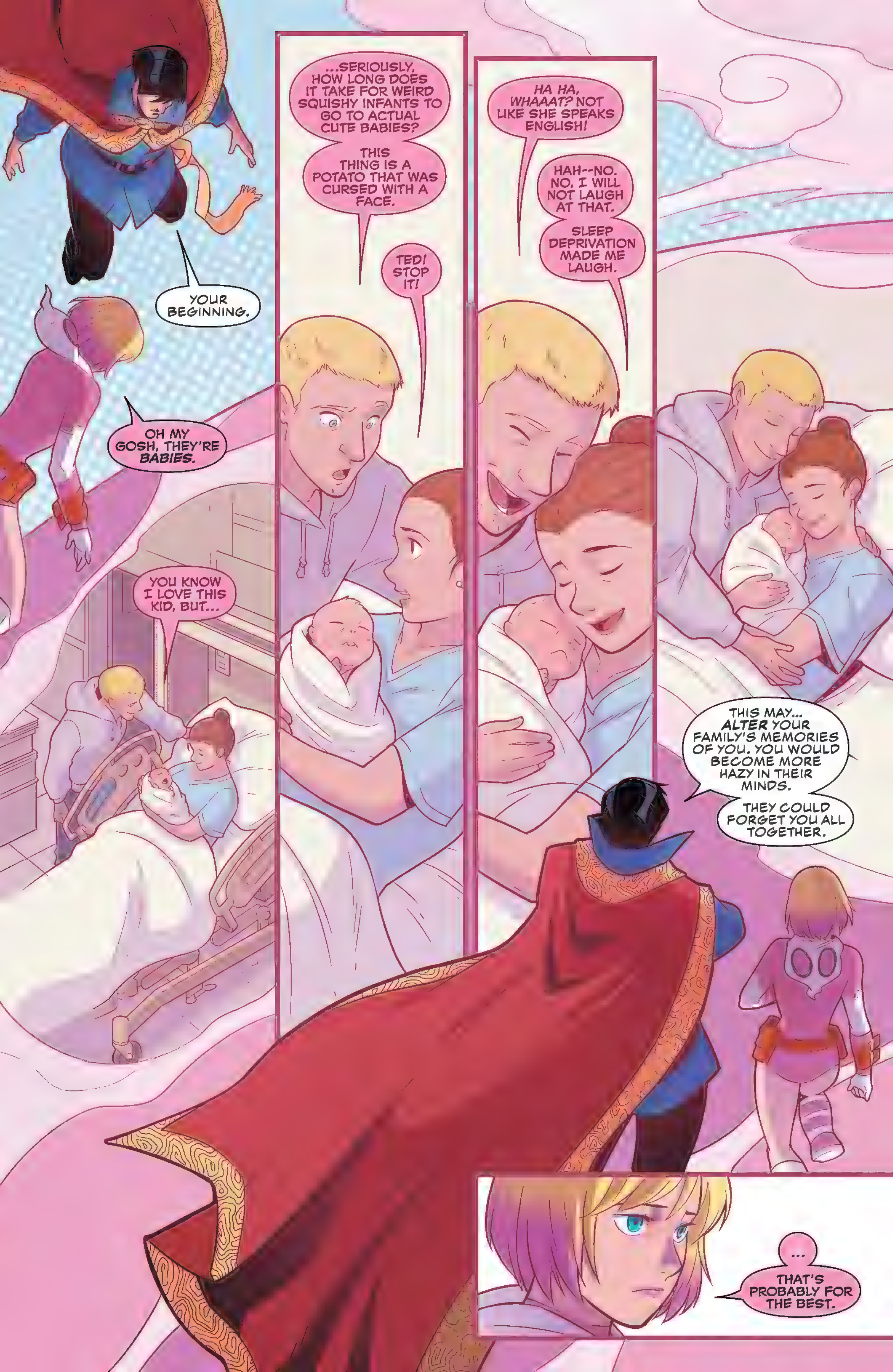

INDEED? SO, YOU WOULD SAY I AM JUST A VILLAIN IN *CAPTAIN AMERICA'S* ONGOING TALE?
EXACTLY. I'M SORRY, BUDDY.
AH, BUT THEN WHERE IS THE HAPPY ENDING FOR ZE CAPTAIN?
HE HAS FOUGHT FOR DECADES, WITH ONLY ZE ILLUSION OF MEANINGFUL VICTORY. ZE WORLD IS NO SAFER PLACE BECAUSE OF HIM. HE STRUGGLES *FOR NOTHING.*
WHAT?
WHAT A FUN CHILDREN'S STORY THAT MUST BE.
NNN
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
SACRE BLEU!
NOT A SINGLE BULL'S-EYE!
NO, BUT LOOK AT YOUR *GROUPING!* YOU MAY BE A NATURAL AFTER--

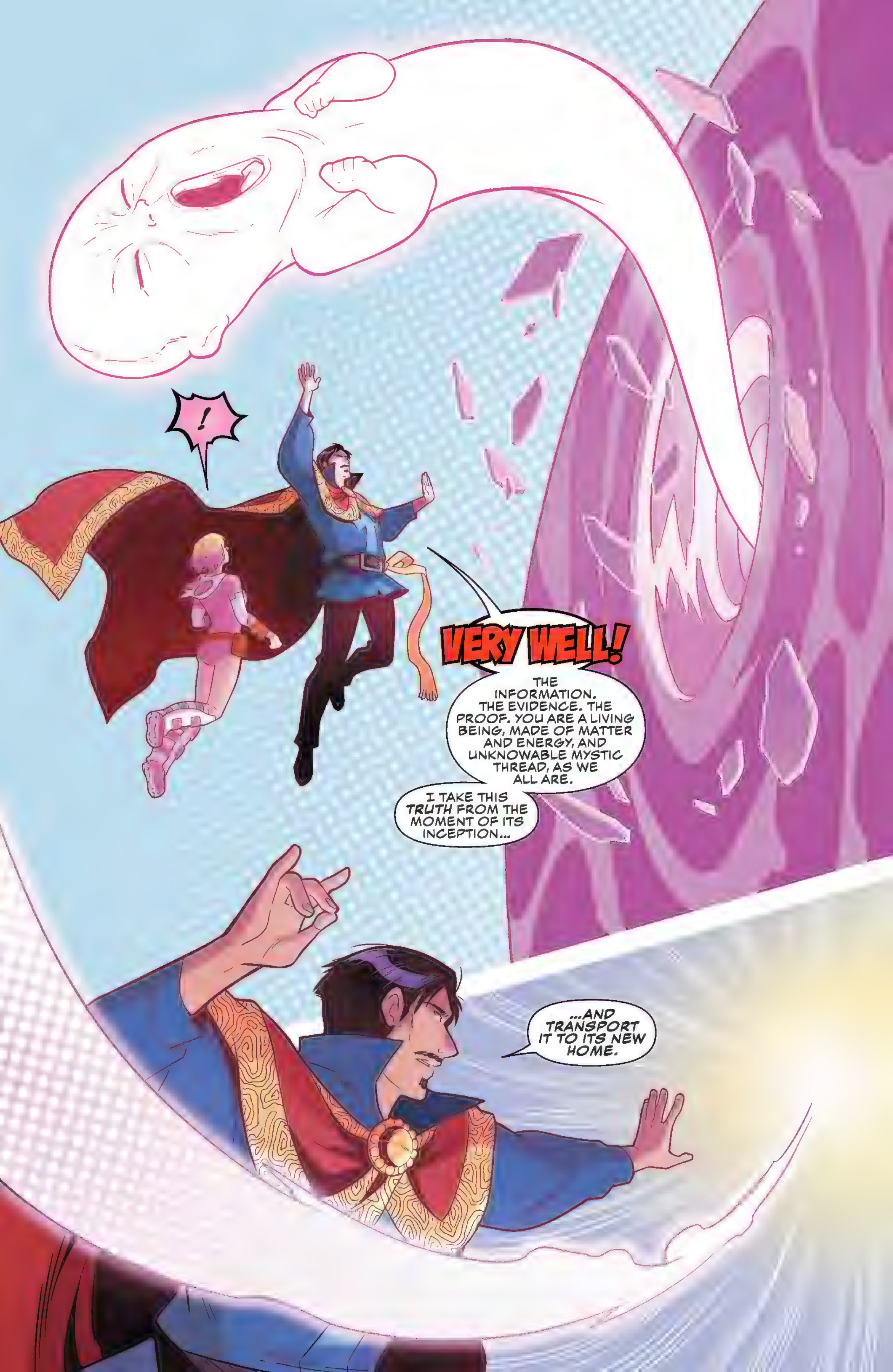

MS. POOLE?
UH...
I BELIEVE YOU'RE MY ONE O' CLOCK?

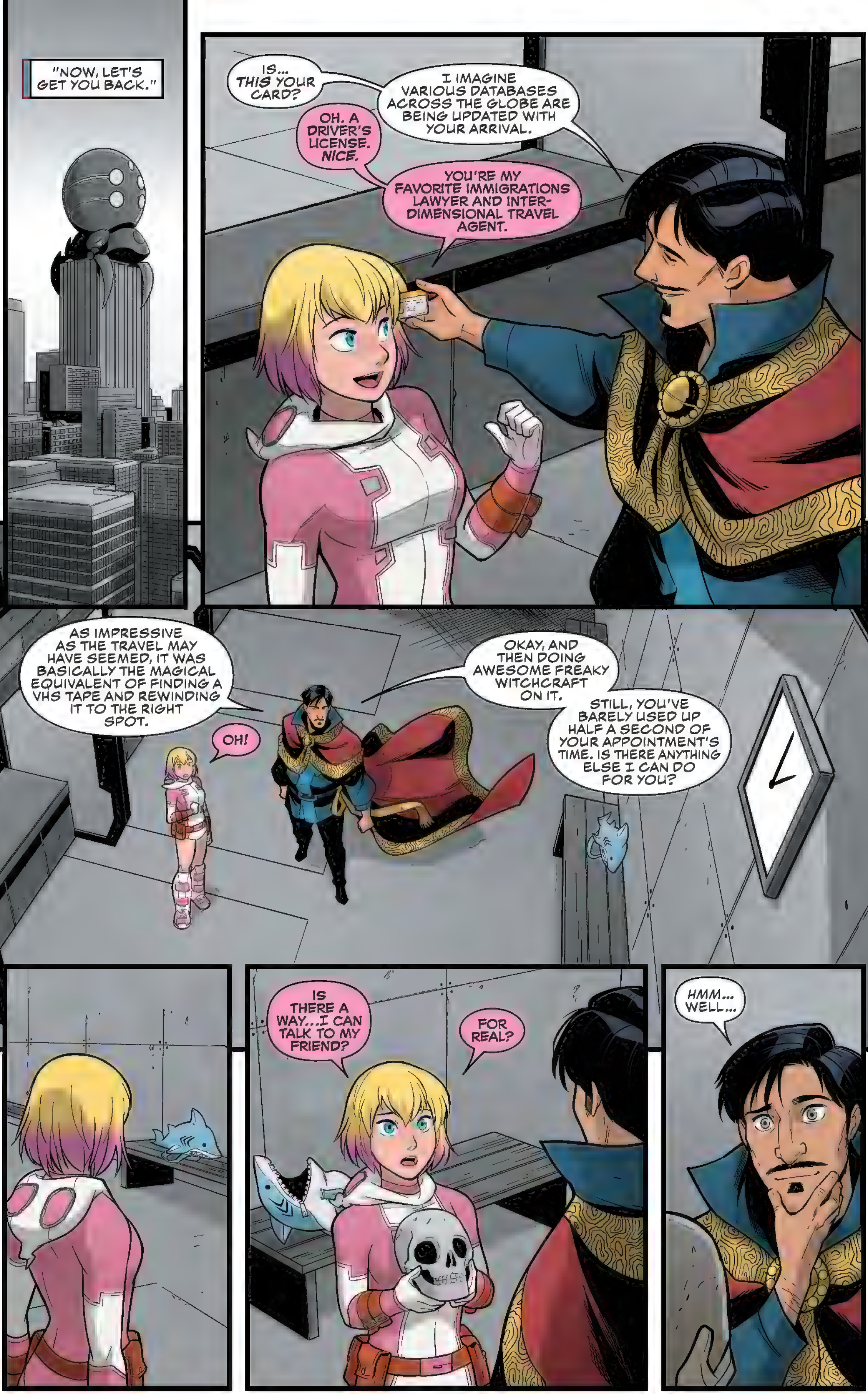

BIG RONNIE BETTER NOT HAVE CHARGED YOU TOO MUCH FOR THIS! YOU KNOW THIS CONSULT COUPON WAS A CHRISTMAS PRESENT? OF COURSE SHE HANGS ON TO IT TO SELL.
BUHHH...
SORRY ABOUT THE WHOLE TIME-FREEZE THING. IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN SQUEEZE IN SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS!
HUNKA, HUNKA WIZARD
...
SO WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
RIGHT! PROBLEMS! I GOT 'EM!
SO, I'M HAVING A HARD TIME GETTING, *UH,* COMIC BOOK UNIVERSE CITIZENSHIP?
HA! YOU KNOW, I *THOUGHT* I HEARD SOMETHING IN YOUR VOICE.
SAY SOMETHING.
SOMETHING--
WHOA! *WHAT?* WHAT IS *THAT?*
SORT OF A COSMIC *ACCENT.* I CAN SEE YOU ARE *VERY* FAR FROM HOME.
AND YOU WANT TO BE A BIT LESS DISPLACED, *HM?* HAVE THIS PLACE STOP TREATING YOU LIKE YOU DON'T EXIST?
OR AT LEAST LET ME OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT, OR BE ELIGIBLE TO RENT AN APARTMENT.
LET'S GO ON A TRIP. YOUR *"PINK HARMONIC"* WILL BE OUR GUIDE.

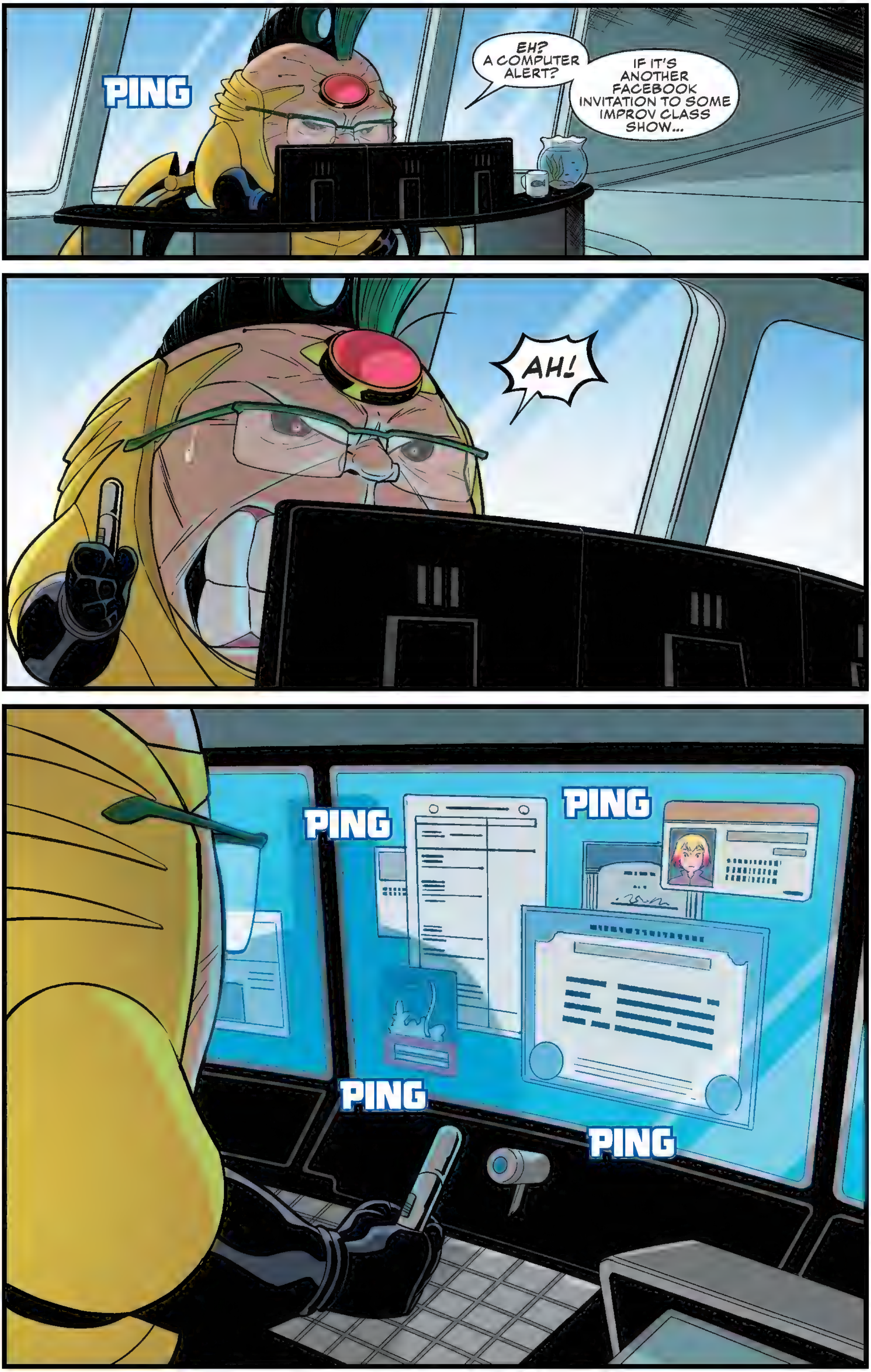

WHERE IS *THIS?*
HM, ALWAYS **TRICKY** TO DESCRIBE IT WITHOUT DRIVING SOMEONE MAD...LET'S SAY IT'S A SPACE BETWEEN THE ATOMS OF REALITIES.
AND IF YOUR BRAIN IS DESPERATELY STRUGGLING TO INTERPRET THE THINGS HAPPENING AROUND YOU THE SAME WAY *MINE* IS, THEN YOU SHOULD SEE AN ORB IN FRONT OF YOU.
IT IS YOUR HOME. OR AT LEAST A WINDOW INTO IT.
CONFIRMIN' THAT ORB.
FASCINATING. THE PEOPLE AND EVENTS OF ***OUR*** WORLD LEAVE... ***FOOTPRINTS*** IN YOURS. LITTLE RECORDINGS, RETELLINGS...
BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH, EH? SURE, I COULD SEE THAT.
DOCTOR STRANGE

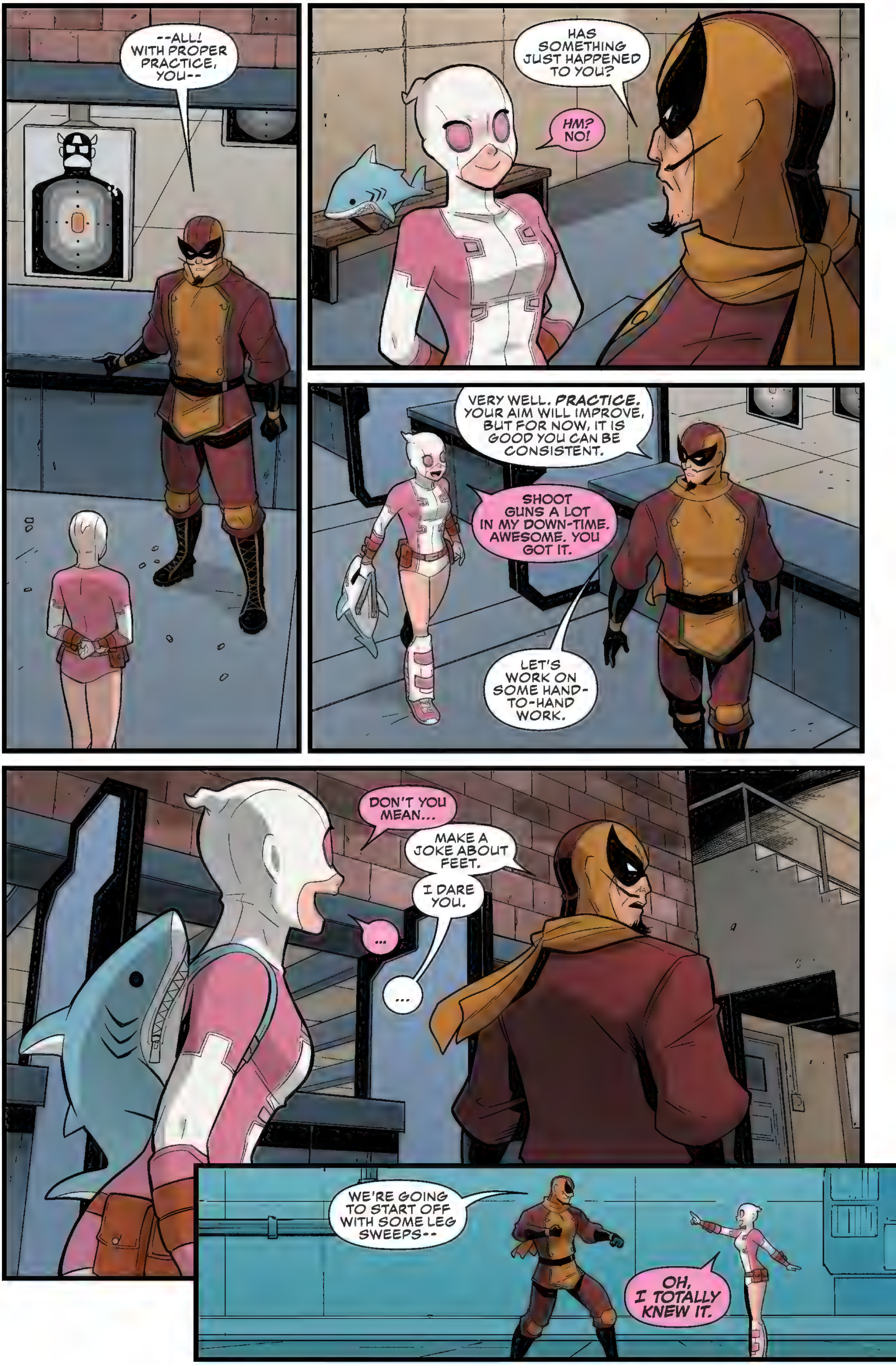

IT WASN'T LIKE THIS WHEN I TRAVELED TO YOUR UNIVERSE.
NO. I IMAGINE IT WAS MUCH MORE TRAUMATIC.
WE'RE IN AN OUTSIDE SPACE. THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT WE CAN DO.
I CAN'T JUST WALK THROUGH THIS AND BE HOME?
NO.
THAT'S PROBABLY FOR THE BEST.
...
I CAN MAKE IT AS THOUGH YOU HAVE LIVED IN OUR UNIVERSE YOUR WHOLE LIFE. IT'S NOT A TOTAL REWRITE.
A CARD IN AN EGG CAN'T DO THAT.
BUT...
...IT'LL GET YOU A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.
MOM! DAD!

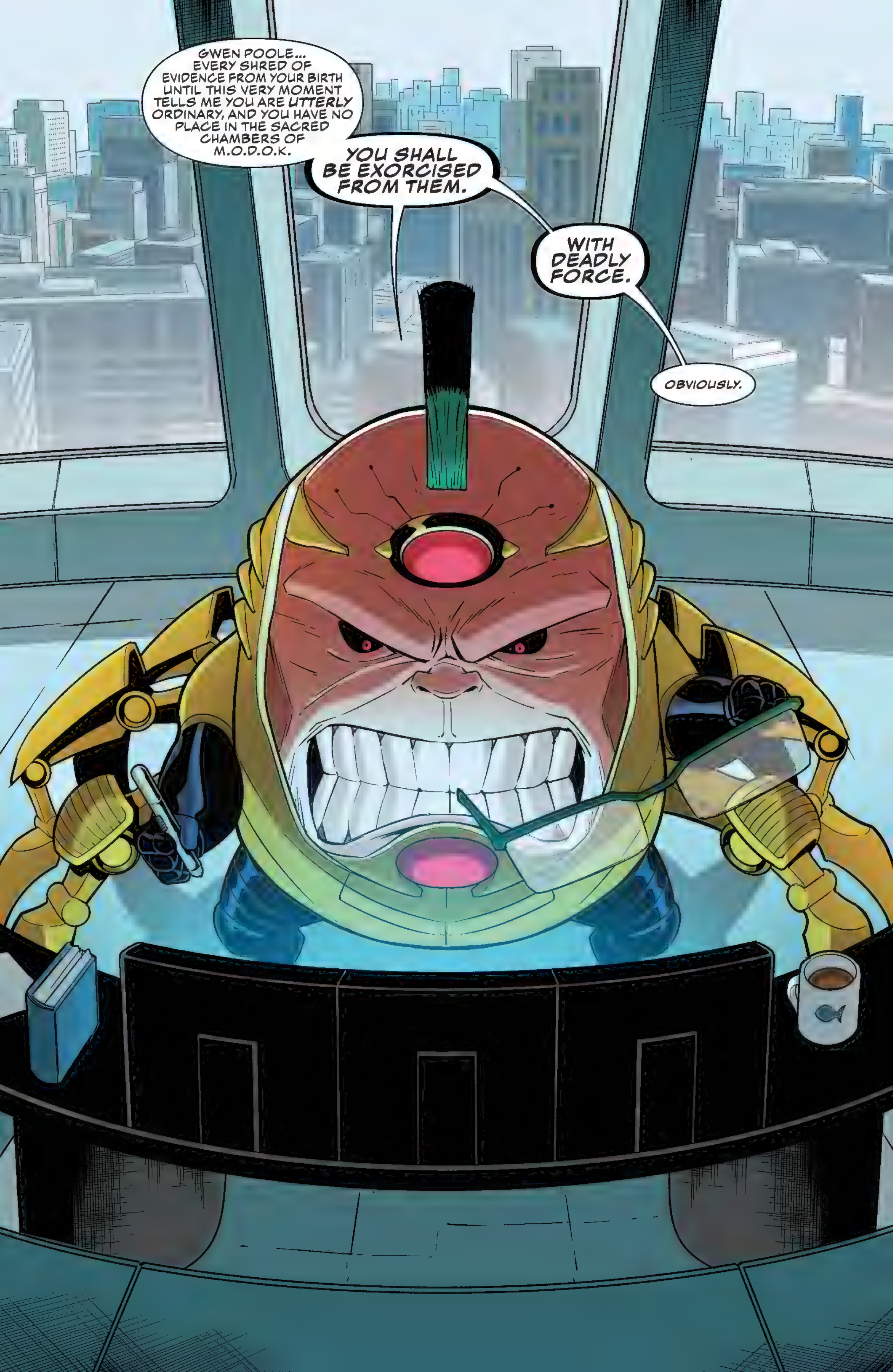

YOUR BEGINNING.
OH MY GOSH, THEY'RE *BABIES.*
YOU KNOW I LOVE THIS KID, BUT...
...SERIOUSLY, HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR WEIRD SQUISHY INFANTS TO GO TO ACTUAL CUTE BABIES?
THIS THING IS A POTATO THAT WAS CURSED WITH A FACE.
TED! STOP IT!
HA HA, WHAAAT? NOT LIKE SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH!
HAH--NO. NO, I WILL NOT LAUGH AT THAT.
SLEEP DEPRIVATION MADE ME LAUGH.
THIS MAY... ***ALTER*** YOUR FAMILY'S MEMORIES OF YOU. YOU WOULD BECOME MORE HAZY IN THEIR MINDS.
THEY COULD FORGET YOU ALL TOGETHER.
...
THAT'S PROBABLY FOR THE BEST.


!
VERY WELL! THE INFORMATION. THE EVIDENCE. THE PROOF. YOU ARE A LIVING BEING, MADE OF MATTER AND ENERGY, AND UNKNOWABLE MYSTIC THREAD, AS WE ALL ARE.
I TAKE THIS *TRUTH* FROM THE MOMENT OF ITS INCEPTION...
...AND *TRANSPORT* IT TO ITS NEW *HOME.*

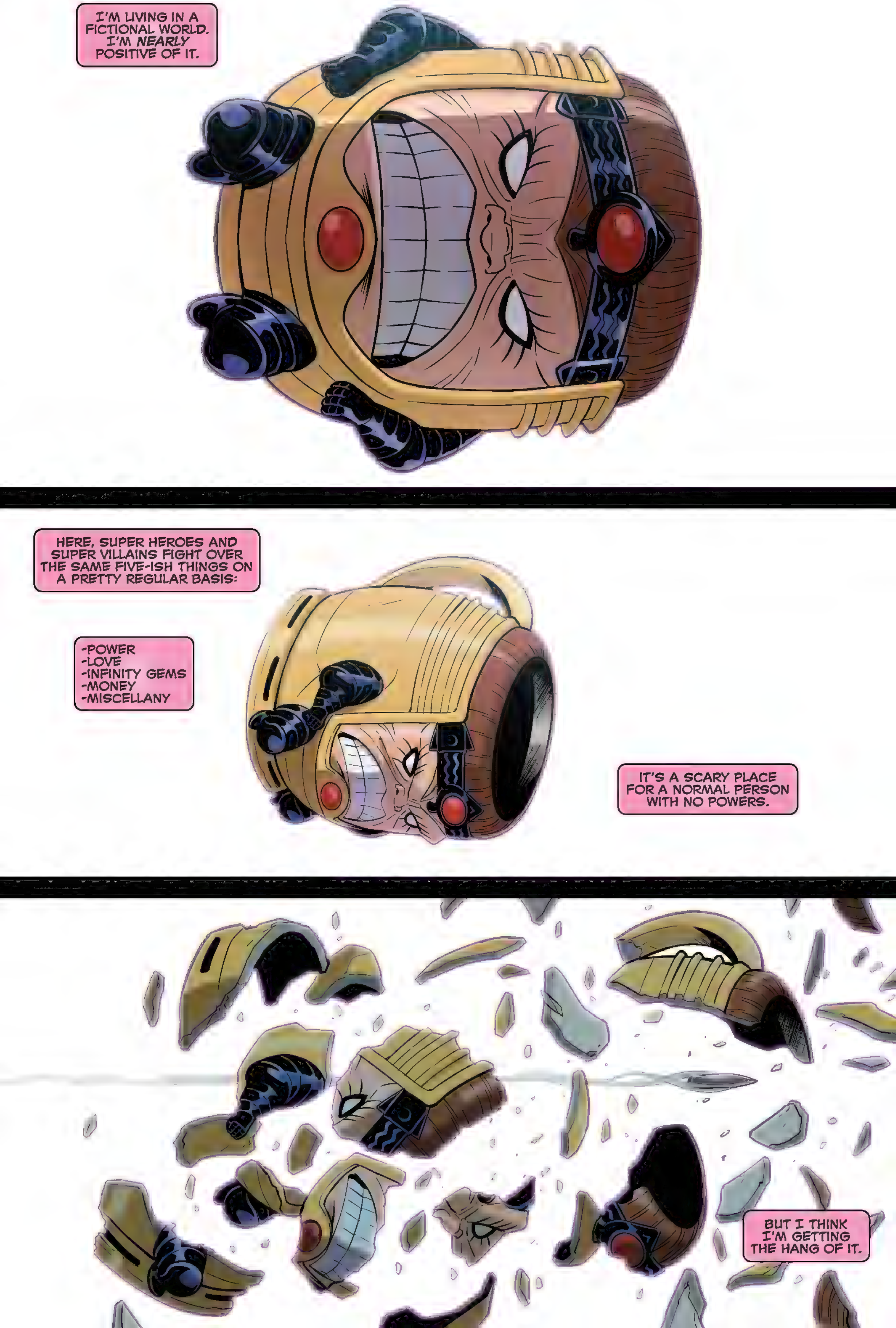

"NOW, LET'S GET YOU BACK."
IS... THIS YOUR CARD?
I IMAGINE VARIOUS DATABASES ACROSS THE GLOBE ARE BEING UPDATED WITH YOUR ARRIVAL.
OH. A DRIVER'S LICENSE. NICE.
YOU'RE MY FAVORITE IMMIGRATIONS LAWYER AND INTER-DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL AGENT.
AS IMPRESSIVE AS THE TRAVEL MAY HAVE SEEMED, IT WAS BASICALLY THE MAGICAL EQUIVALENT OF FINDING A VHS TAPE AND REWINDING IT TO THE RIGHT SPOT.
OH!
OKAY, AND THEN DOING AWESOME FREAKY WITCHCRAFT ON IT.
STILL, YOU'VE BARELY USED UP HALF A SECOND OF YOUR APPOINTMENT'S TIME. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I CAN DO FOR YOU?
IS THERE A WAY...I CAN TALK TO MY FRIEND?
FOR REAL?
HMM... WELL...

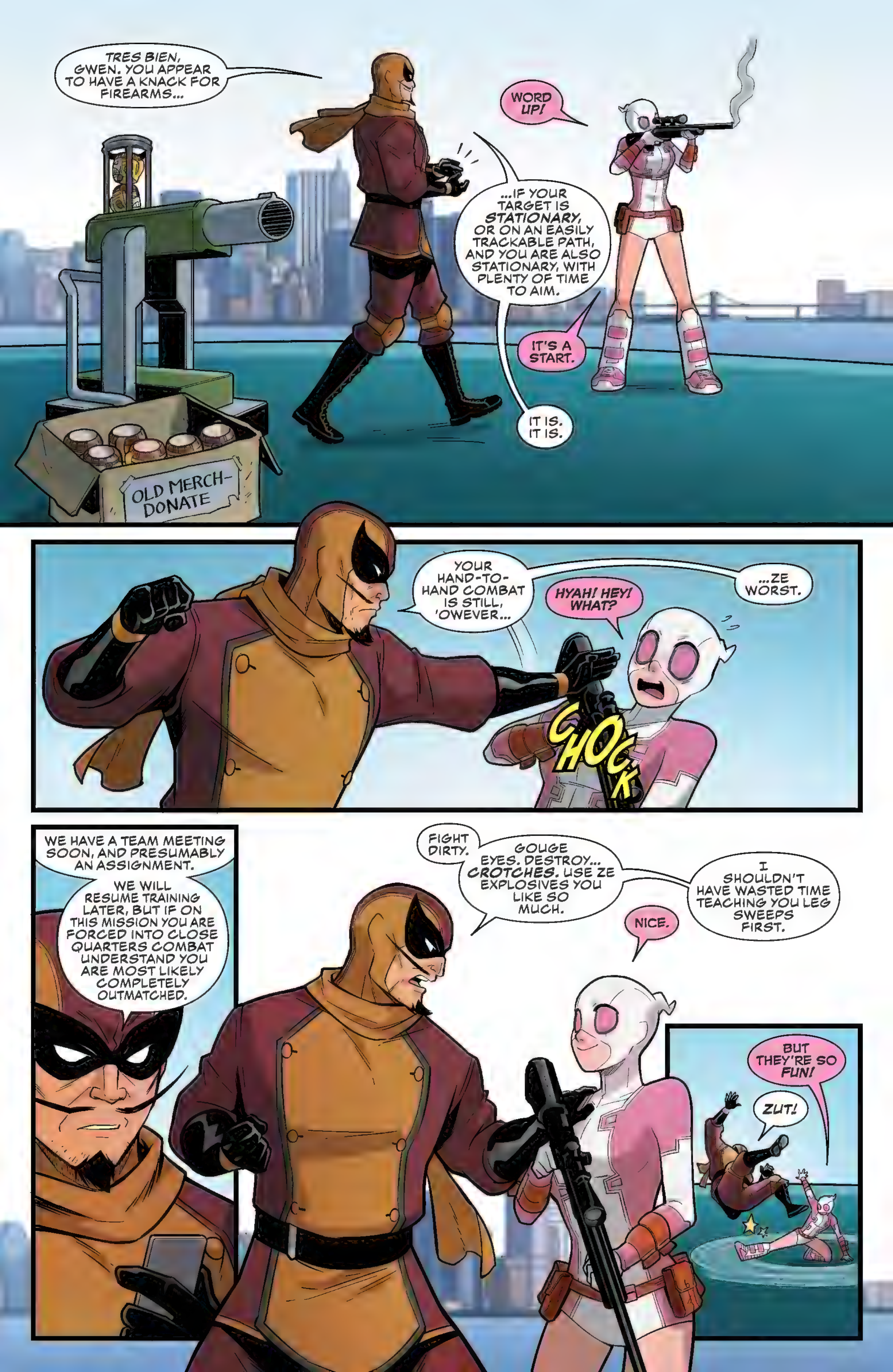

PING
EH? A COMPUTER ALERT?
IF IT'S ANOTHER FACEBOOK INVITATION TO SOME IMPROV CLASS SHOW...
AH!
PING
PING
PING
PING

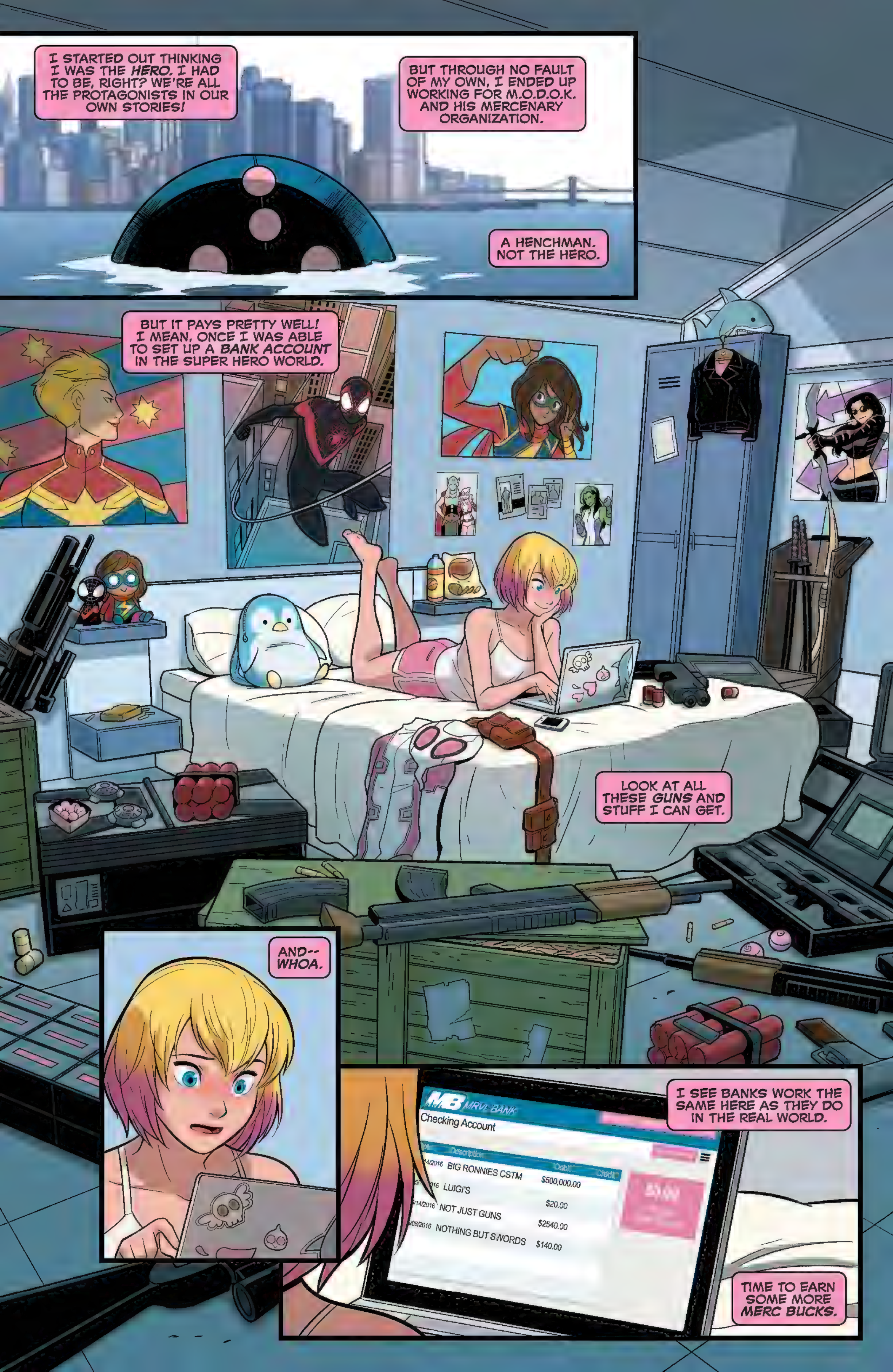

--ALL! WITH PROPER PRACTICE, YOU--
HAS SOMETHING JUST HAPPENED TO YOU?
HM? NO!
VERY WELL. *PRACTICE.* YOUR AIM WILL IMPROVE, BUT FOR NOW, IT IS GOOD YOU CAN BE CONSISTENT.
SHOOT GUNS A LOT IN MY DOWN-TIME. AWESOME. YOU GOT IT.
LET'S WORK ON SOME HAND-TO-HAND WORK.
DON'T YOU MEAN...
MAKE A JOKE ABOUT FEET.
I DARE YOU.
...
...
WE'RE GOING TO START OFF WITH SOME LEG SWEEPS--
OH, I TOTALLY KNEW IT.

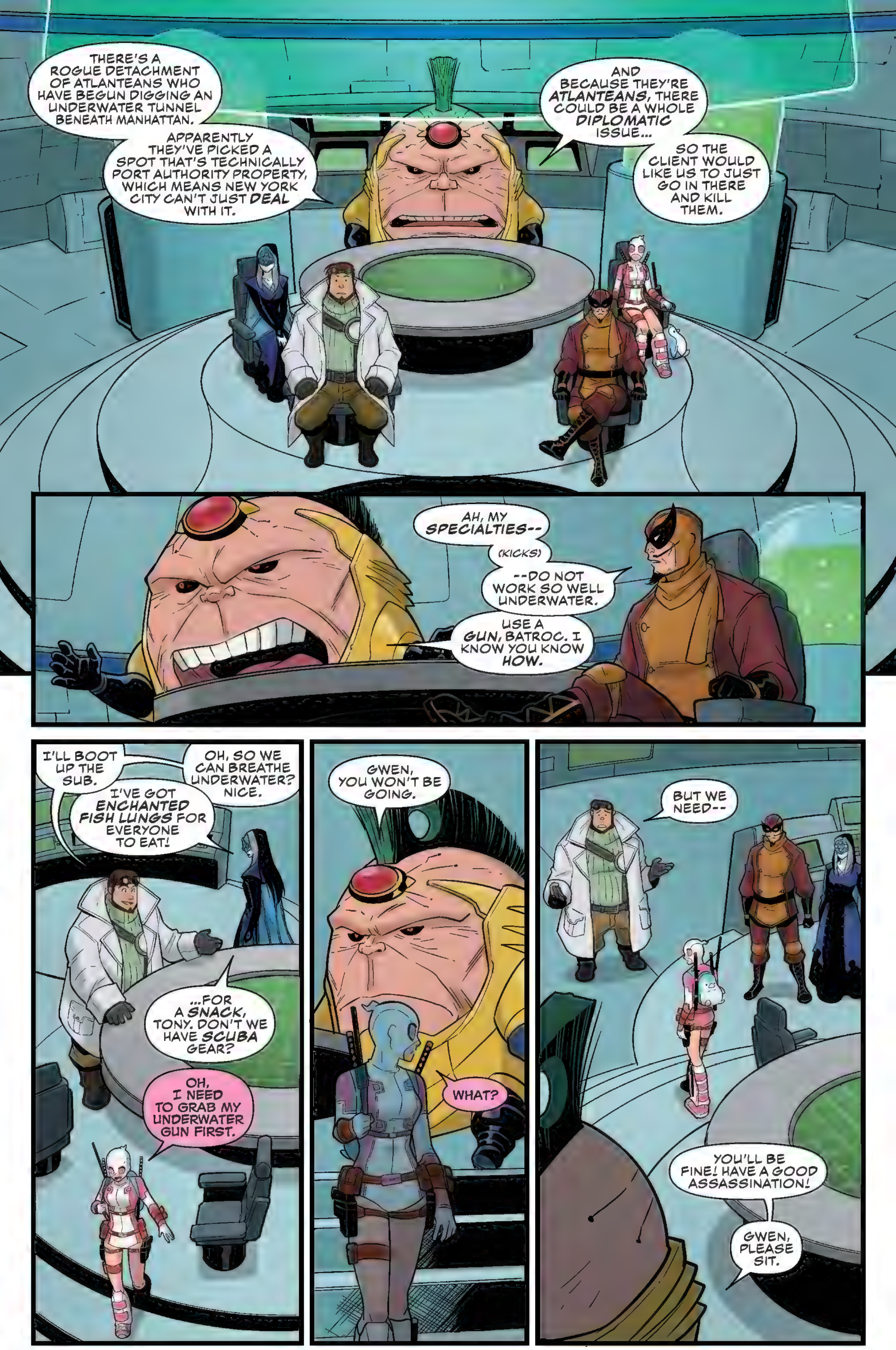

GWEN POOLE... EVERY SHRED OF EVIDENCE FROM YOUR BIRTH UNTIL THIS VERY MOMENT TELLS ME YOU ARE *UTTERLY* ORDINARY, AND YOU HAVE NO PLACE IN THE SACRED CHAMBERS OF M.O.D.O.K.
YOU SHALL BE EXORCISED FROM THEM.
WITH DEADLY FORCE.
OBVIOUSLY.

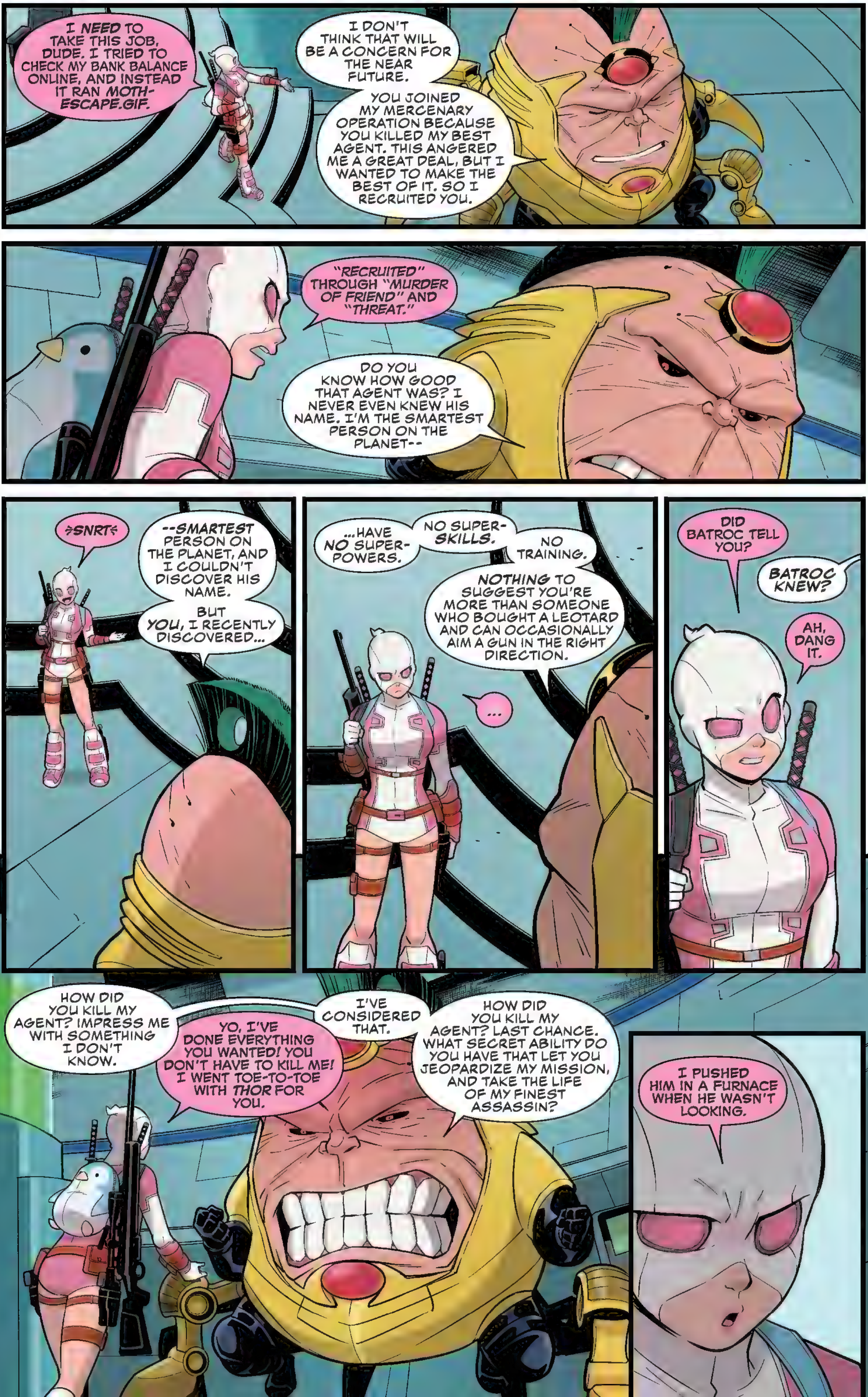
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #4

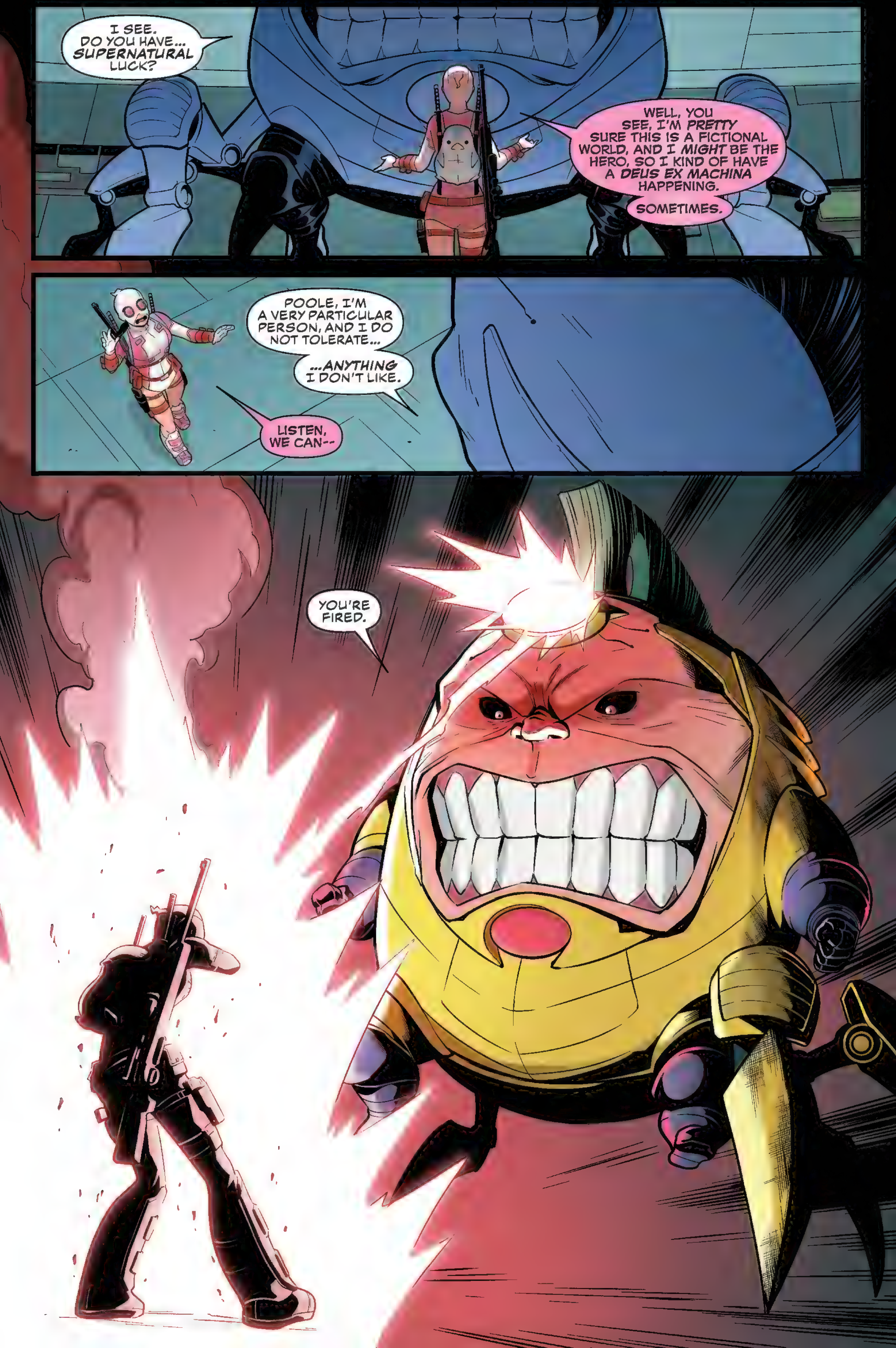

I'M LIVING IN A FICTIONAL WORLD. I'M *NEARLY* POSITIVE OF IT.
HERE, SUPER HEROES AND SUPER VILLAINS FIGHT OVER THE SAME FIVE-ISH THINGS ON A PRETTY REGULAR BASIS:
-POWER
-LOVE
-INFINITY GEMS
-MONEY
-MISCELLANY
IT'S A SCARY PLACE FOR A NORMAL PERSON WITH NO POWERS.
BUT I THINK I'M GETTING THE HANG OF IT.

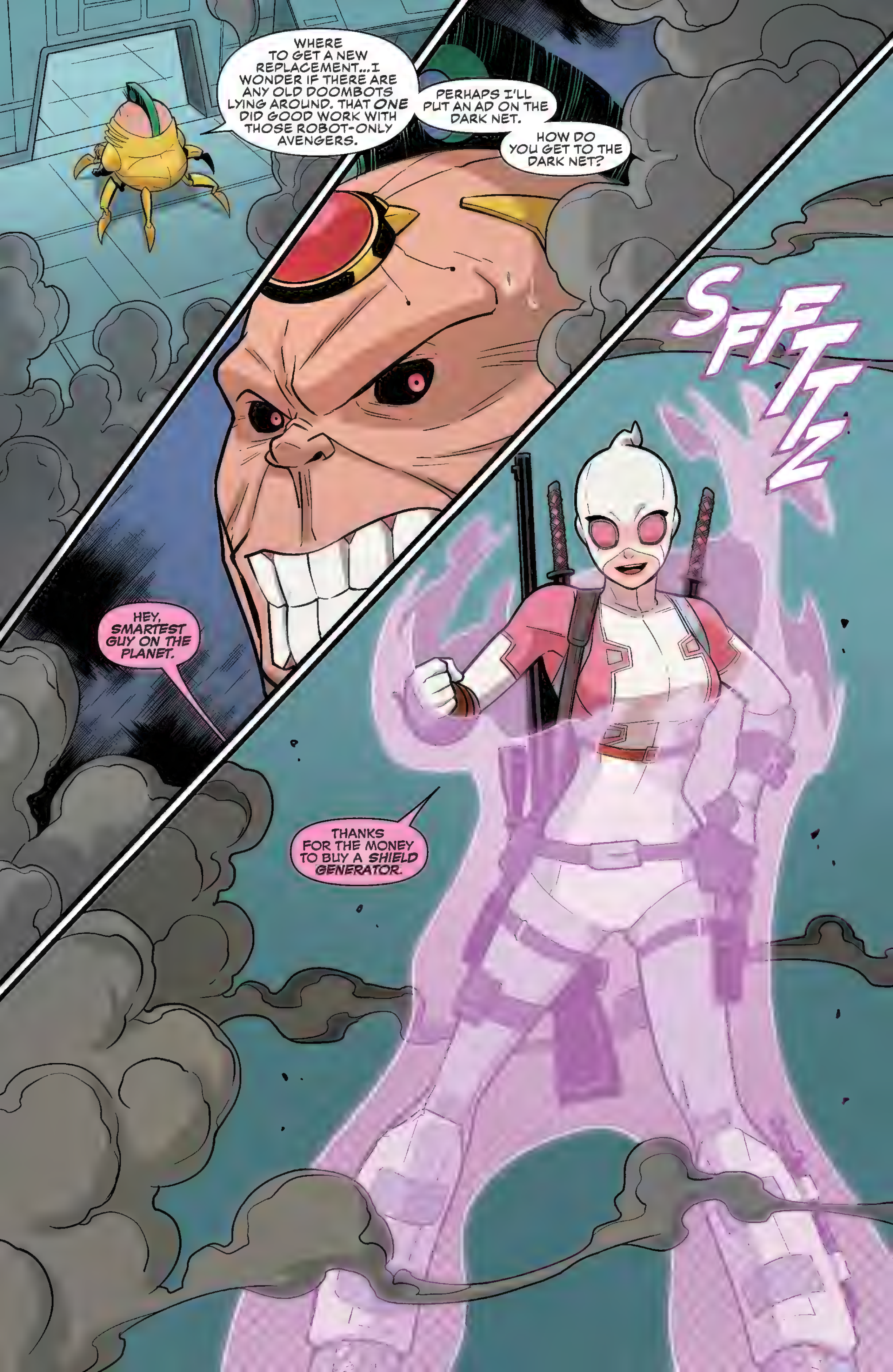

TRES BIEN, GWEN. YOU APPEAR TO HAVE A KNACK FOR FIREARMS...
WORD UP!
...IF YOUR TARGET IS *STATIONARY,* OR ON AN EASILY TRACKABLE PATH, AND YOU ARE ALSO STATIONARY, WITH PLENTY OF TIME TO AIM.
IT'S A START.
IT IS. IT IS.
OLD MERCH- DONATE
YOUR HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT IS STILL, 'OWEVER...
HYAH! HEY! WHAT?
...ZE WORST.
CHOCK
WE HAVE A TEAM MEETING SOON, AND PRESUMABLY AN ASSIGNMENT.
WE WILL RESUME TRAINING LATER, BUT IF ON THIS MISSION YOU ARE FORCED INTO CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT UNDERSTAND YOU ARE MOST LIKELY COMPLETELY OUTMATCHED.
FIGHT DIRTY.
GOUGE EYES. DESTROY... *CROTCHES.* USE ZE EXPLOSIVES YOU LIKE SO MUCH.
NICE.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE WASTED TIME TEACHING YOU LEG SWEEPS FIRST.
BUT THEY'RE SO *FUN!*
ZUT!

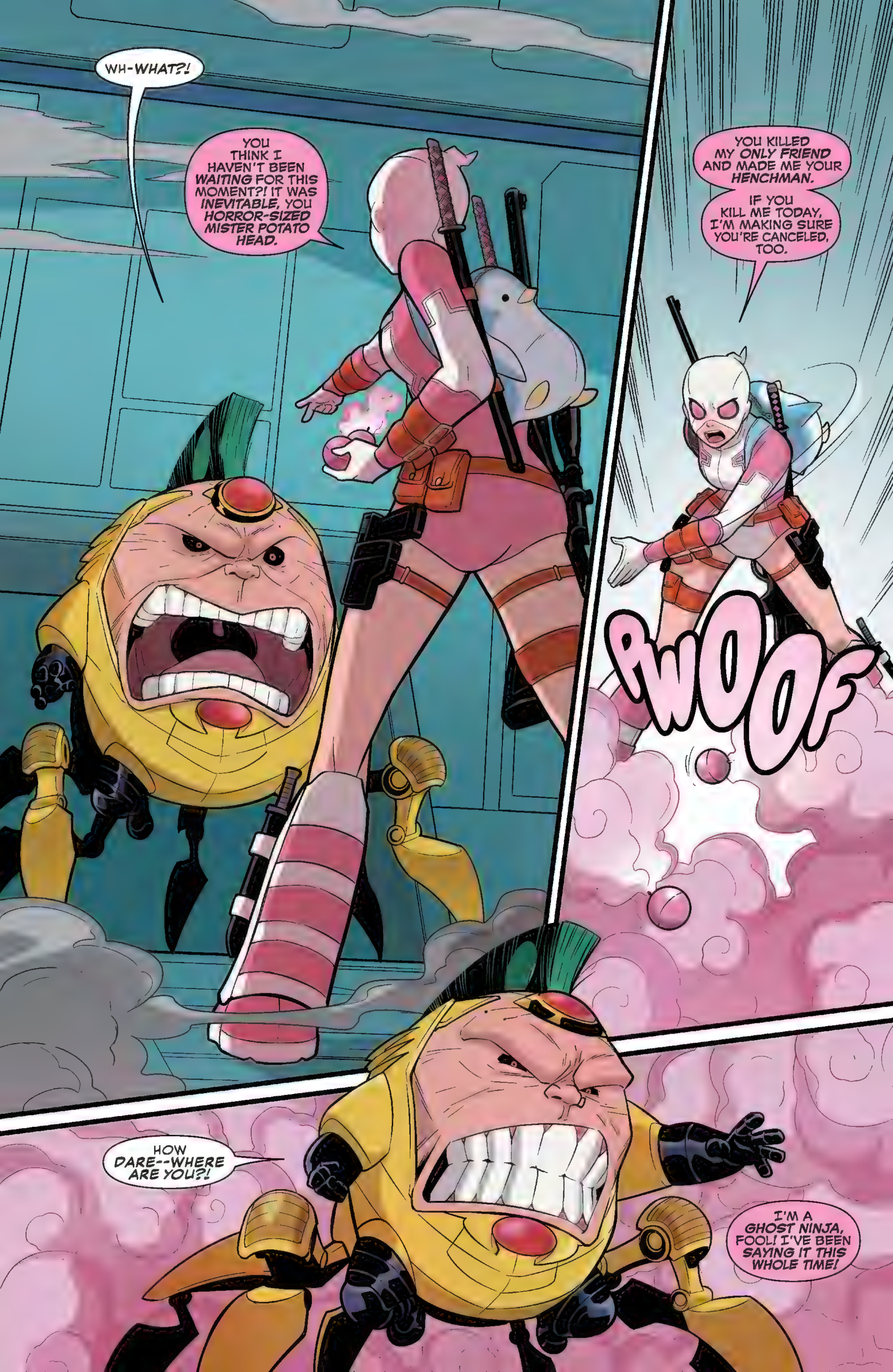

I STARTED OUT THINKING I WAS THE *HERO*. I HAD TO BE, RIGHT? WE'RE ALL THE PROTAGONISTS IN OUR OWN STORIES!
BUT THROUGH NO FAULT OF MY OWN, I ENDED UP WORKING FOR M.O.D.O.K. AND HIS MERCENARY ORGANIZATION.
A HENCHMAN. NOT THE HERO.
BUT IT PAYS PRETTY WELL! I MEAN, ONCE I WAS ABLE TO SET UP A *BANK ACCOUNT* IN THE SUPER HERO WORLD.
LOOK AT ALL THESE *GUNS* AND STUFF I CAN GET.
AND-- WHOA.
MB MRVL BANK
Checking Account
Description
Debit
Credit
14/2016 BIG RONNIES CSTM $500,000.00
016 LUIGI'S $20.00
/14/2016 NOT JUST GUNS $2540.00
08/2016 NOTHING BUT SWORDS $140.00
I SEE BANKS WORK THE SAME HERE AS THEY DO IN THE REAL WORLD.
TIME TO EARN SOME MORE *MERC BUCKS*.

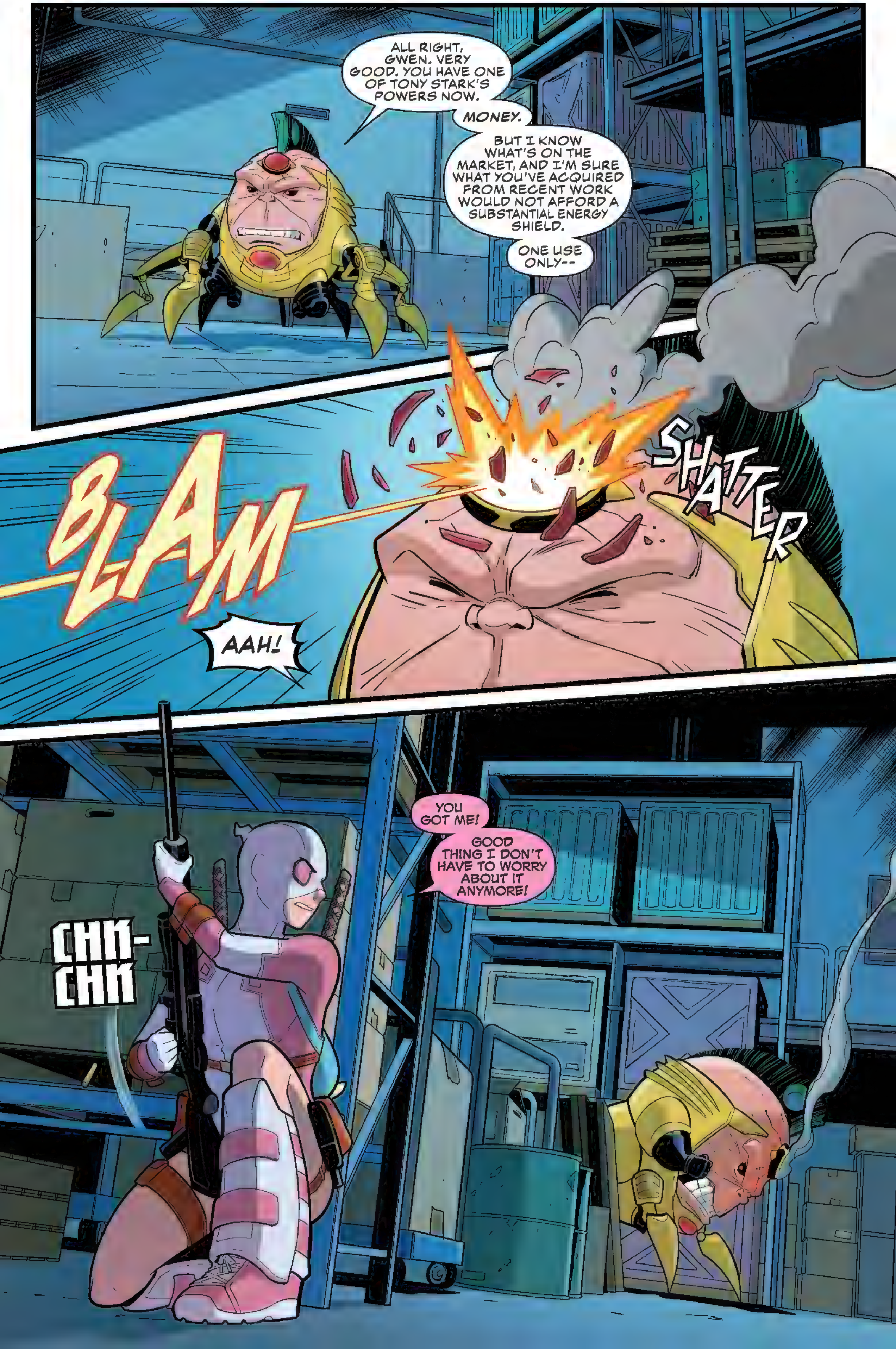

THERE'S A ROGUE DETACHMENT OF ATLANTEANS WHO HAVE BEGUN DIGGING AN UNDERWATER TUNNEL BENEATH MANHATTAN.
APPARENTLY THEY'VE PICKED A SPOT THAT'S TECHNICALLY PORT AUTHORITY PROPERTY, WHICH MEANS NEW YORK CITY CAN'T JUST *DEAL* WITH IT.
AND BECAUSE THEY'RE *ATLANTEANS*, THERE COULD BE A WHOLE *DIPLOMATIC* ISSUE...
SO THE CLIENT WOULD LIKE US TO JUST GO IN THERE AND KILL THEM.
AH, MY *SPECIALTIES*--
(KICKS)
--DO NOT WORK SO WELL UNDERWATER.
USE A *GUN*, BATROC. I KNOW YOU KNOW *HOW*.
I'LL BOOT UP THE SUB.
OH, SO WE CAN BREATHE UNDERWATER? NICE.
I'VE GOT *ENCHANTED FISH LUNGS* FOR EVERYONE TO EAT!
...FOR A *SNACK*, TONY. DON'T WE HAVE *SCUBA* GEAR?
OH, I NEED TO GRAB MY UNDERWATER GUN FIRST.
GWEN, YOU WON'T BE GOING.
WHAT?
BUT WE NEED--
YOU'LL BE FINE! HAVE A GOOD ASSASSINATION!
GWEN, PLEASE SIT.

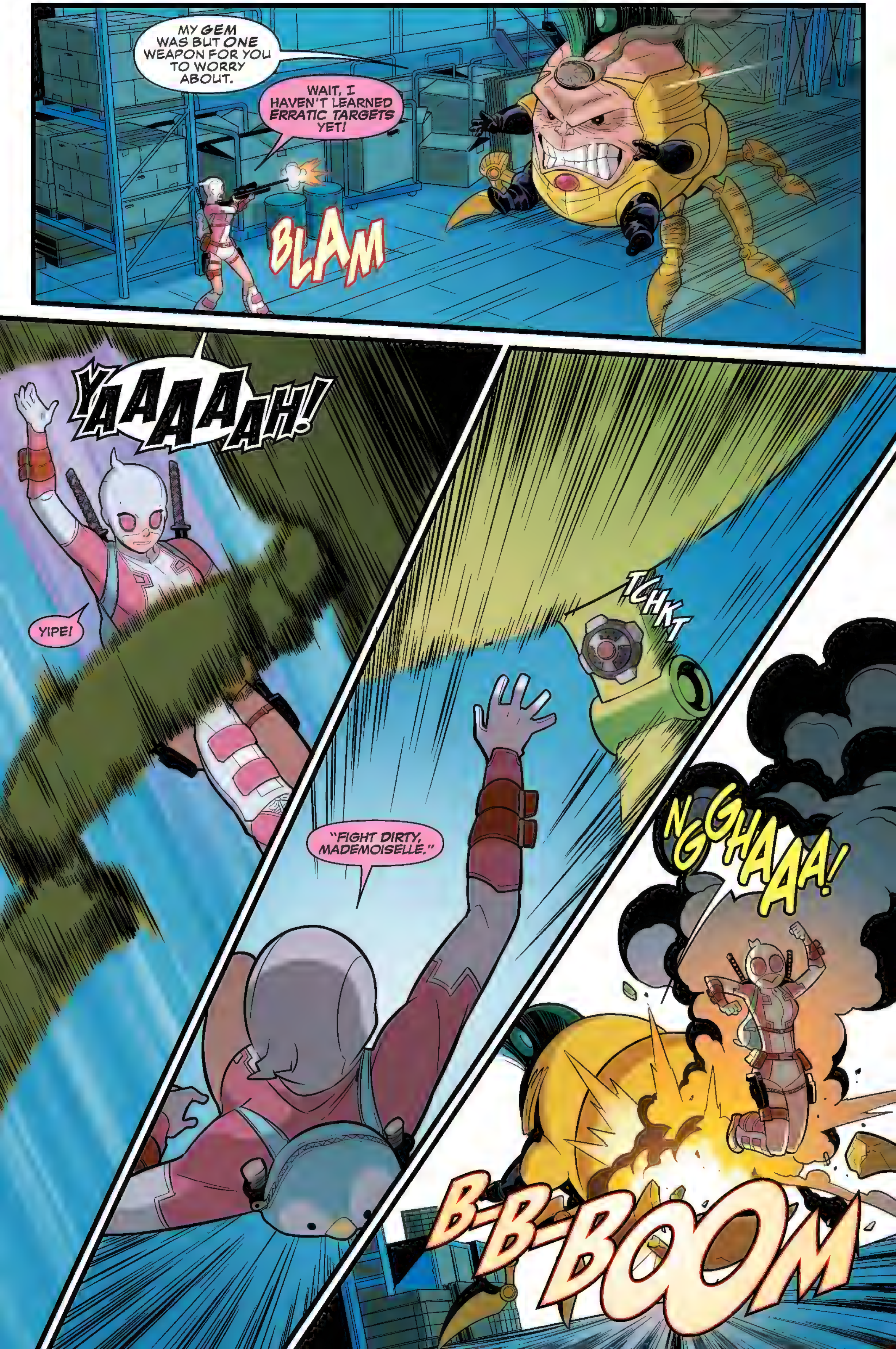

I *NEED* TO TAKE THIS JOB, DUDE. I TRIED TO CHECK MY BANK BALANCE ONLINE, AND INSTEAD IT RAN *MOTH-ESCAPE.GIF.*
I DON'T THINK THAT WILL BE A CONCERN FOR THE NEAR FUTURE.
YOU JOINED MY MERCENARY OPERATION BECAUSE YOU KILLED MY BEST AGENT. THIS ANGERED ME A GREAT DEAL, BUT I WANTED TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT. SO I RECRUITED YOU.
"RECRUITED" THROUGH *"MURDER OF FRIEND"* AND *"THREAT."*
DO YOU KNOW HOW GOOD THAT AGENT WAS? I NEVER EVEN KNEW HIS NAME. I'M THE SMARTEST PERSON ON THE PLANET--
SNRT
--*SMARTEST* PERSON ON THE PLANET, AND I COULDN'T DISCOVER HIS NAME.
BUT *YOU*, I RECENTLY DISCOVERED...
...HAVE *NO* SUPER-POWERS.
NO SUPER-*SKILLS.*
NO TRAINING.
NOTHING TO SUGGEST YOU'RE MORE THAN SOMEONE WHO BOUGHT A LEOTARD AND CAN OCCASIONALLY AIM A GUN IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.
...
DID BATROC TELL YOU?
BATROC KNEW?
AH, DANG IT.
HOW DID YOU KILL MY AGENT? IMPRESS ME WITH SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW.
YO, I'VE DONE EVERYTHING YOU WANTED! YOU DON'T HAVE TO KILL ME! I WENT TOE-TO-TOE WITH *THOR* FOR YOU.
I'VE CONSIDERED THAT.
HOW DID YOU KILL MY AGENT? LAST CHANCE. WHAT SECRET ABILITY DO YOU HAVE THAT LET YOU JEOPARDIZE MY MISSION, AND TAKE THE LIFE OF MY FINEST ASSASSIN?
I PUSHED HIM IN A FURNACE WHEN HE WASN'T LOOKING.

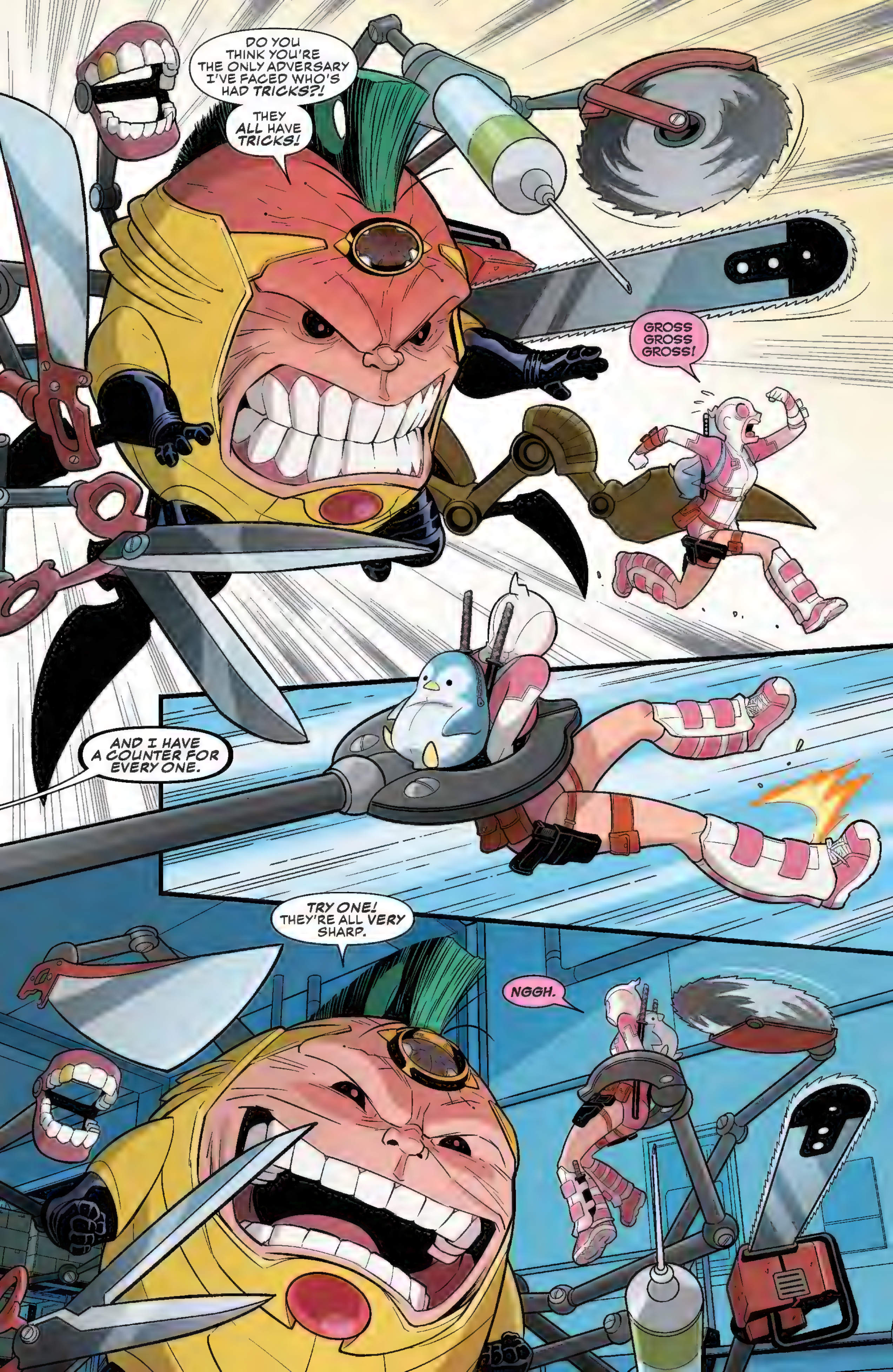

I SEE. DO YOU HAVE... SUPERNATURAL LUCK?
WELL, YOU SEE, I'M PRETTY SURE THIS IS A FICTIONAL WORLD, AND I MIGHT BE THE HERO, SO I KIND OF HAVE A DEUS EX MACHINA HAPPENING.
SOMETIMES.
POOLE, I'M A VERY PARTICULAR PERSON, AND I DO NOT TOLERATE...
...ANYTHING I DON'T LIKE.
LISTEN, WE CAN--
YOU'RE FIRED.

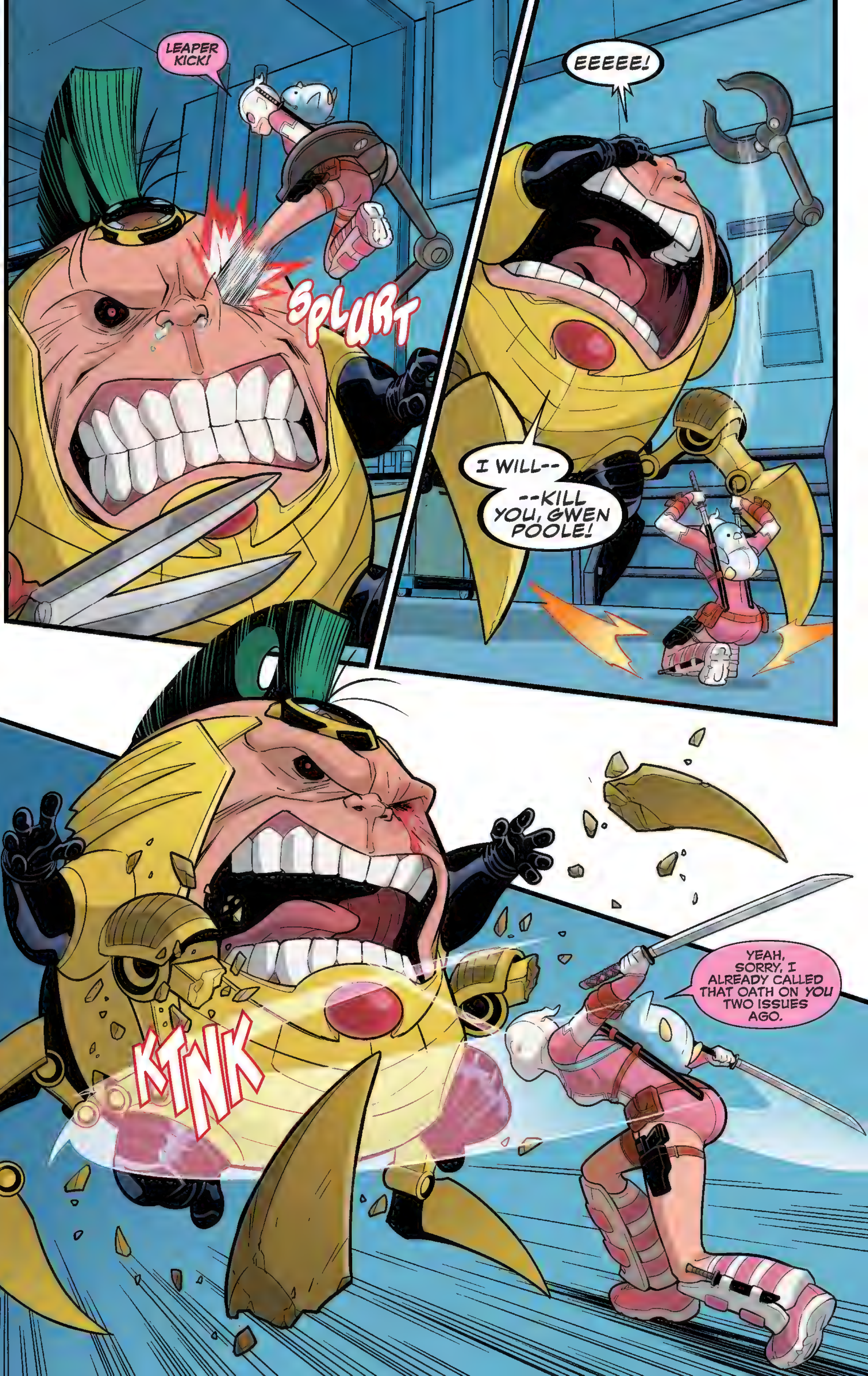

WHERE TO GET A NEW REPLACEMENT...I WONDER IF THERE ARE ANY OLD DOOMBOTS LYING AROUND. THAT *ONE* DID GOOD WORK WITH THOSE ROBOT-ONLY AVENGERS.
PERHAPS I'LL PUT AN AD ON THE DARK NET.
HOW DO YOU GET TO THE DARK NET?
HEY, *SMARTEST GUY ON THE PLANET.*
SFFTTZ
THANKS FOR THE MONEY TO BUY A *SHIELD GENERATOR.*

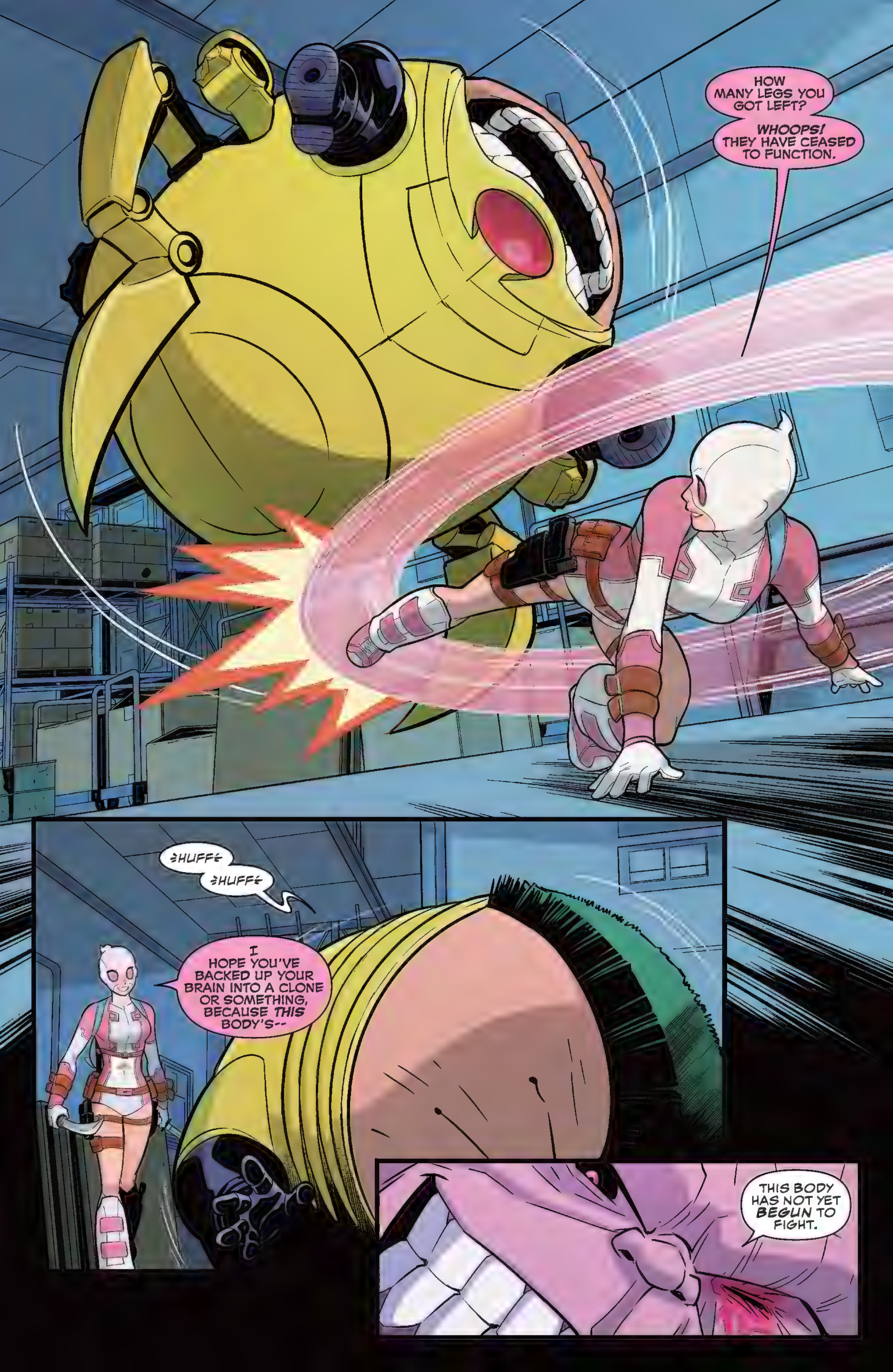

WH-WHAT?!
YOU THINK I HAVEN'T BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT?! IT WAS INEVITABLE, YOU HORROR-SIZED MISTER POTATO HEAD.
YOU KILLED MY ONLY FRIEND AND MADE ME YOUR HENCHMAN.
IF YOU KILL ME TODAY, I'M MAKING SURE YOU'RE CANCELED, TOO.
PWOOF
HOW DARE--WHERE ARE YOU?!
I'M A GHOST NINJA, FOOL! I'VE BEEN SAYING IT THIS WHOLE TIME!

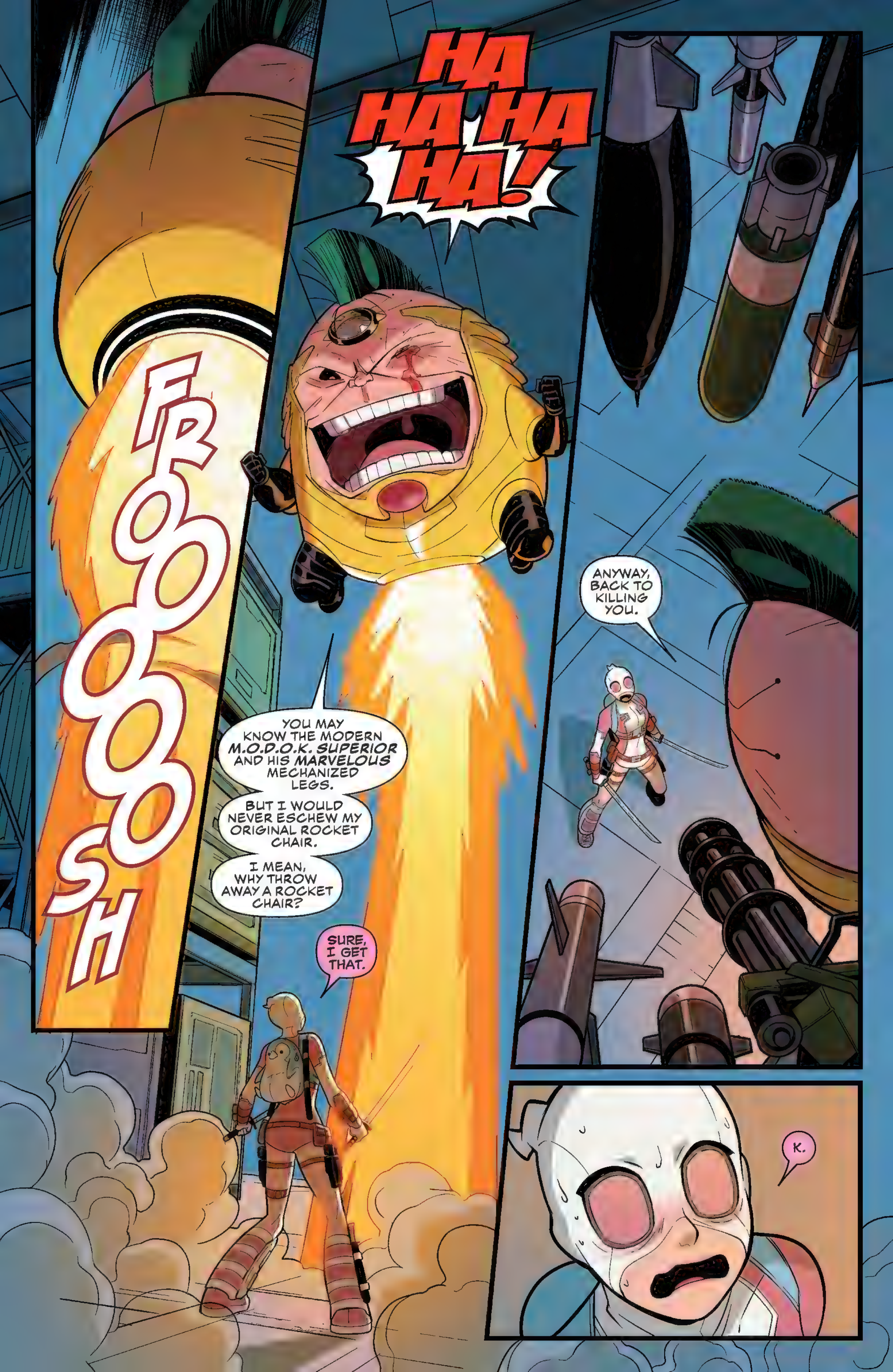

ALL RIGHT, GWEN. VERY GOOD. YOU HAVE ONE OF TONY STARK'S POWERS NOW.
MONEY.
BUT I KNOW WHAT'S ON THE MARKET, AND I'M SURE WHAT YOU'VE ACQUIRED FROM RECENT WORK WOULD NOT AFFORD A SUBSTANTIAL ENERGY SHIELD.
ONE USE ONLY--
BLAM
SHATTER
AAH!
YOU GOT ME!
GOOD THING I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT ANYMORE!
CHK-CHK

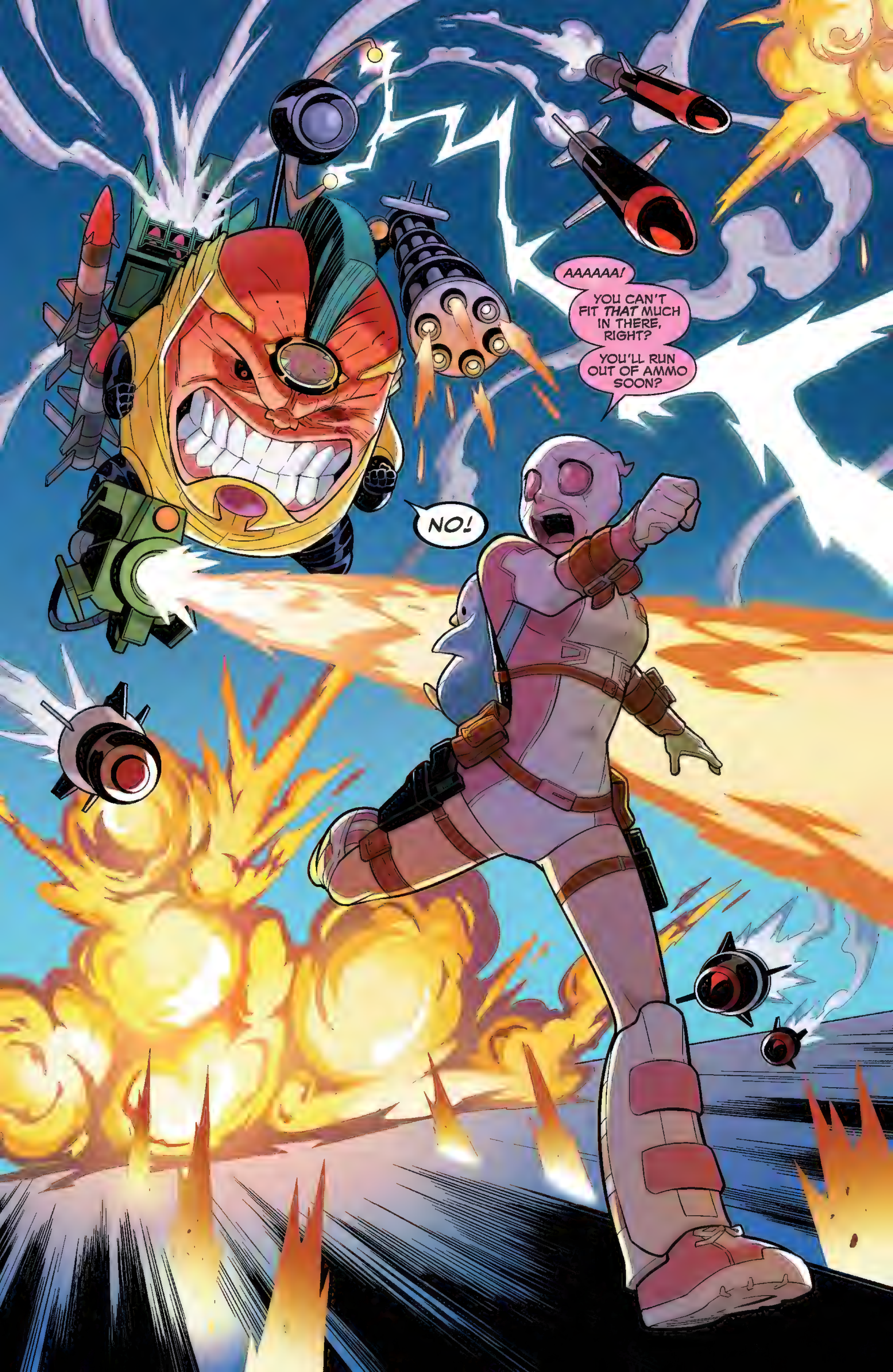

MY GEM WAS BUT ONE WEAPON FOR YOU TO WORRY ABOUT.
WAIT, I HAVEN'T LEARNED ERRATIC TARGETS YET!
BLAM
YAAAAAH!
YIPE!
TCHKT
"FIGHT DIRTY, MADEMOISELLE."
NGGHAAAA!
B-B-BOOM

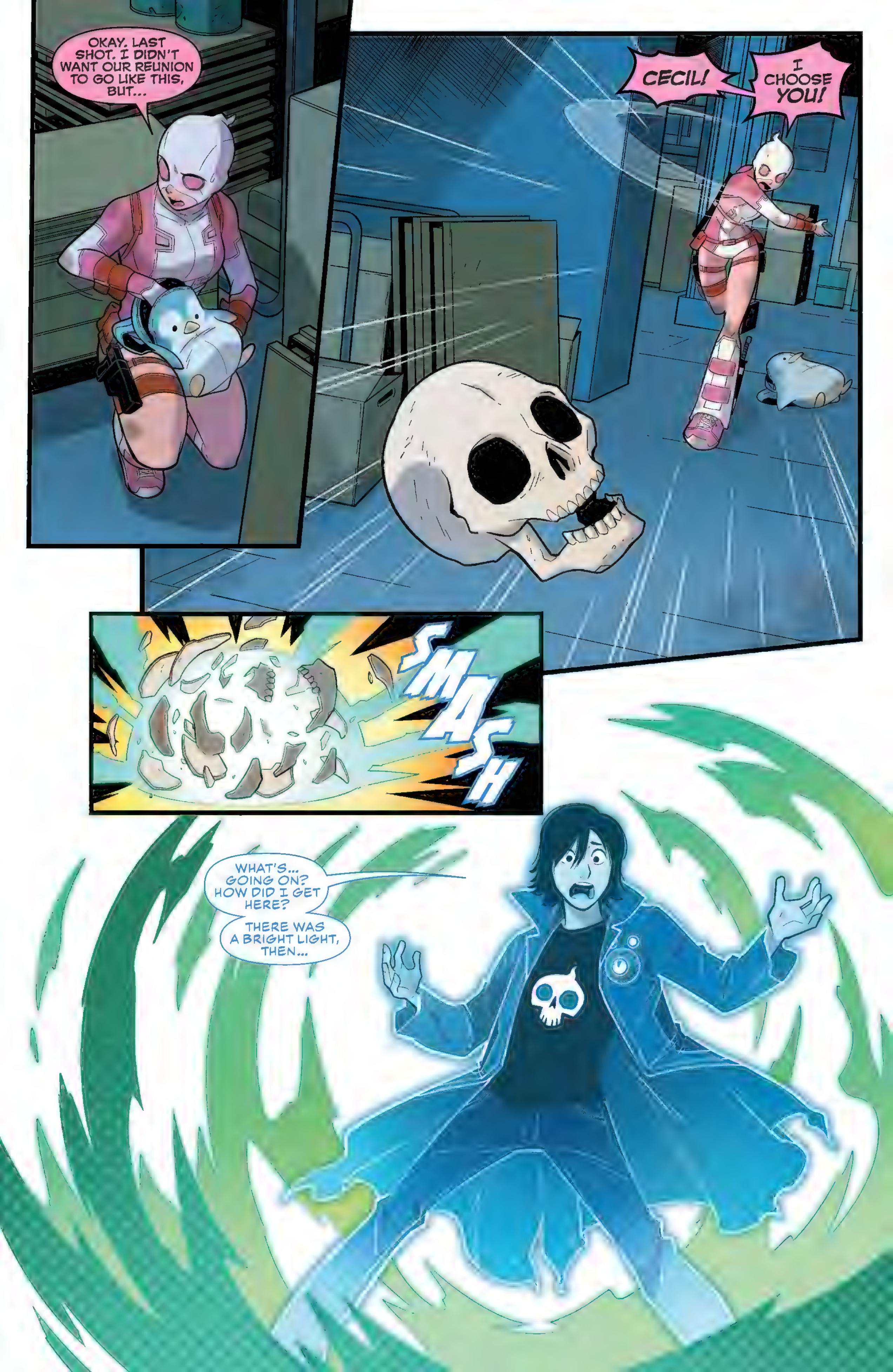

DO YOU THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY ADVERSARY I'VE FACED WHO'S HAD TRICKS?!
THEY ALL HAVE TRICKS!
GROSS GROSS GROSS!
AND I HAVE A COUNTER FOR EVERY ONE.
TRY ONE! THEY'RE ALL VERY SHARP.
NGGH.

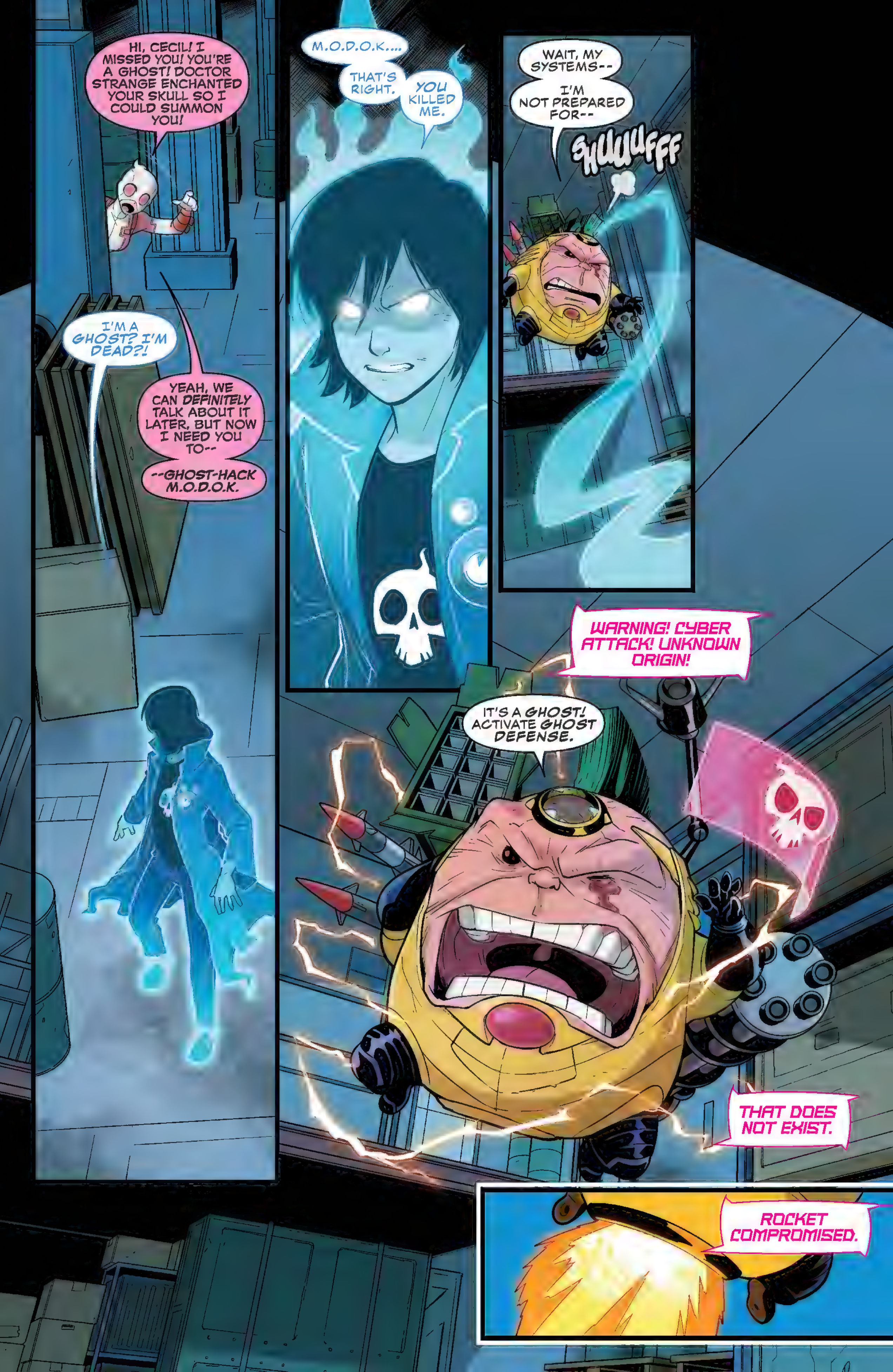

LEAPER KICK!
SPLURT
EEEEE!
I WILL--
--KILL YOU, GWEN POOLE!
KTNK
YEAH, SORRY, I ALREADY CALLED THAT OATH ON *YOU* TWO ISSUES AGO.

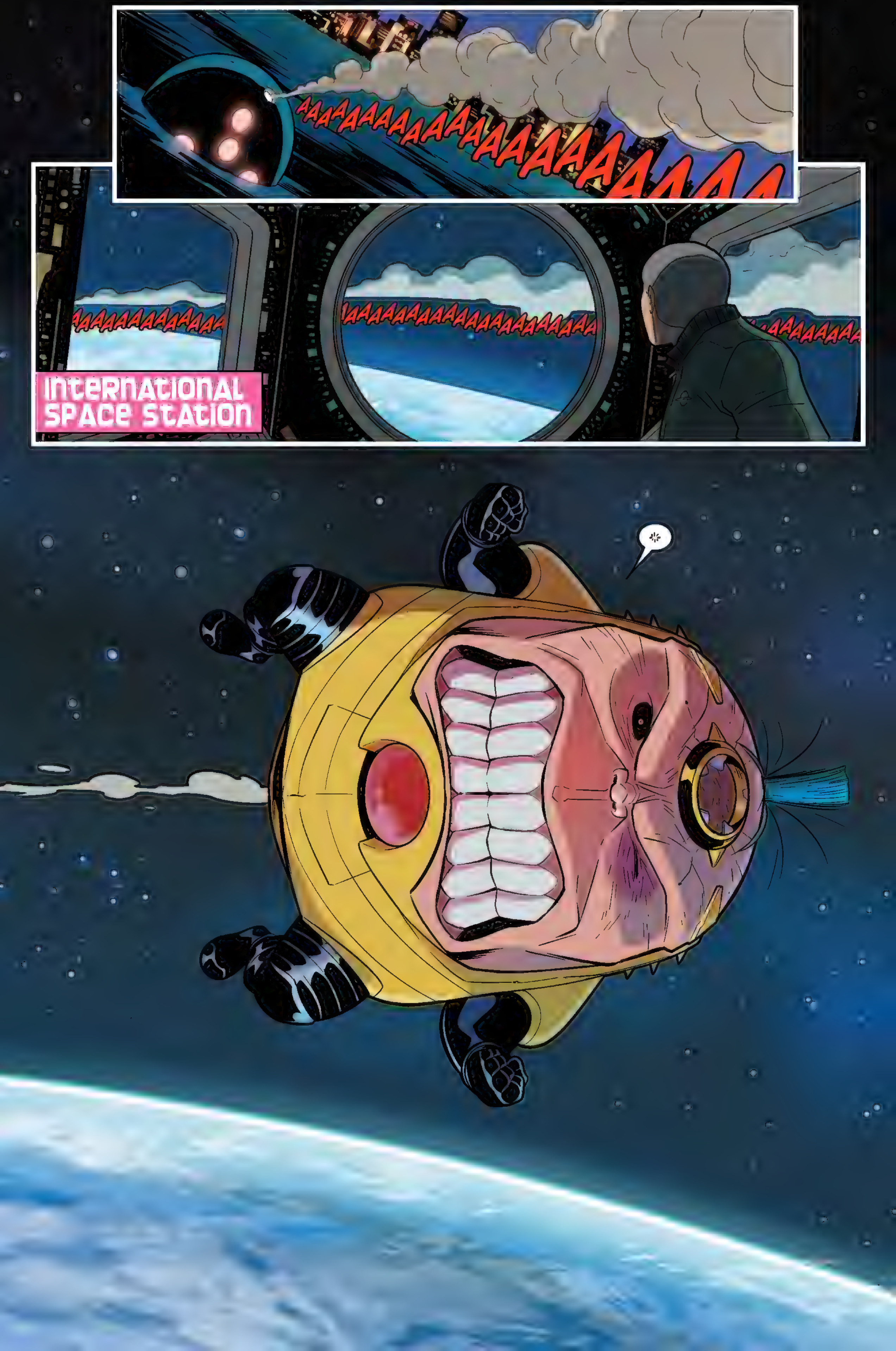

HOW MANY LEGS YOU GOT LEFT?
WHOOPS! THEY HAVE CEASED TO FUNCTION.
≠HUFF≠
≠HUFF≠
I HOPE YOU'VE BACKED UP YOUR BRAIN INTO A CLONE OR SOMETHING, BECAUSE *THIS* BODY'S--
THIS BODY HAS NOT YET *BEGUN* TO FIGHT.

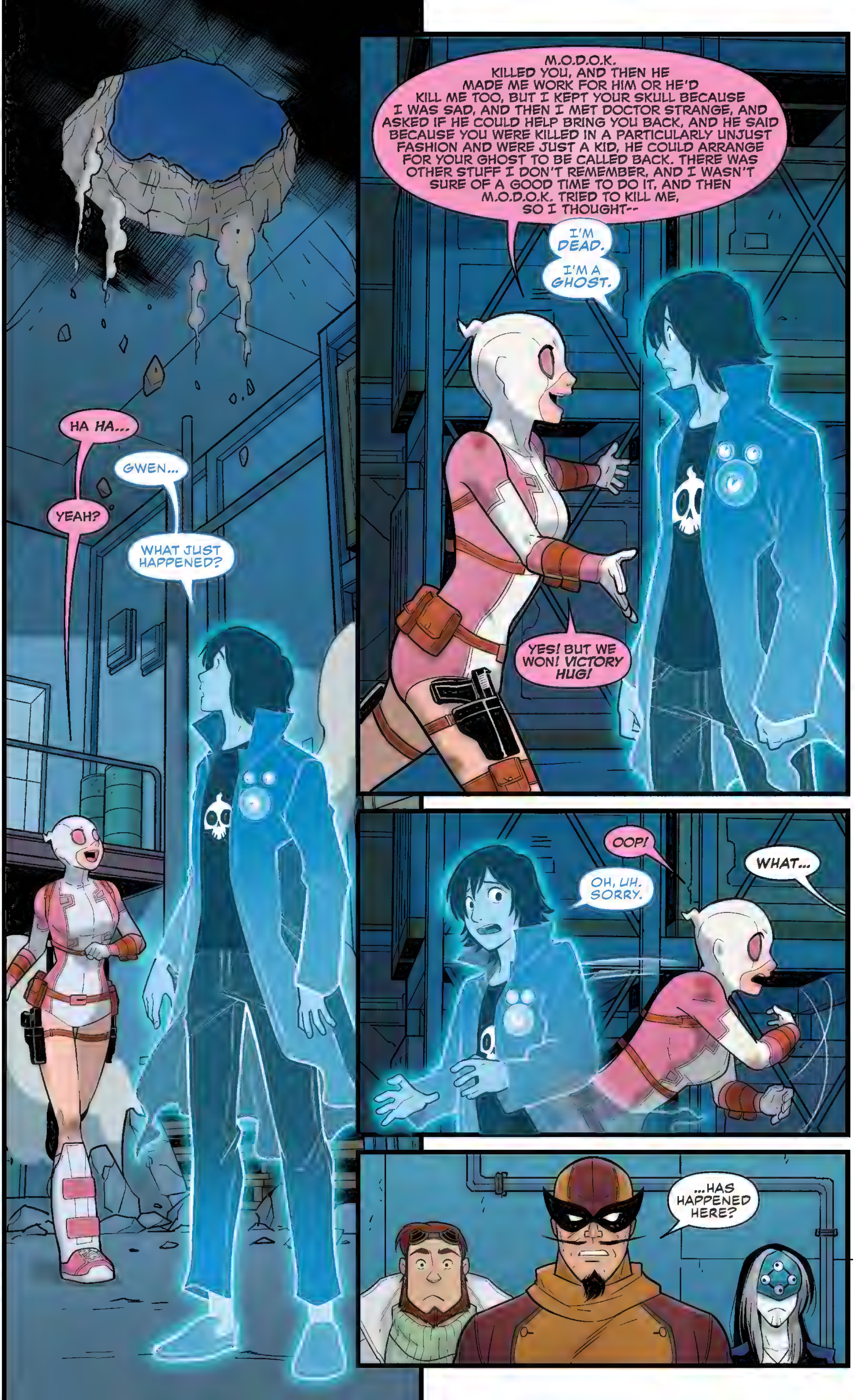

FROOOOOOSH
HA HA HA HA HA!
YOU MAY KNOW THE MODERN M.O.D.O.K. SUPERIOR AND HIS MARVELOUS MECHANIZED LEGS.
BUT I WOULD NEVER ESCHEW MY ORIGINAL ROCKET CHAIR.
I MEAN, WHY THROW AWAY A ROCKET CHAIR?
SURE, I GET THAT.
ANYWAY, BACK TO KILLING YOU.
K.

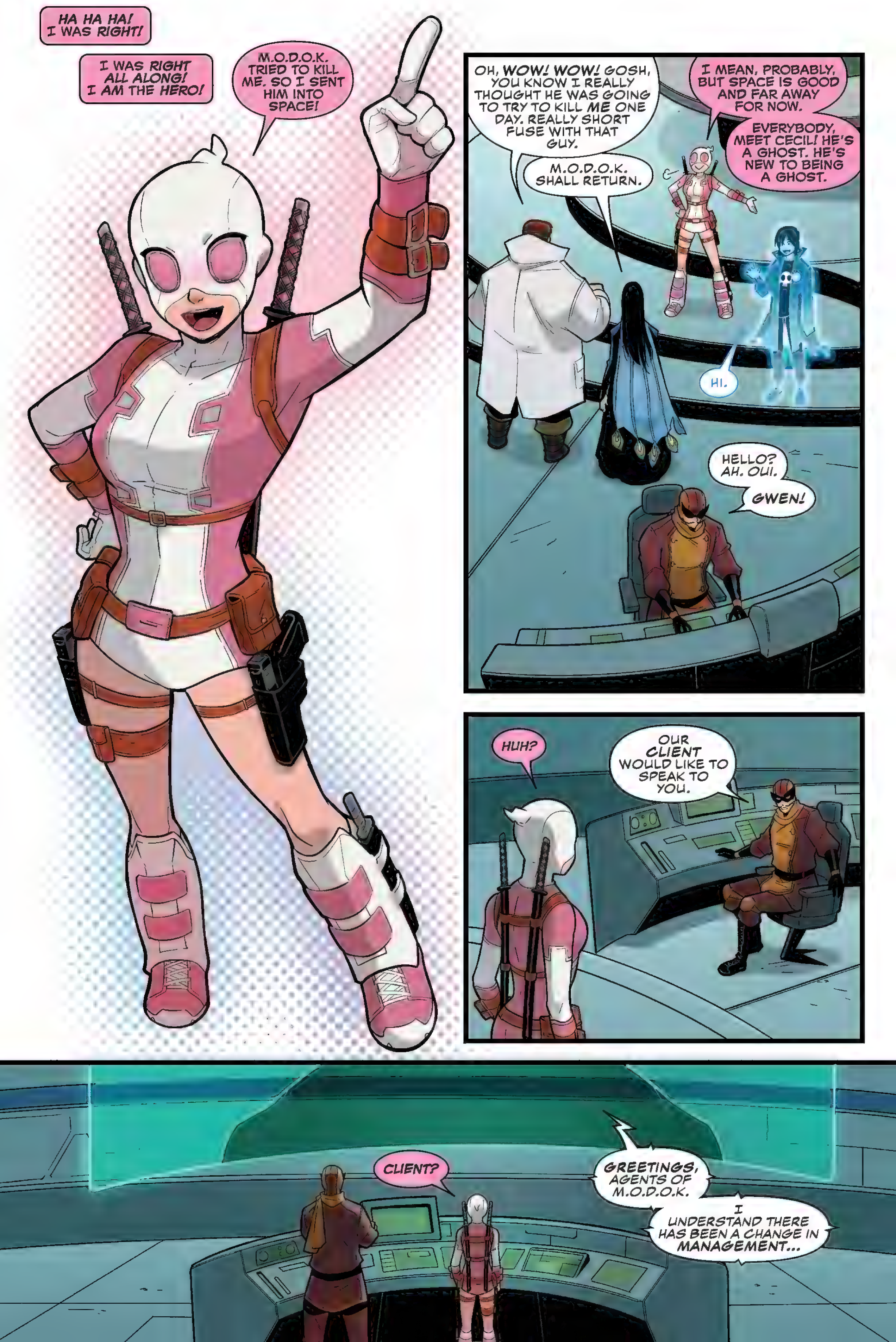

AAAAAA!
YOU CAN'T FIT *THAT* MUCH IN THERE, RIGHT?
YOU'LL RUN OUT OF AMMO SOON?
NO!


OKAY. LAST SHOT. I DIDN'T WANT OUR REUNION TO GO LIKE THIS, BUT...
CECIL!
I CHOOSE YOU!
SMASH
WHAT'S... GOING ON? HOW DID I GET HERE?
THERE WAS A BRIGHT LIGHT, THEN...

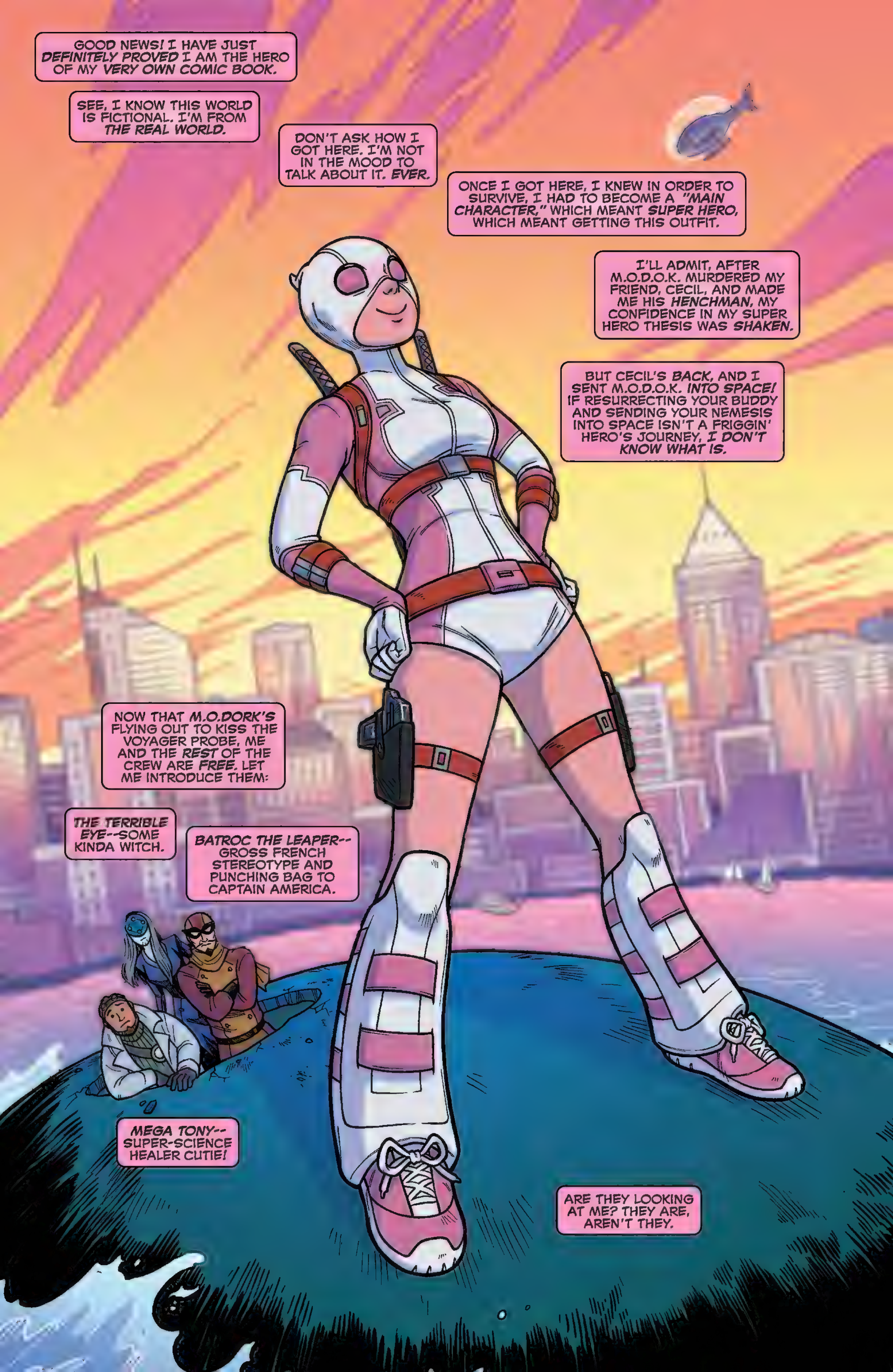

HI, CECIL! I MISSED YOU! YOU'RE A GHOST! DOCTOR STRANGE ENCHANTED YOUR SKULL SO I COULD SUMMON YOU!
I'M A GHOST? I'M DEAD?!
YEAH, WE CAN DEFINITELY TALK ABOUT IT LATER, BUT NOW I NEED YOU TO--
--GHOST-HACK M.O.D.O.K.
M.O.D.O.K....
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU KILLED ME.
WAIT, MY SYSTEMS--
I'M NOT PREPARED FOR--
SHUUUFFF
WARNING! CYBER ATTACK! UNKNOWN ORIGIN!
IT'S A GHOST! ACTIVATE GHOST DEFENSE.
THAT DOES NOT EXIST.
ROCKET COMPROMISED.

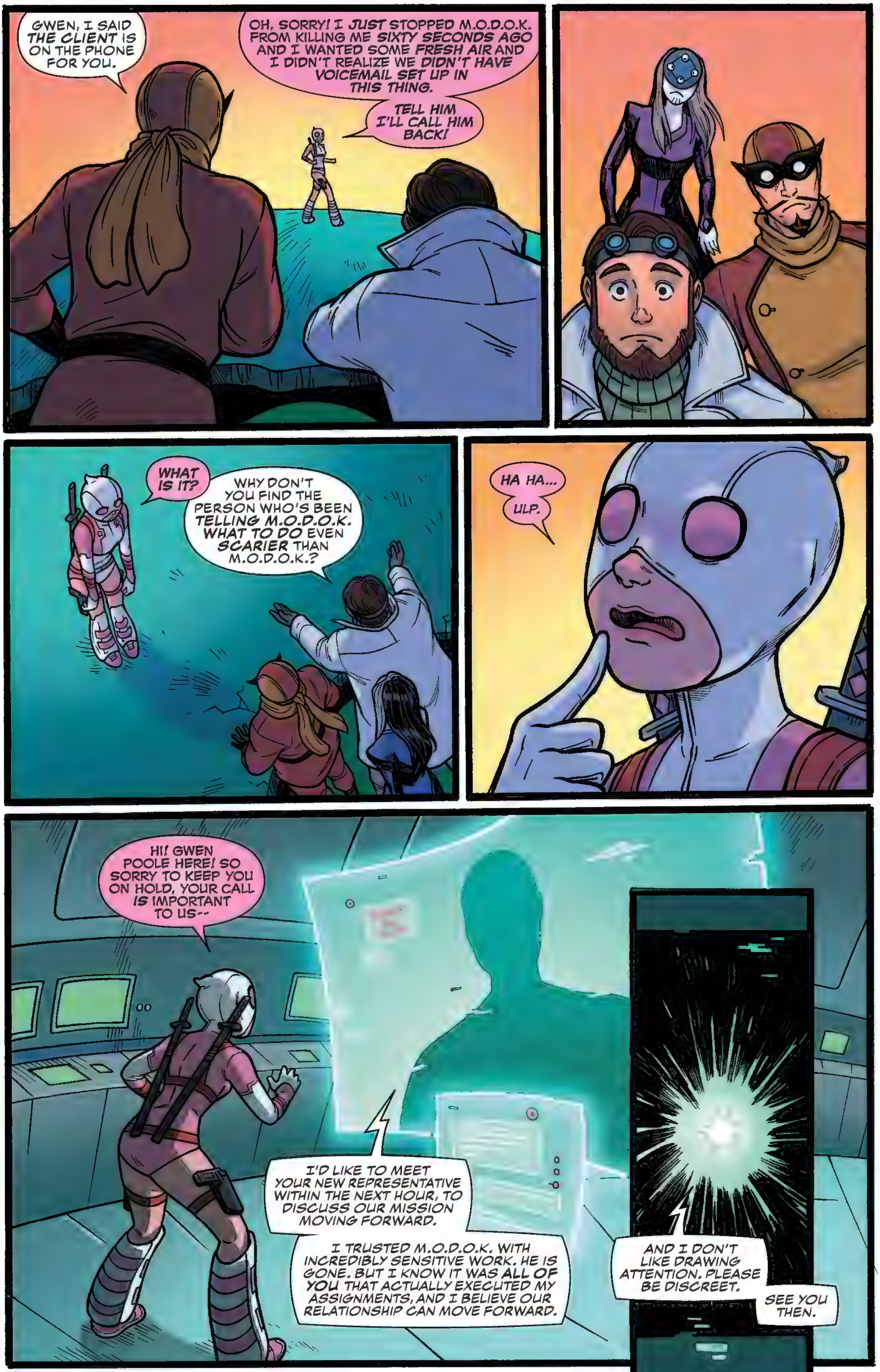

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION
AAAAAAAAA

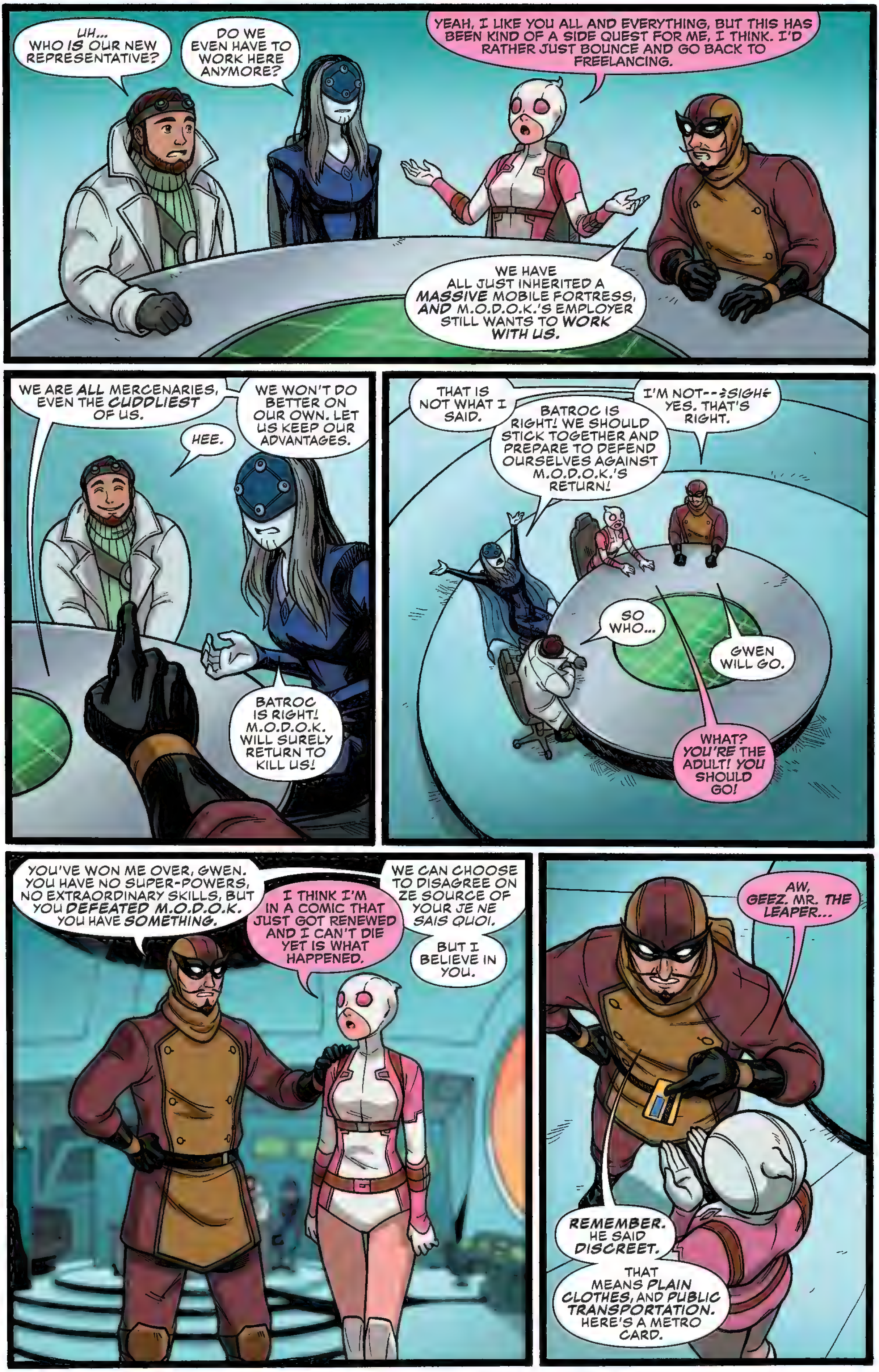

HA HA...
GWEN...
YEAH?
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
M.O.D.O.K. KILLED YOU, AND THEN HE MADE ME WORK FOR HIM OR HE'D KILL ME TOO, BUT I KEPT YOUR SKULL BECAUSE I WAS SAD, AND THEN I MET DOCTOR STRANGE, AND ASKED IF HE COULD HELP BRING YOU BACK, AND HE SAID BECAUSE YOU WERE KILLED IN A PARTICULARLY UNJUST FASHION AND WERE JUST A KID, HE COULD ARRANGE FOR YOUR GHOST TO BE CALLED BACK. THERE WAS OTHER STUFF I DON'T REMEMBER, AND I WASN'T SURE OF A GOOD TIME TO DO IT, AND THEN M.O.D.O.K. TRIED TO KILL ME, SO I THOUGHT--
I'M *DEAD.*
I'M A *GHOST.*
YES! BUT WE WON! *VICTORY HUG!*
OOP!
OH, UH. SORRY.
WHAT...
...HAS HAPPENED HERE?

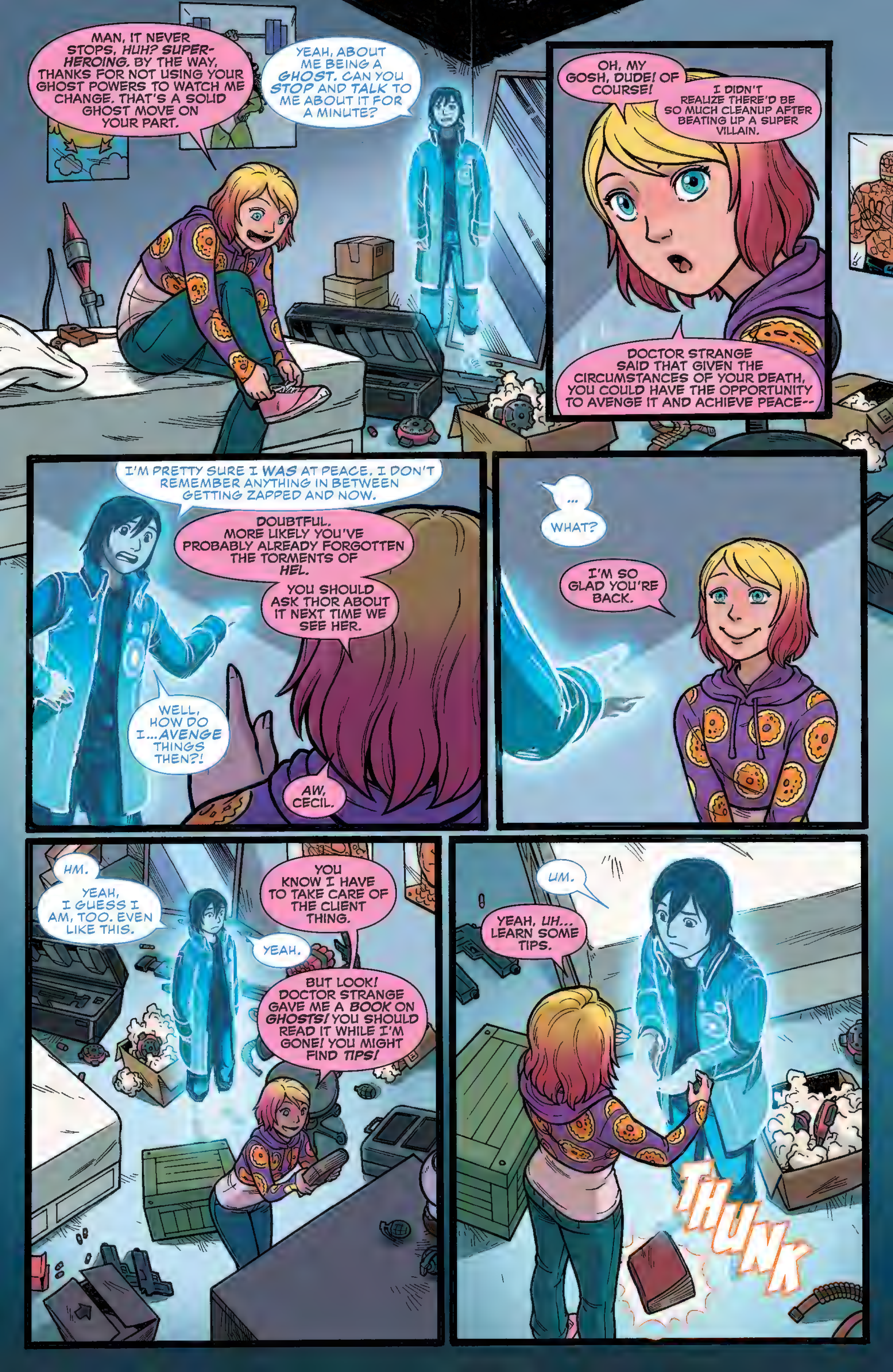

HA HA HA! I WAS RIGHT!
I WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG! I AM THE HERO!
M.O.D.O.K. TRIED TO KILL ME. SO I SENT HIM INTO SPACE!
OH, WOW! WOW! GOSH, YOU KNOW I REALLY THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO TRY TO KILL ME ONE DAY. REALLY SHORT FUSE WITH THAT GUY.
M.O.D.O.K. SHALL RETURN.
I MEAN, PROBABLY, BUT SPACE IS GOOD AND FAR AWAY FOR NOW.
EVERYBODY, MEET CECIL! HE'S A GHOST. HE'S NEW TO BEING A GHOST.
HI.
HELLO? AH. OUI.
GWEN!
HUH?
OUR CLIENT WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO YOU.
CLIENT?
GREETINGS, AGENTS OF M.O.D.O.K.
I UNDERSTAND THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT...

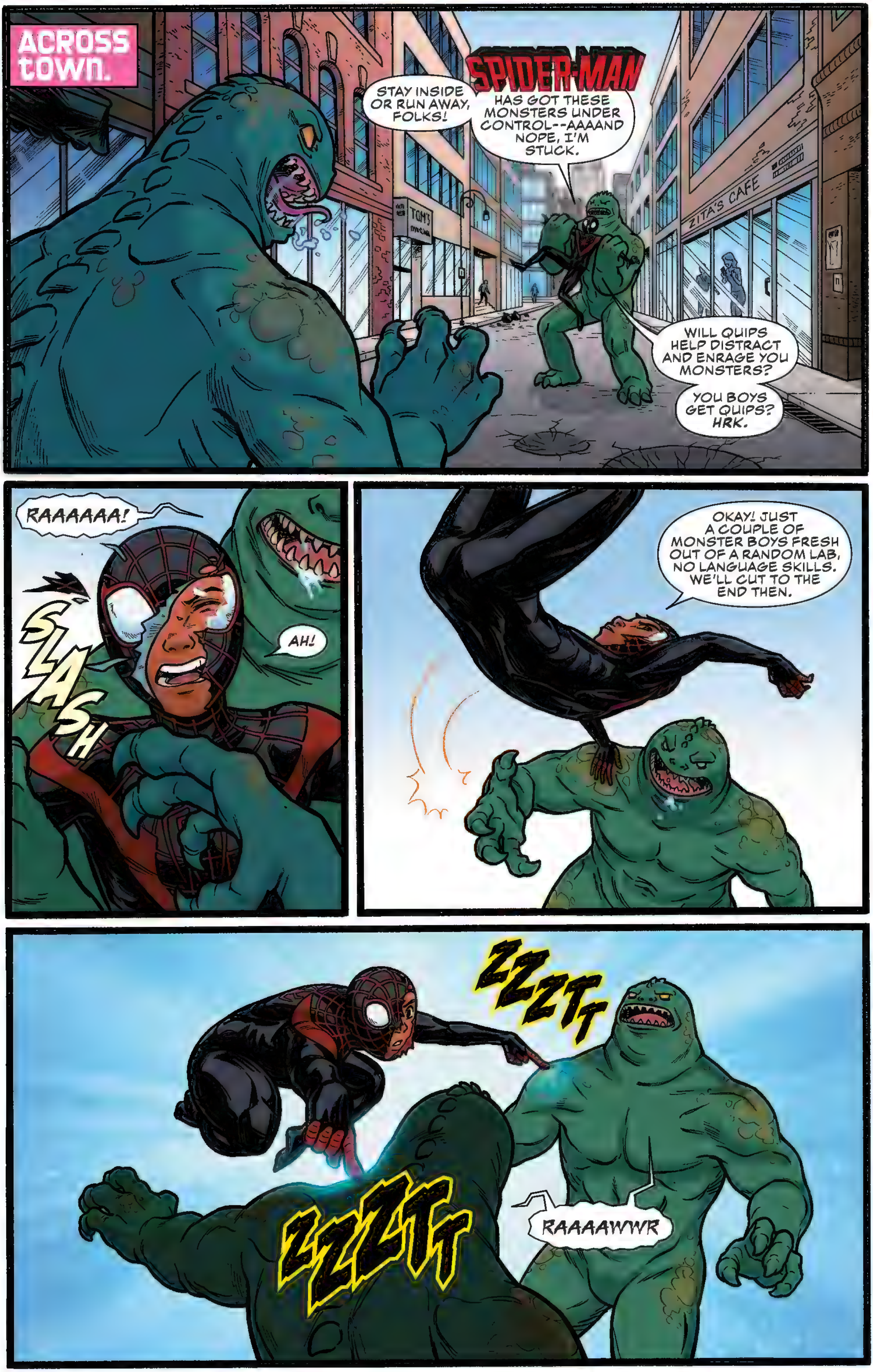
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #5

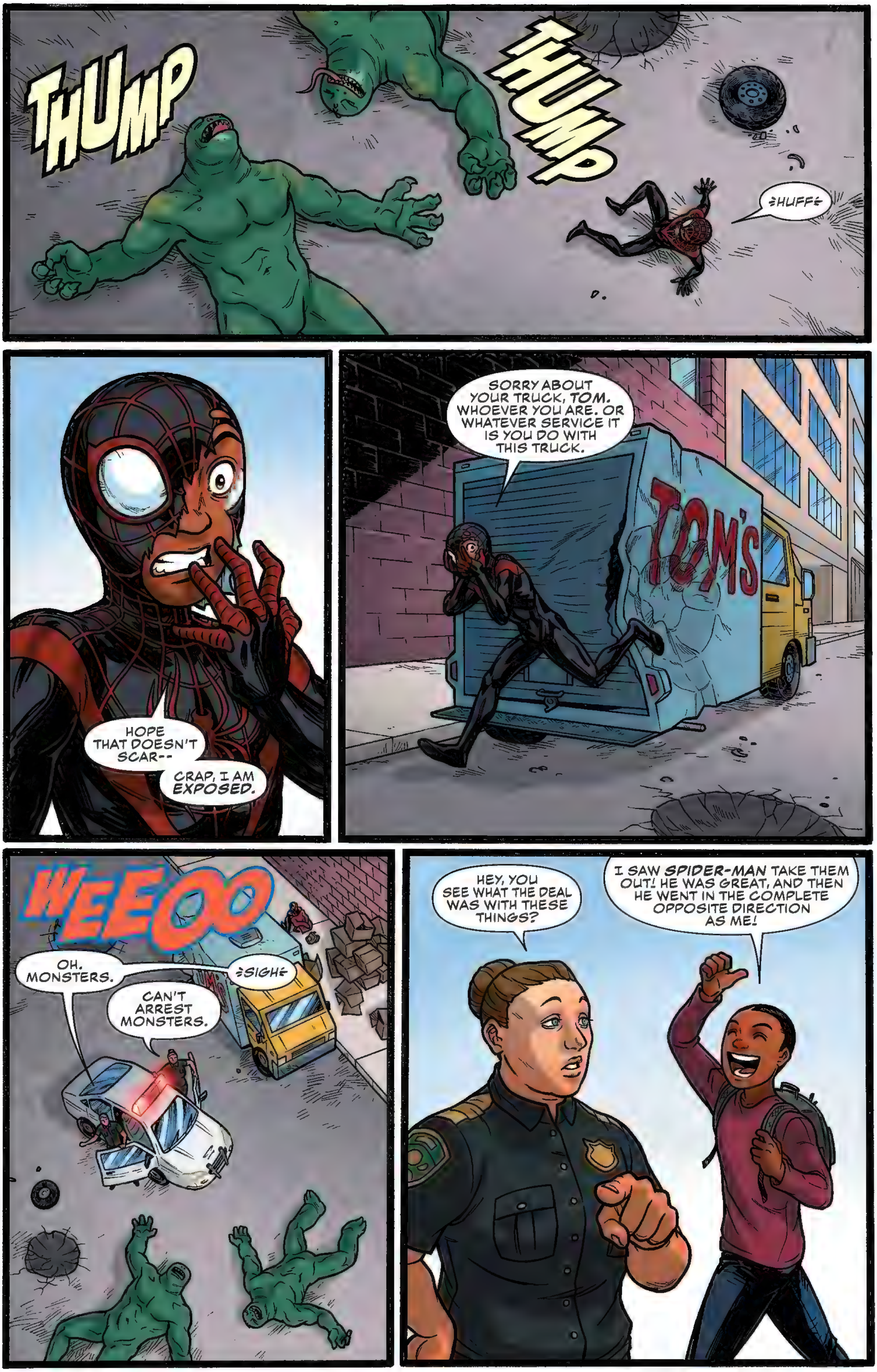

GOOD NEWS! I HAVE JUST *DEFINITELY PROVED* I AM THE HERO OF MY *VERY OWN COMIC BOOK.*
SEE, I KNOW THIS WORLD IS FICTIONAL. I'M FROM *THE REAL WORLD.*
DON'T ASK HOW I GOT HERE. I'M NOT IN THE MOOD TO TALK ABOUT IT. *EVER.*
ONCE I GOT HERE, I KNEW IN ORDER TO SURVIVE, I HAD TO BECOME A *"MAIN CHARACTER,"* WHICH MEANT *SUPER HERO*, WHICH MEANT GETTING THIS OUTFIT.
I'LL ADMIT, AFTER M.O.D.O.K. MURDERED MY FRIEND, CECIL, AND MADE ME HIS *HENCHMAN*, MY CONFIDENCE IN MY SUPER HERO THESIS WAS *SHAKEN.*
BUT CECIL'S *BACK*, AND I SENT M.O.D.O.K. *INTO SPACE!* IF RESURRECTING YOUR BUDDY AND SENDING YOUR NEMESIS INTO SPACE ISN'T A FRIGGIN' HERO'S JOURNEY, *I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS.*
NOW THAT *M.O.DORK'S* FLYING OUT TO KISS THE VOYAGER PROBE, ME AND THE *REST* OF THE CREW ARE *FREE*. LET ME INTRODUCE THEM:
THE TERRIBLE EYE--SOME KINDA WITCH.
BATROC THE LEAPER--GROSS FRENCH STEREOTYPE AND PUNCHING BAG TO CAPTAIN AMERICA.
MEGA TONY--SUPER-SCIENCE HEALER CUTIE!
ARE THEY LOOKING AT ME? THEY ARE, AREN'T THEY.

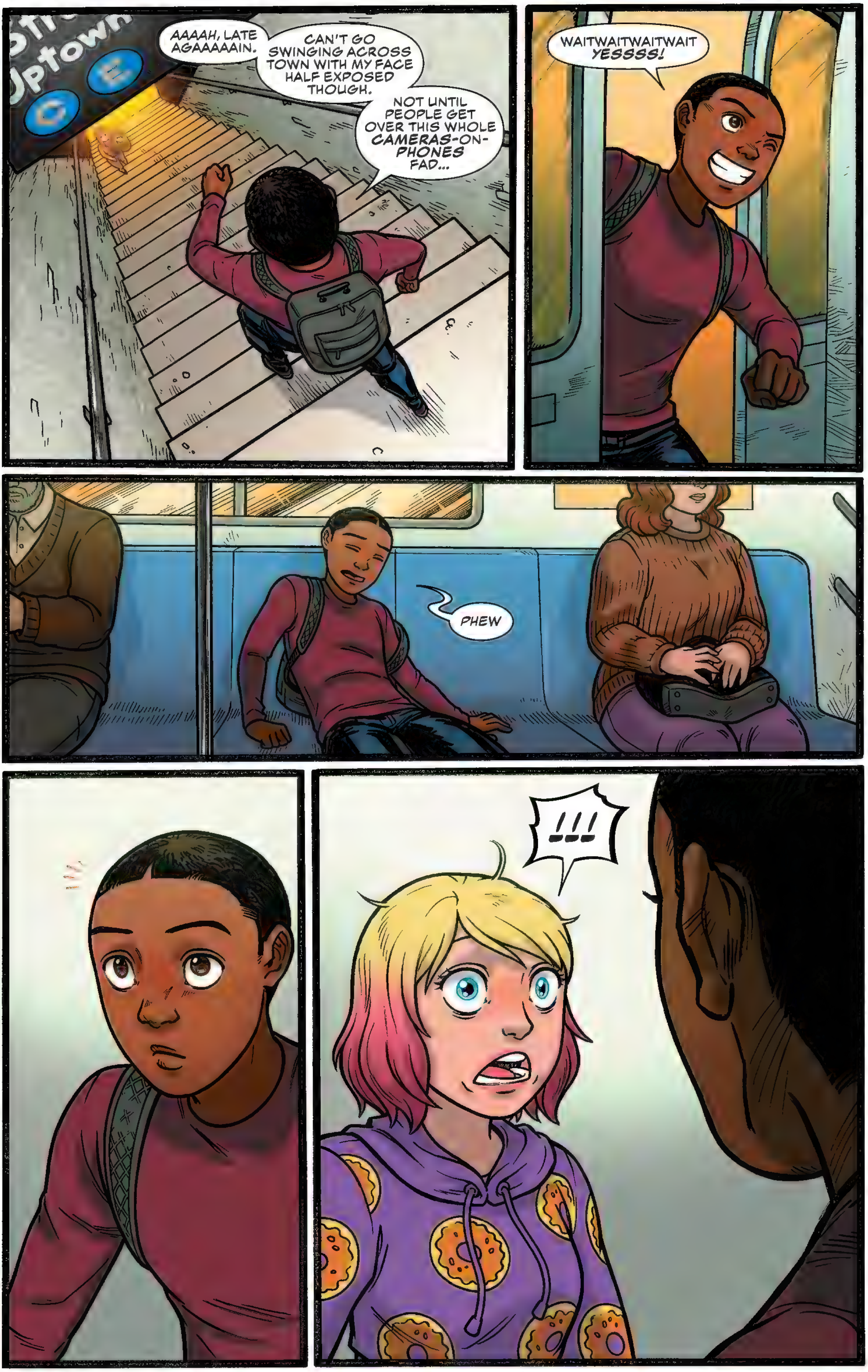

GWEN, I SAID THE CLIENT IS ON THE PHONE FOR YOU.
OH, SORRY! I JUST STOPPED M.O.D.O.K. FROM KILLING ME SIXTY SECONDS AGO AND I WANTED SOME FRESH AIR AND I DIDN'T REALIZE WE DIDN'T HAVE VOICEMAIL SET UP IN THIS THING.
TELL HIM I'LL CALL HIM BACK!
WHAT IS IT?
WHY DON'T YOU FIND THE PERSON WHO'S BEEN TELLING M.O.D.O.K. WHAT TO DO EVEN SCARIER THAN M.O.D.O.K.?
HA HA...
ULP.
HI! GWEN POOLE HERE! SO SORRY TO KEEP YOU ON HOLD, YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US--
I'D LIKE TO MEET YOUR NEW REPRESENTATIVE WITHIN THE NEXT HOUR, TO DISCUSS OUR MISSION MOVING FORWARD.
I TRUSTED M.O.D.O.K. WITH INCREDIBLY SENSITIVE WORK. HE IS GONE. BUT I KNOW IT WAS ALL OF YOU THAT ACTUALLY EXECUTED MY ASSIGNMENTS, AND I BELIEVE OUR RELATIONSHIP CAN MOVE FORWARD.
AND I DON'T LIKE DRAWING ATTENTION. PLEASE BE DISCREET.
SEE YOU THEN.

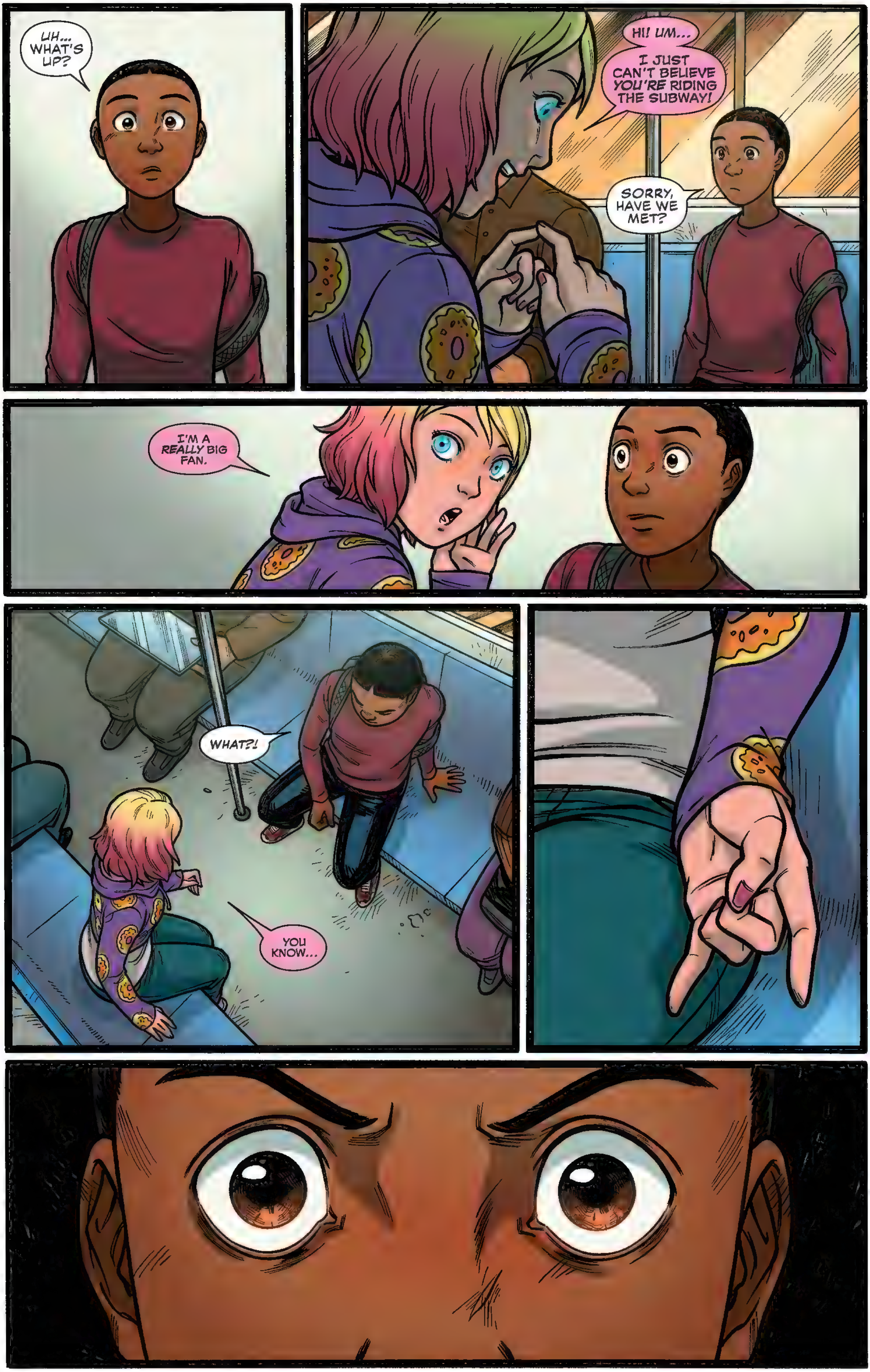

UH... WHO IS OUR NEW REPRESENTATIVE?
DO WE EVEN HAVE TO WORK HERE ANYMORE?
YEAH, I LIKE YOU ALL AND EVERYTHING, BUT THIS HAS BEEN KIND OF A SIDE QUEST FOR ME, I THINK. I'D RATHER JUST BOUNCE AND GO BACK TO FREELANCING.
WE HAVE ALL JUST INHERITED A MASSIVE MOBILE FORTRESS, AND M.O.D.O.K.'S EMPLOYER STILL WANTS TO WORK WITH US.
WE ARE ALL MERCENARIES, EVEN THE CUDDLIEST OF US.
WE WON'T DO BETTER ON OUR OWN. LET US KEEP OUR ADVANTAGES.
HEE.
BATROC IS RIGHT! M.O.D.O.K. WILL SURELY RETURN TO KILL US!
THAT IS NOT WHAT I SAID.
BATROC IS RIGHT! WE SHOULD STICK TOGETHER AND PREPARE TO DEFEND OURSELVES AGAINST M.O.D.O.K.'S RETURN!
I'M NOT-- *SIGH* YES. THAT'S RIGHT.
SO WHO...
GWEN WILL GO.
WHAT? YOU'RE THE ADULT! YOU SHOULD GO!
YOU'VE WON ME OVER, GWEN. YOU HAVE NO SUPER-POWERS, NO EXTRAORDINARY SKILLS, BUT YOU DEFEATED M.O.D.O.K. YOU HAVE SOMETHING.
I THINK I'M IN A COMIC THAT JUST GOT RENEWED AND I CAN'T DIE YET IS WHAT HAPPENED.
WE CAN CHOOSE TO DISAGREE ON ZE SOURCE OF YOUR JE NE SAIS QUOI.
BUT I BELIEVE IN YOU.
AW, GEEZ. MR. THE LEAPER...
REMEMBER. HE SAID DISCREET.
THAT MEANS PLAIN CLOTHES, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. HERE'S A METRO CARD.

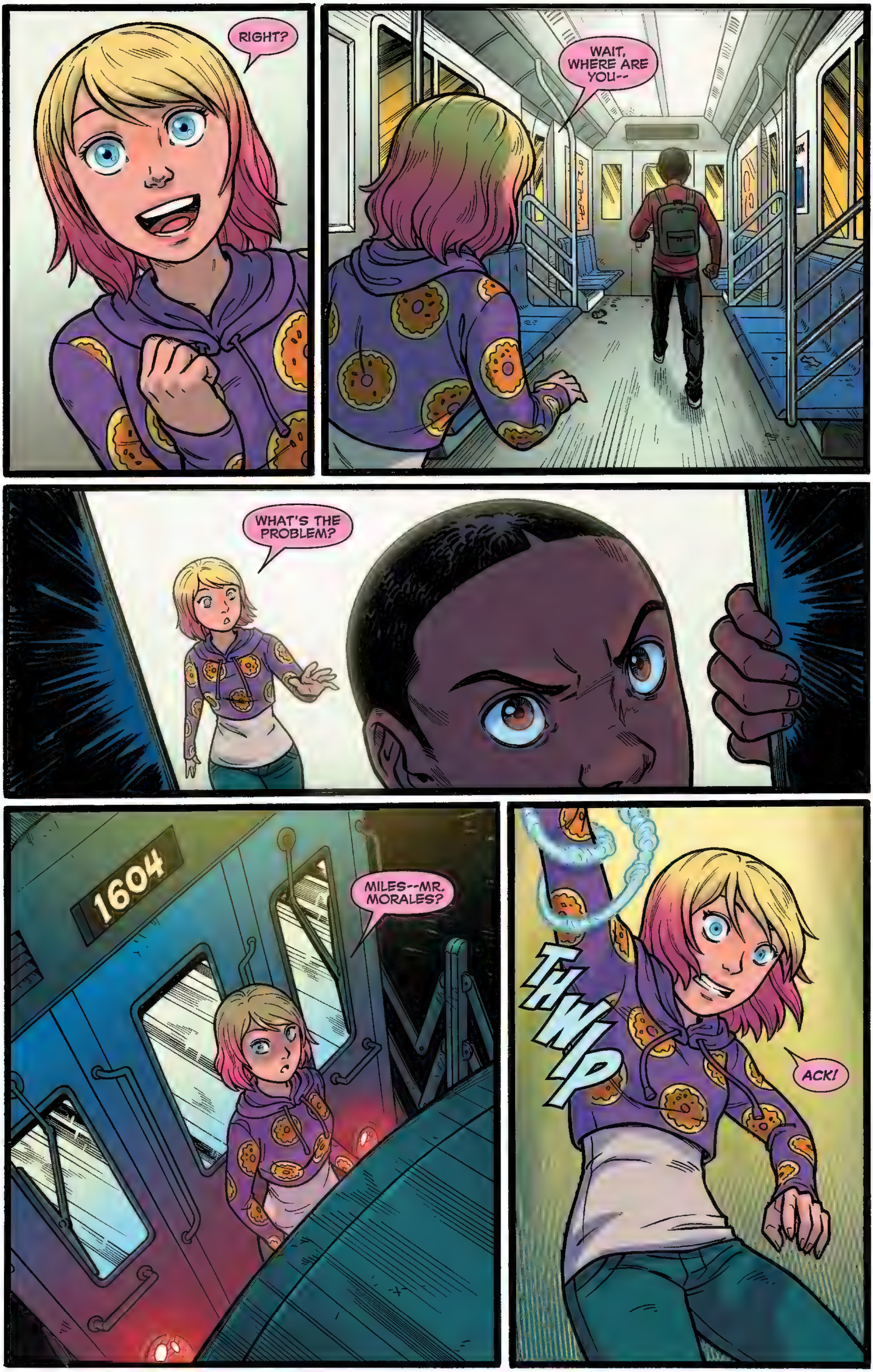

MAN, IT NEVER STOPS, HUH? SUPER-HEROING. BY THE WAY, THANKS FOR NOT USING YOUR GHOST POWERS TO WATCH ME CHANGE. THAT'S A SOLID GHOST MOVE ON YOUR PART.
YEAH, ABOUT ME BEING A GHOST. CAN YOU STOP AND TALK TO ME ABOUT IT FOR A MINUTE?
OH, MY GOSH, DUDE! OF COURSE!
I DIDN'T REALIZE THERE'D BE SO MUCH CLEANUP AFTER BEATING UP A SUPER VILLAIN.
DOCTOR STRANGE SAID THAT GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR DEATH, YOU COULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO AVENGE IT AND ACHIEVE PEACE--
I'M PRETTY SURE I WAS AT PEACE. I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING IN BETWEEN GETTING ZAPPED AND NOW.
DOUBTFUL. MORE LIKELY YOU'VE PROBABLY ALREADY FORGOTTEN THE TORMENTS OF HEL.
YOU SHOULD ASK THOR ABOUT IT NEXT TIME WE SEE HER.
WELL, HOW DO I...AVENGE THINGS THEN?!
AW, CECIL.
...
WHAT?
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE BACK.
HM.
YEAH, I GUESS I AM, TOO. EVEN LIKE THIS.
YOU KNOW I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THE CLIENT THING.
YEAH.
BUT LOOK! DOCTOR STRANGE GAVE ME A BOOK ON GHOSTS! YOU SHOULD READ IT WHILE I'M GONE! YOU MIGHT FIND TIPS!
UM.
YEAH, UH... LEARN SOME TIPS.
THUNK

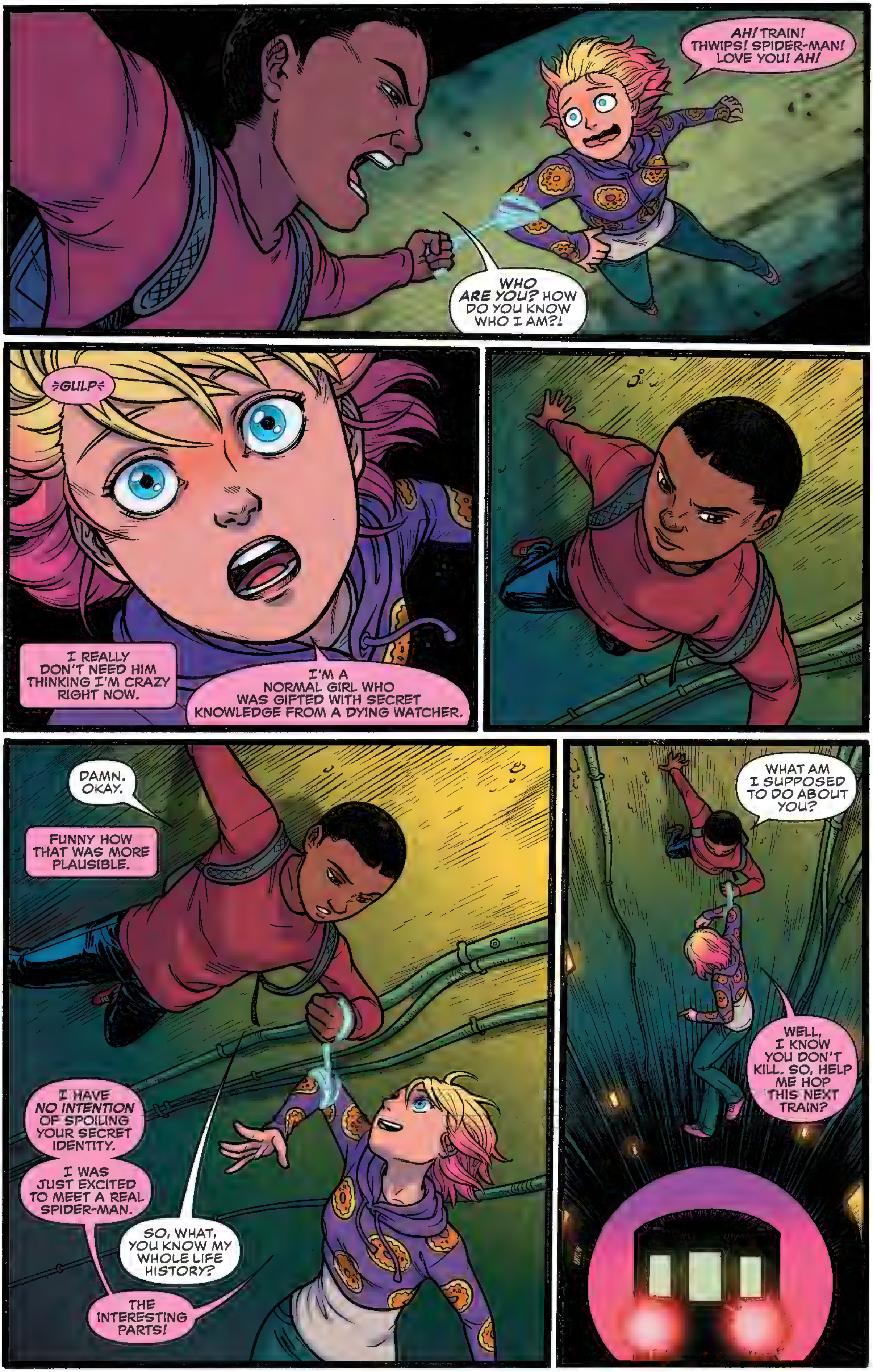

ACROSS town.
STAY INSIDE OR RUN AWAY, FOLKS!
SPIDER-MAN HAS GOT THESE MONSTERS UNDER CONTROL--AAAAND NOPE, I'M STUCK.
TOM'S
ZITA'S CAFE
WILL QUIPS HELP DISTRACT AND ENRAGE YOU MONSTERS?
YOU BOYS GET QUIPS? HRK.
RAAAAAA!
SLASH
AH!
OKAY! JUST A COUPLE OF MONSTER BOYS FRESH OUT OF A RANDOM LAB, NO LANGUAGE SKILLS. WE'LL CUT TO THE END THEN.
ZZZTT
ZZZTT
RAAAAWWR

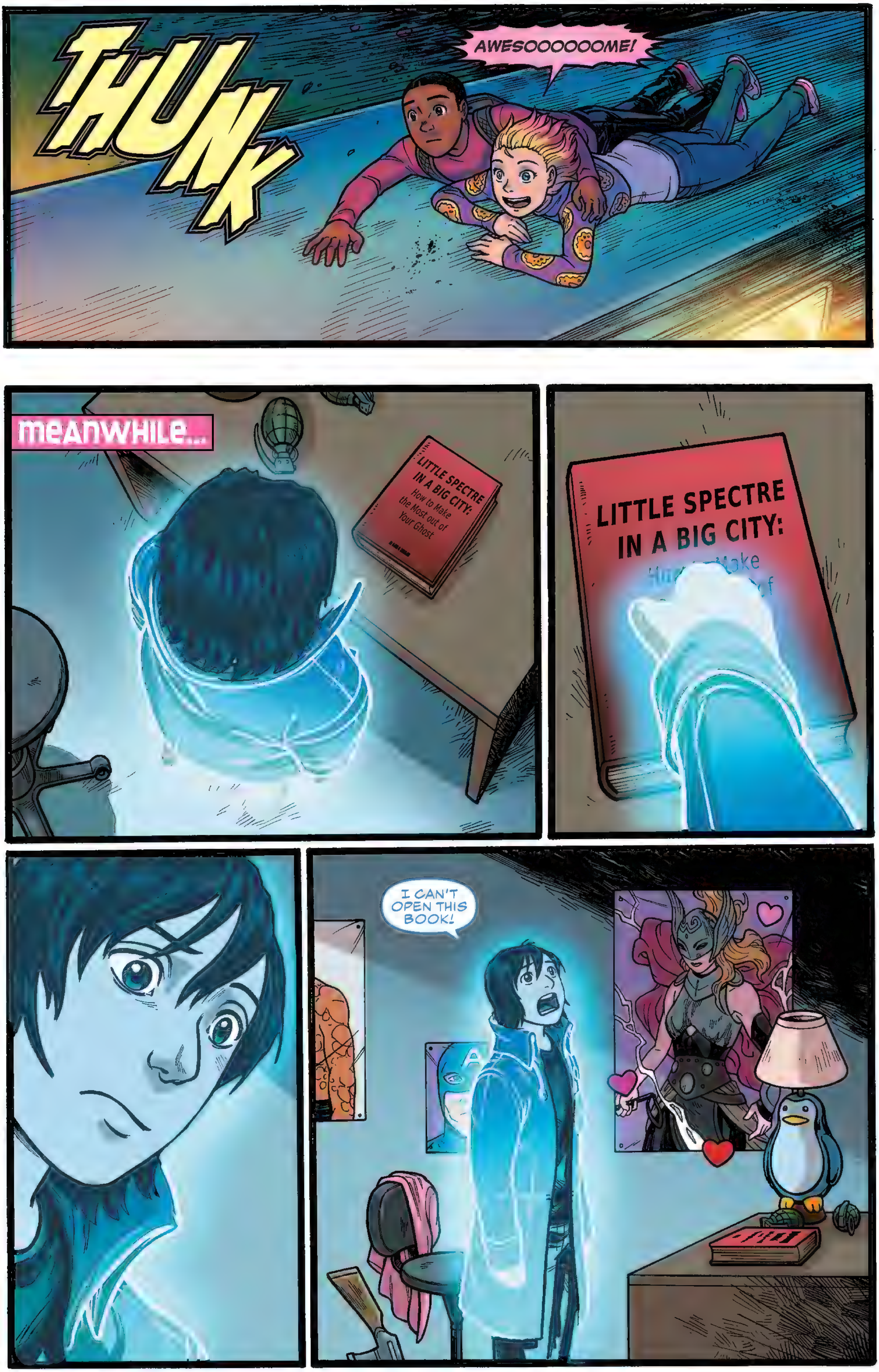

THUMP
THUMP
=HUFF=
HOPE THAT DOESN'T SCAR--
CRAP, I AM *EXPOSED.*
SORRY ABOUT YOUR TRUCK, *TOM.* WHOEVER YOU ARE. OR WHATEVER SERVICE IT IS YOU DO WITH THIS TRUCK.
TOM'S
WEEOO
OH. MONSTERS.
=SIGH=
CAN'T ARREST MONSTERS.
HEY, YOU SEE WHAT THE DEAL WAS WITH THESE THINGS?
I SAW *SPIDER-MAN* TAKE THEM OUT! HE WAS GREAT, AND THEN HE WENT IN THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE DIRECTION AS ME!

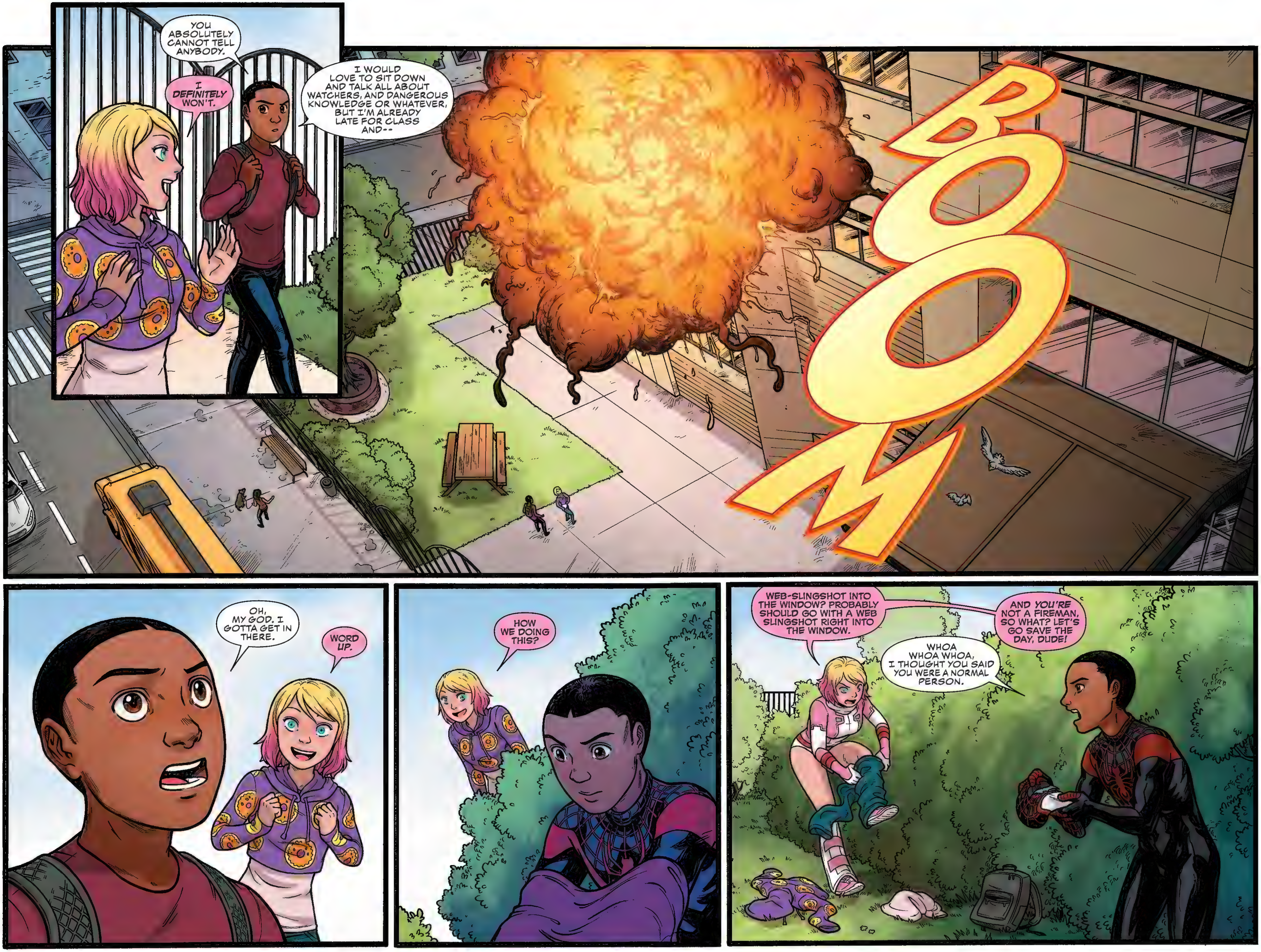

Uptown
C
E
AAAAH, LATE AGAAAAAIN.
CAN'T GO SWINGING ACROSS TOWN WITH MY FACE HALF EXPOSED THOUGH.
NOT UNTIL PEOPLE GET OVER THIS WHOLE *CAMERAS-ON-PHONES* FAD...
WAITWAITWAITWAIT *YESSSS!*
PHEW
!!!

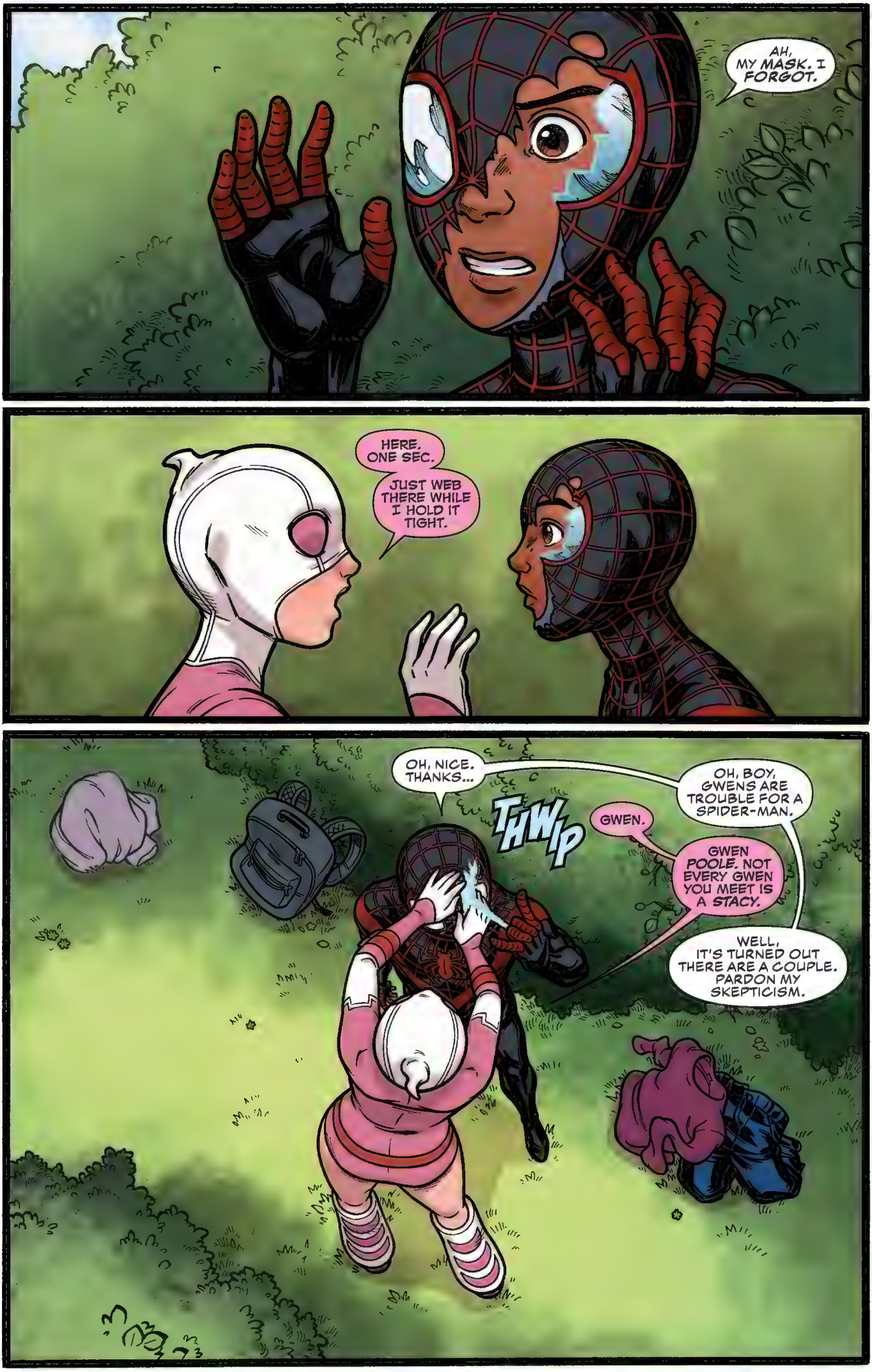

UH... WHAT'S UP?
HI! UM...
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE *YOU'RE* RIDING THE SUBWAY!
SORRY, HAVE WE MET?
I'M A *REALLY* BIG FAN.
WHAT?!
YOU KNOW...

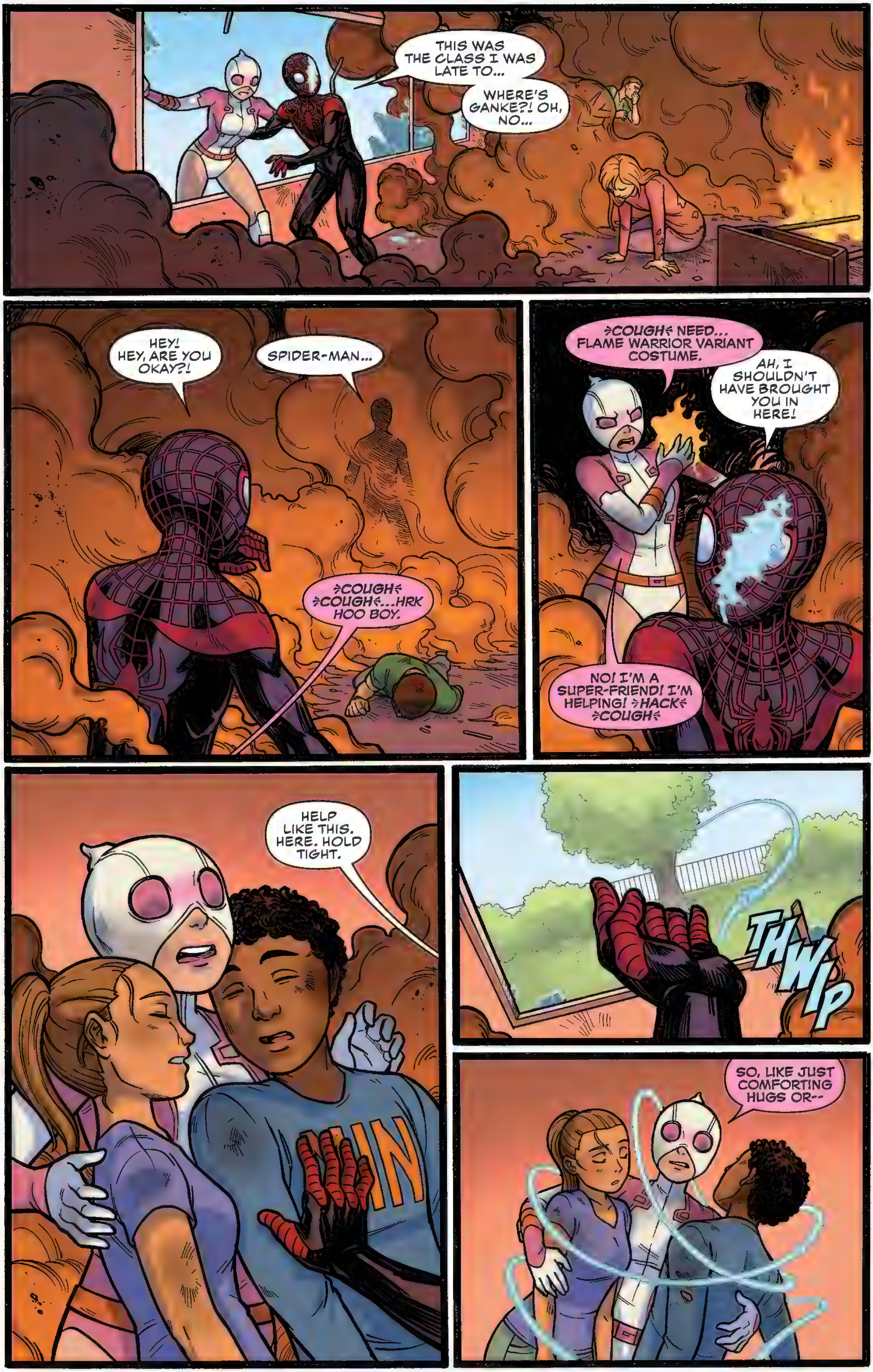

RIGHT?
WAIT, WHERE ARE YOU--
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
1604
MILES--MR. MORALES?
THWIP
ACK!

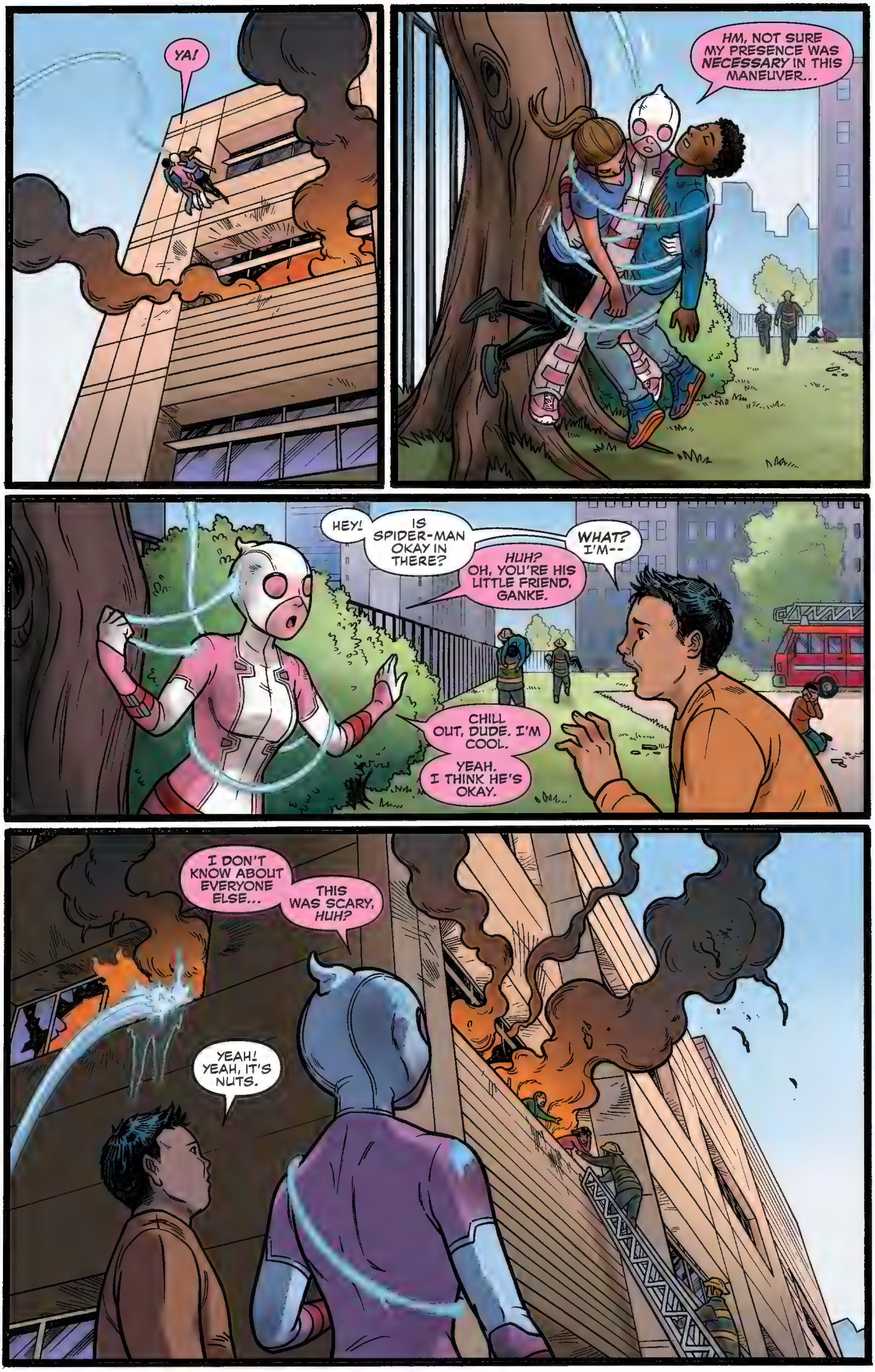

AH! TRAIN! THWIPS! SPIDER-MAN! LOVE YOU! AH!
WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?!
GULP
I REALLY DON'T NEED HIM THINKING I'M CRAZY RIGHT NOW.
I'M A NORMAL GIRL WHO WAS GIFTED WITH SECRET KNOWLEDGE FROM A DYING WATCHER.
DAMN. OKAY.
FUNNY HOW THAT WAS MORE PLAUSIBLE.
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF SPOILING YOUR SECRET IDENTITY.
I WAS JUST EXCITED TO MEET A REAL SPIDER-MAN.
SO, WHAT, YOU KNOW MY WHOLE LIFE HISTORY?
THE INTERESTING PARTS!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO ABOUT YOU?
WELL, I KNOW YOU DON'T KILL. SO, HELP ME HOP THIS NEXT TRAIN?

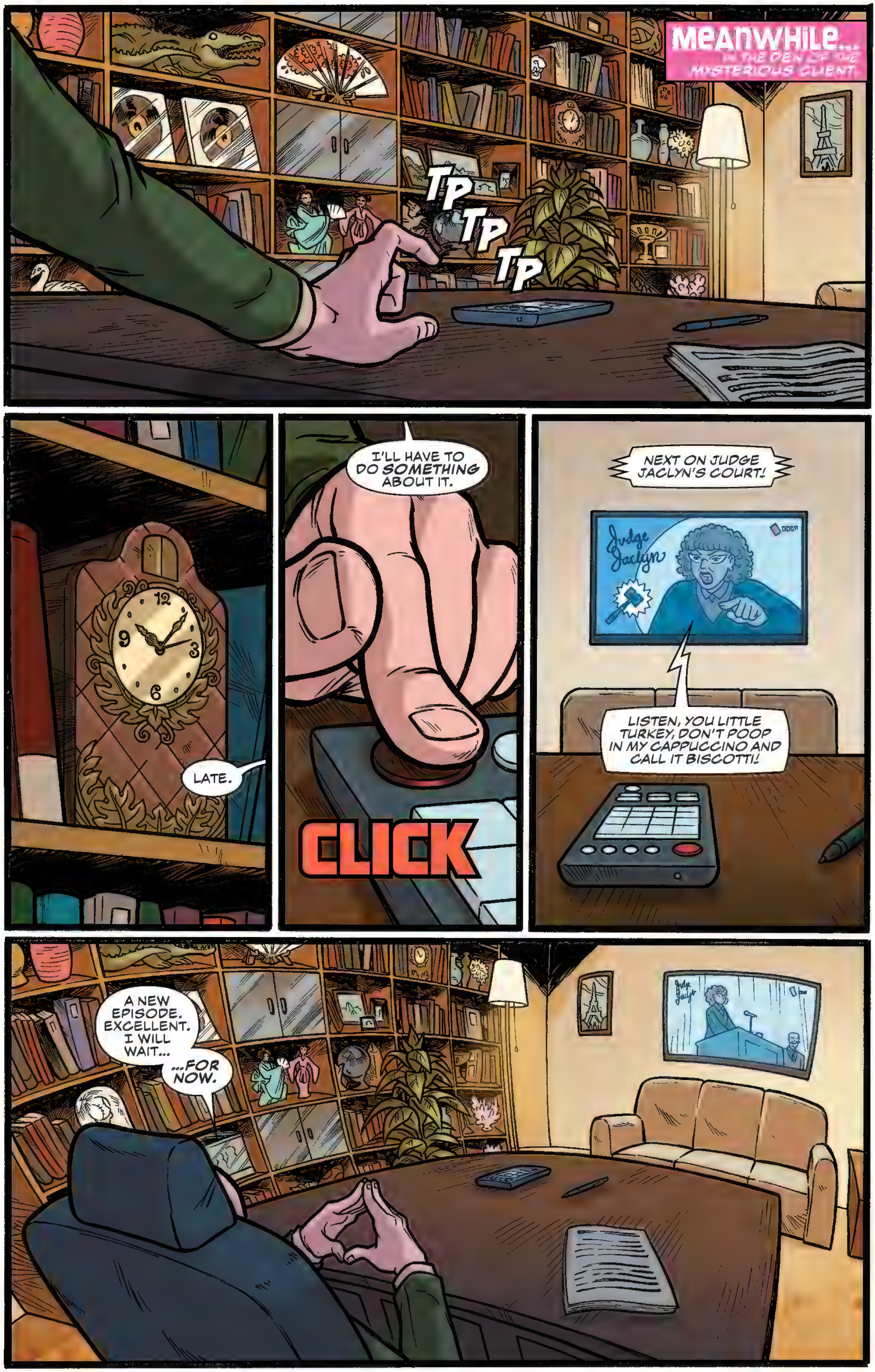

THUNK
AWESOOOOOOOME!
MEANWHILE...
LITTLE SPECTRE IN A BIG CITY: How to Make the Most out of Your Ghost
LITTLE SPECTRE IN A BIG CITY:
I CAN'T OPEN THIS BOOK!

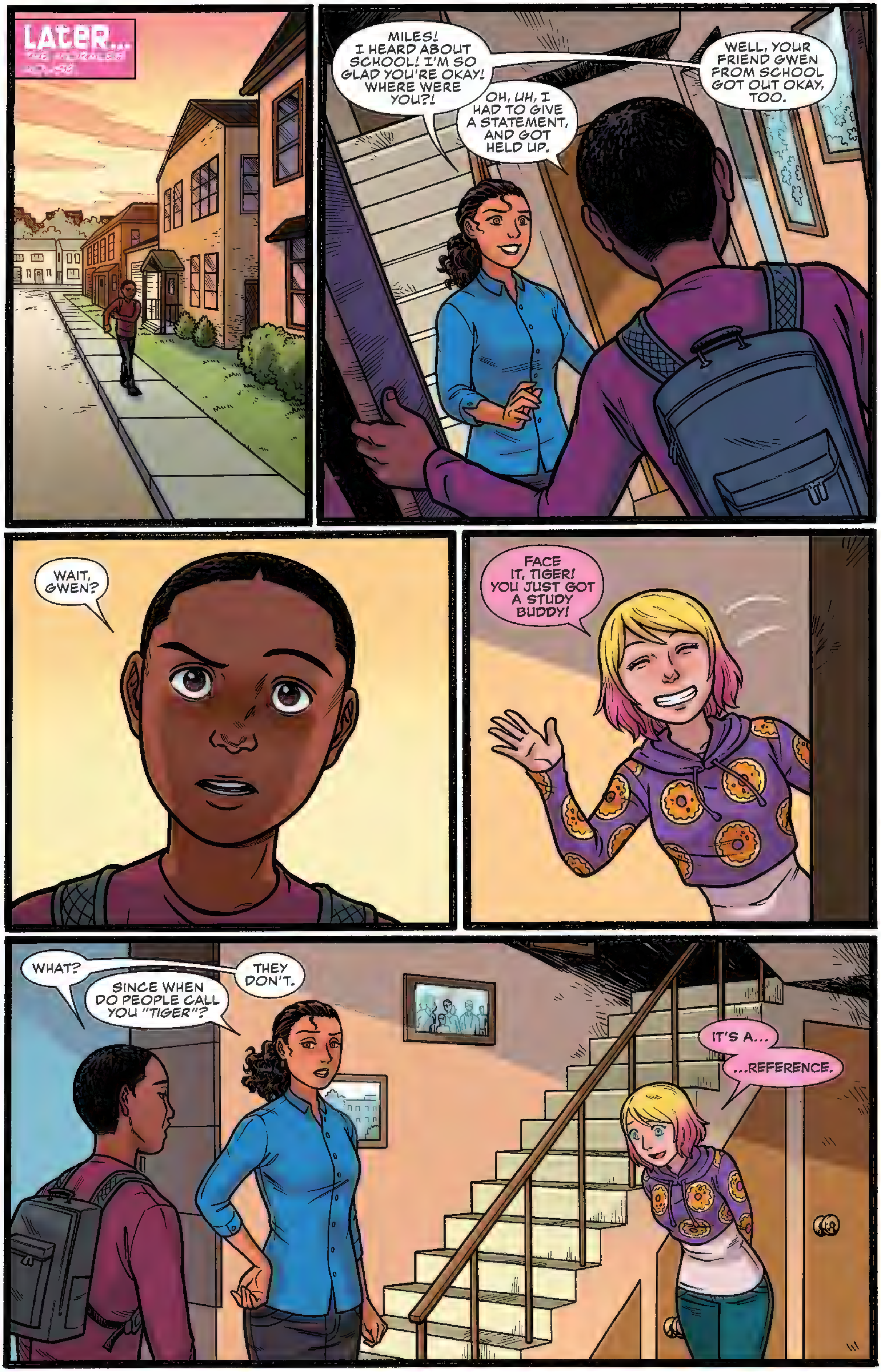

YOU ABSOLUTELY CANNOT TELL ANYBODY.
I DEFINITELY WON'T.
I WOULD LOVE TO SIT DOWN AND TALK ALL ABOUT WATCHERS, AND DANGEROUS KNOWLEDGE OR WHATEVER, BUT I'M ALREADY LATE FOR CLASS AND--
BOOM
OH, MY GOD. I GOTTA GET IN THERE.
WORD UP.
HOW WE DOING THIS?
WEB-SLINGSHOT INTO THE WINDOW? PROBABLY SHOULD GO WITH A WEB SLINGSHOT RIGHT INTO THE WINDOW.
AND YOU'RE NOT A FIREMAN, SO WHAT? LET'S GO SAVE THE DAY, DUDE!
WHOA WHOA WHOA, I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WERE A NORMAL PERSON.

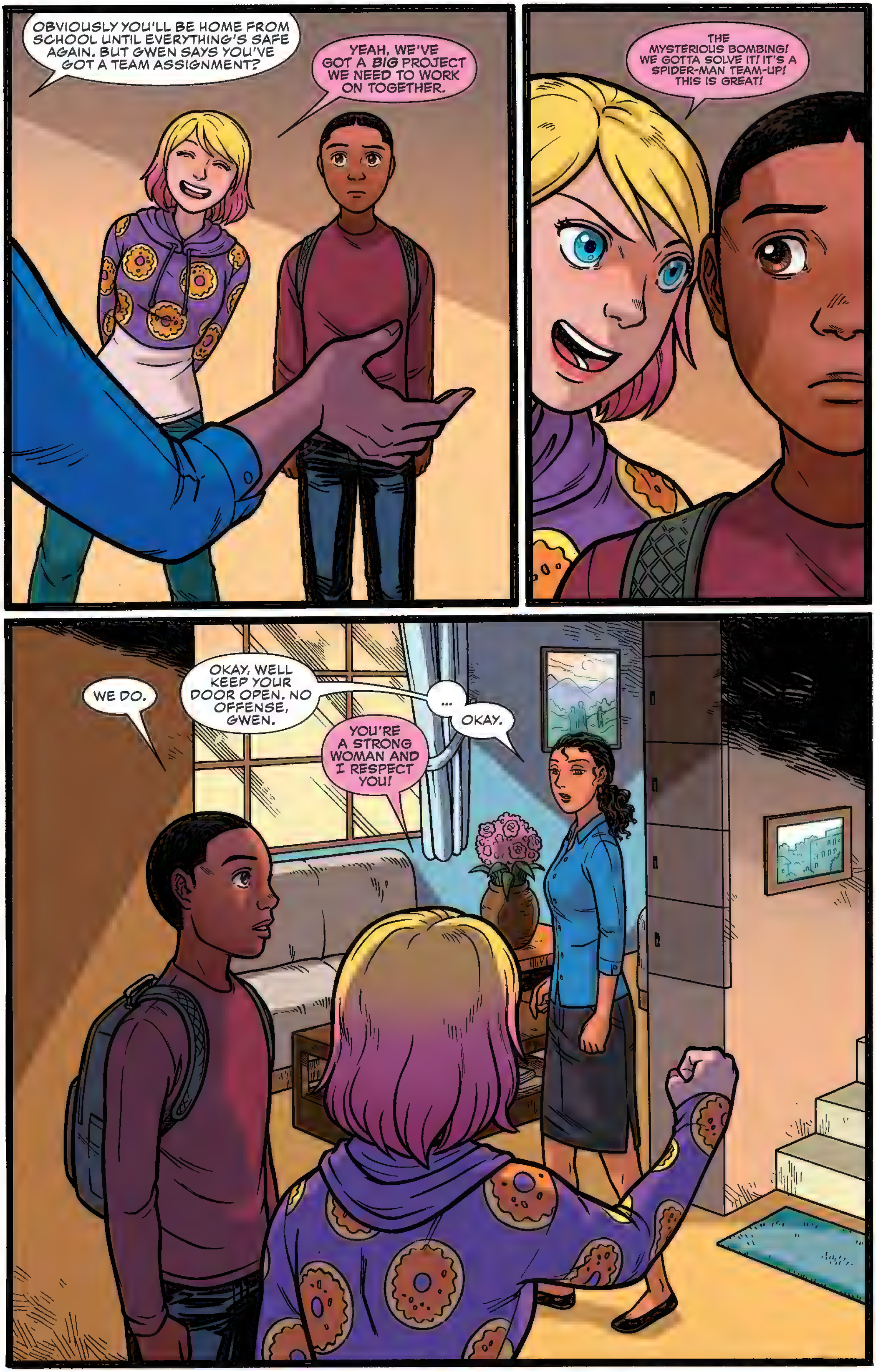

AH, MY *MASK*. I *FORGOT.*
HERE. ONE SEC.
JUST WEB THERE WHILE I HOLD IT TIGHT.
OH, NICE. THANKS...
THWIP
OH, BOY, GWENS ARE TROUBLE FOR A SPIDER-MAN.
GWEN.
GWEN *POOLE*. NOT EVERY GWEN YOU MEET IS A *STACY.*
WELL, IT'S TURNED OUT THERE ARE A COUPLE. PARDON MY SKEPTICISM.

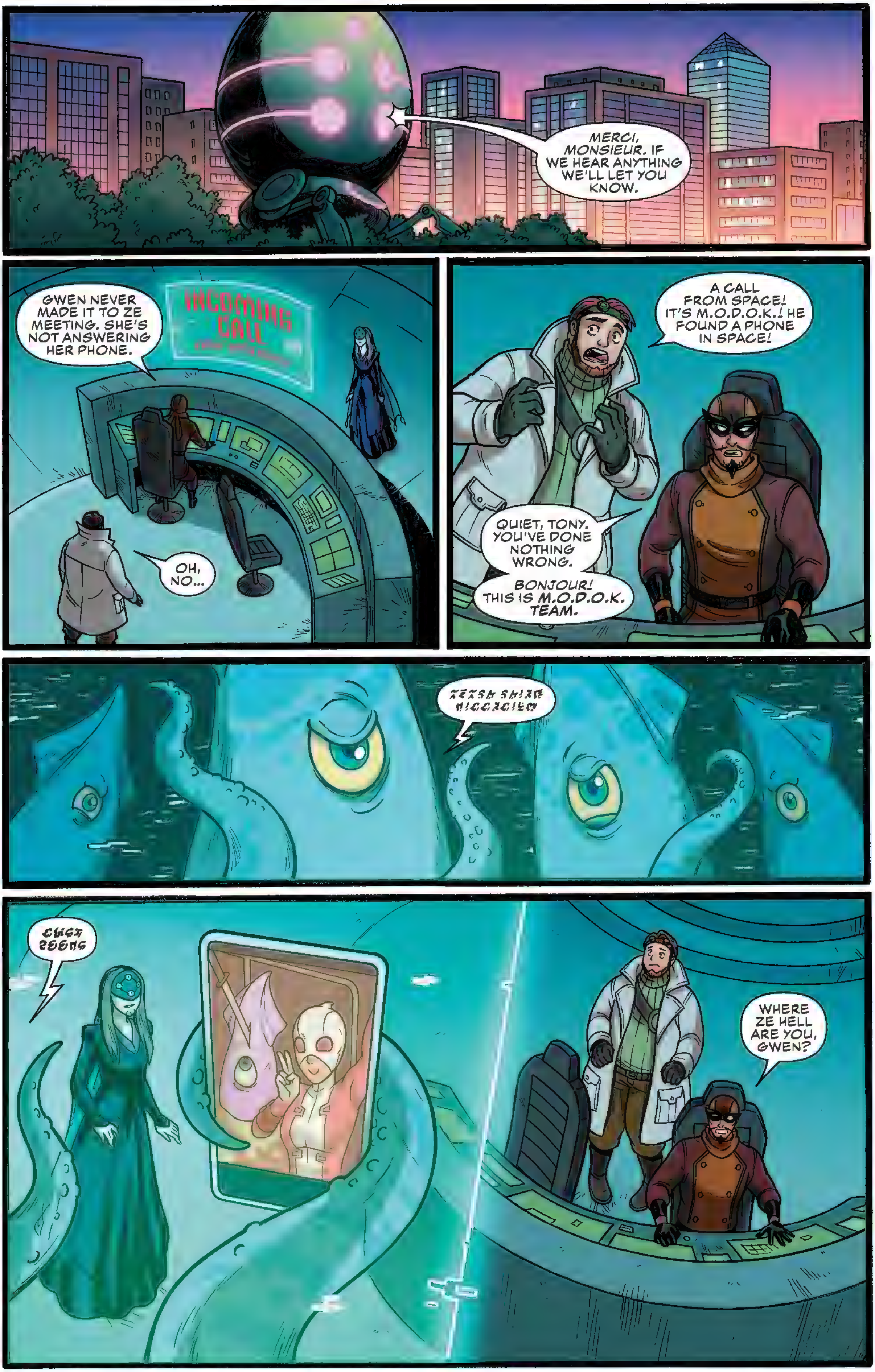

THIS WAS THE CLASS I WAS LATE TO...
WHERE'S GANKE?! OH, NO...
HEY! HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?!
SPIDER-MAN...
⊱COUGH⊰ ⊱COUGH⊰...HRK HOO BOY.
⊱COUGH⊰ NEED... FLAME WARRIOR VARIANT COSTUME.
AH, I SHOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT YOU IN HERE!
NO! I'M A SUPER-FRIEND! I'M HELPING! ⊱HACK⊰ ⊱COUGH⊰
HELP LIKE THIS. HERE. HOLD TIGHT.
THWIP
SO, LIKE JUST COMFORTING HUGS OR--

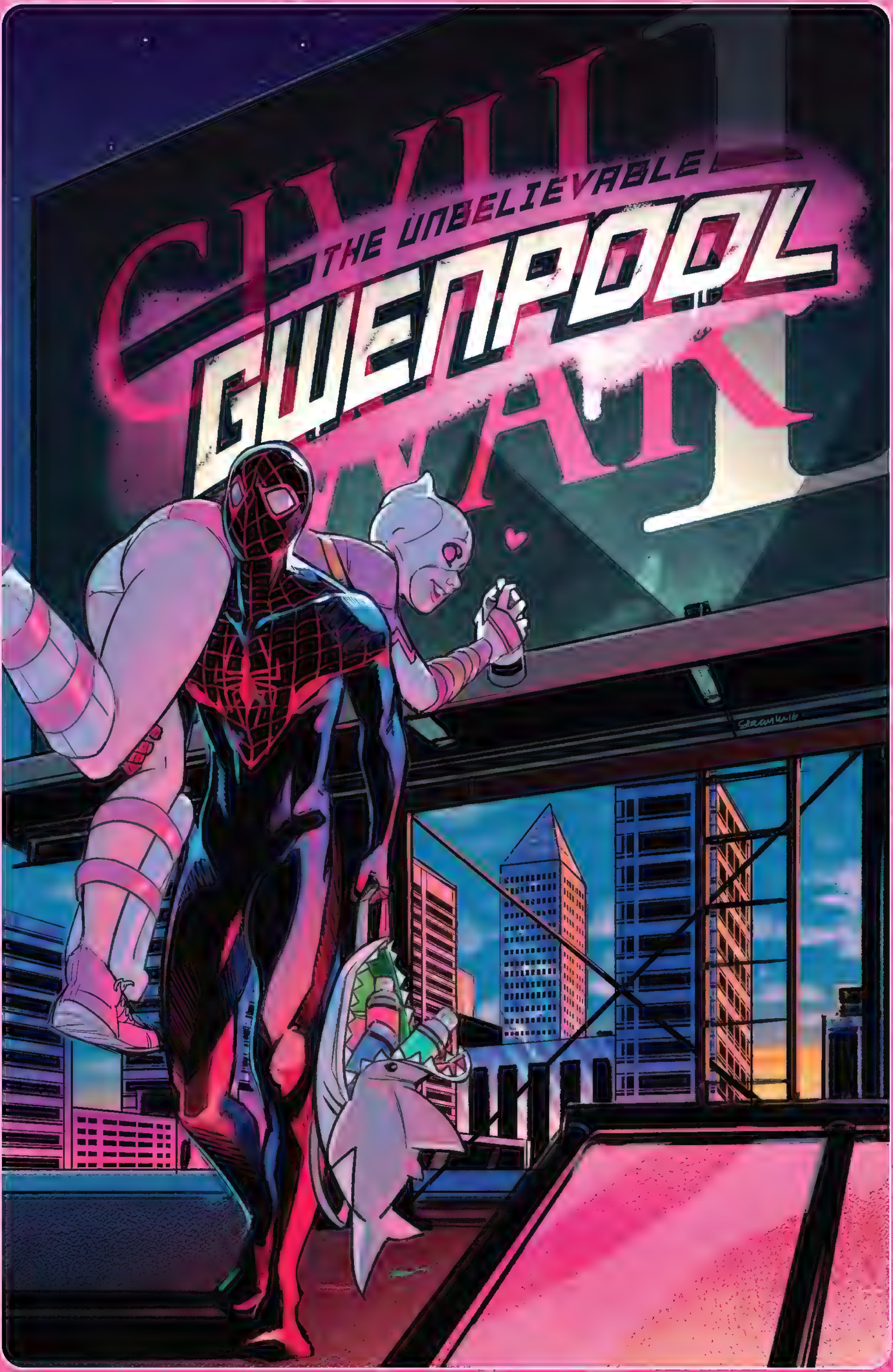

YA!
HM, NOT SURE MY PRESENCE WAS NECESSARY IN THIS MANEUVER...
HEY!
IS SPIDER-MAN OKAY IN THERE?
WHAT? I'M--
HUH? OH, YOU'RE HIS LITTLE FRIEND, GANKE.
CHILL OUT, DUDE. I'M COOL.
YEAH. I THINK HE'S OKAY.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE...
THIS WAS SCARY, HUH?
YEAH! YEAH, IT'S NUTS.


MEANWHILE...
IN THE DEN OF THE MYSTERIOUS CLIENT.
TP TP TP
LATE.
I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
CLICK
NEXT ON JUDGE JACLYN'S COURT!
Judge Jaclyn
LISTEN, YOU LITTLE TURKEY, DON'T POOP IN MY CAPPUCCINO AND CALL IT BISCOTTI!
A NEW EPISODE. EXCELLENT. I WILL WAIT...
...FOR NOW.
Judge Jaclyn

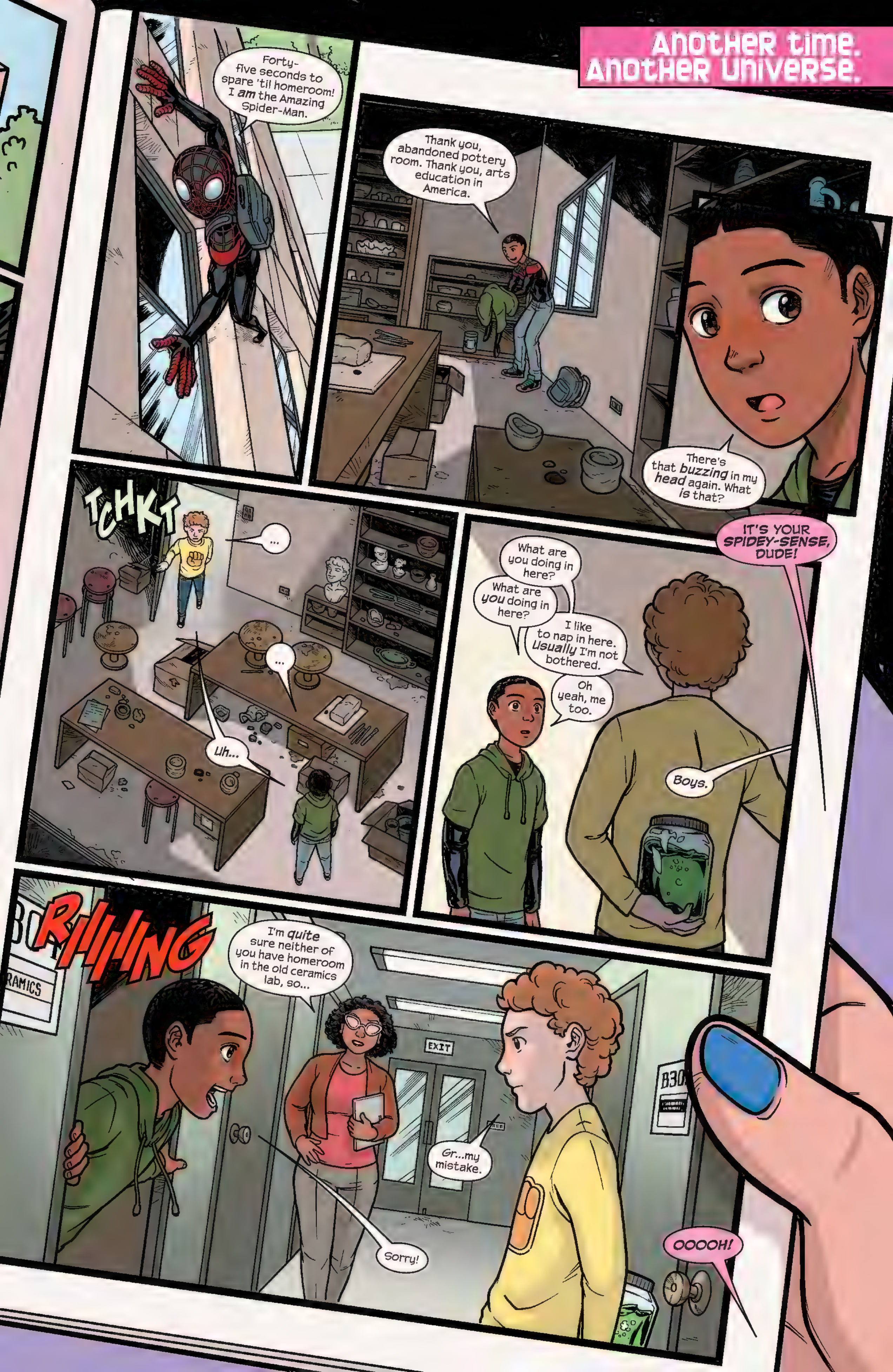

LATER...
THE MORALES HOUSE.
MILES! I HEARD ABOUT SCHOOL! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE OKAY! WHERE WERE YOU?!
OH, UH, I HAD TO GIVE A STATEMENT, AND GOT HELD UP.
WELL, YOUR FRIEND GWEN FROM SCHOOL GOT OUT OKAY, TOO.
WAIT, GWEN?
FACE IT, TIGER! YOU JUST GOT A STUDY BUDDY!
WHAT?
SINCE WHEN DO PEOPLE CALL YOU "TIGER"?
THEY DON'T.
IT'S A...
...REFERENCE.

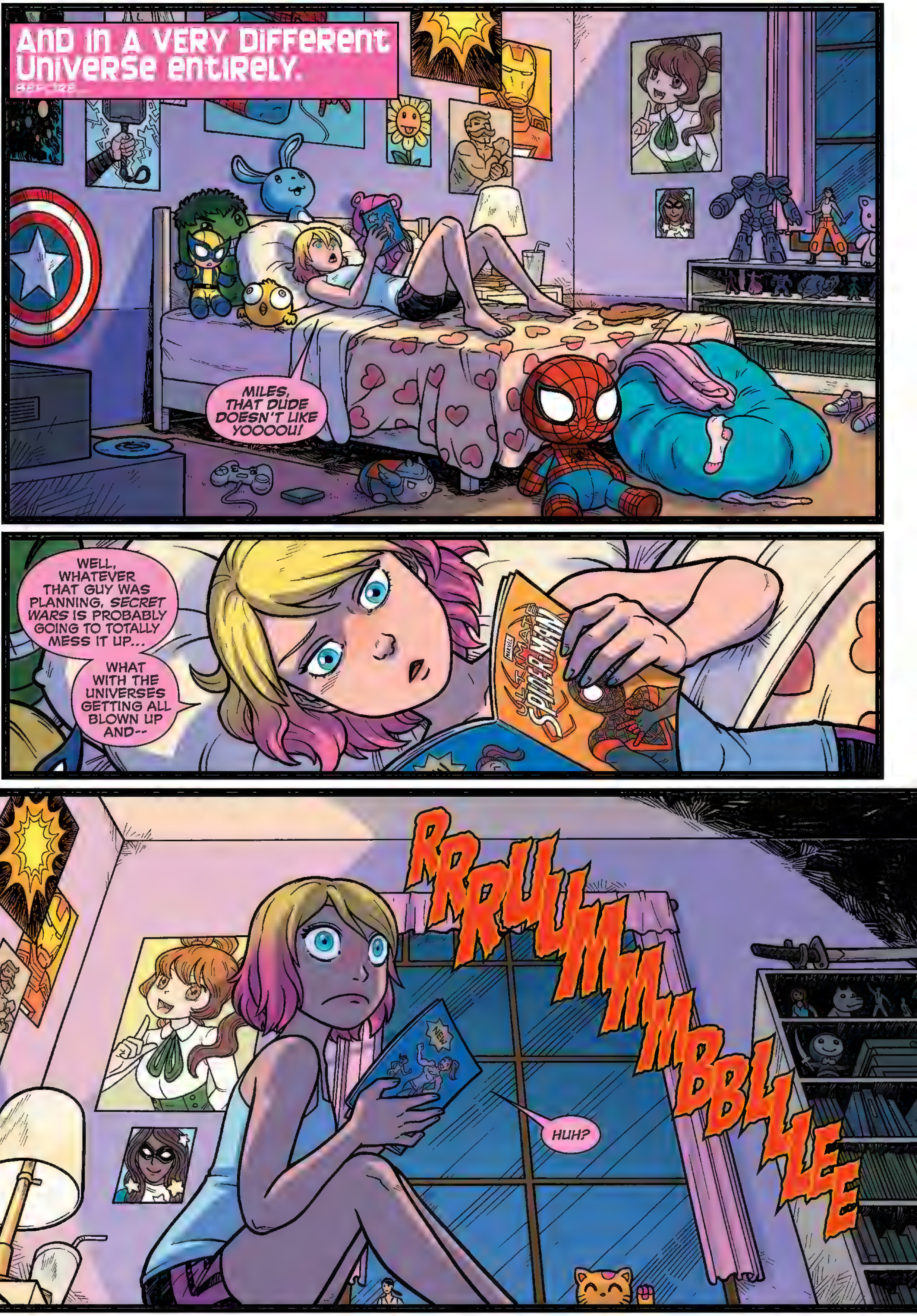

OBVIOUSLY YOU'LL BE HOME FROM SCHOOL UNTIL EVERYTHING'S SAFE AGAIN. BUT GWEN SAYS YOU'VE GOT A TEAM ASSIGNMENT?
YEAH, WE'VE GOT A *BIG* PROJECT WE NEED TO WORK ON TOGETHER.
THE MYSTERIOUS BOMBING! WE GOTTA SOLVE IT! IT'S A SPIDER-MAN TEAM-UP! THIS IS GREAT!
WE DO.
OKAY, WELL KEEP YOUR DOOR OPEN. NO OFFENSE, GWEN.
...
OKAY.
YOU'RE A STRONG WOMAN AND I RESPECT YOU!

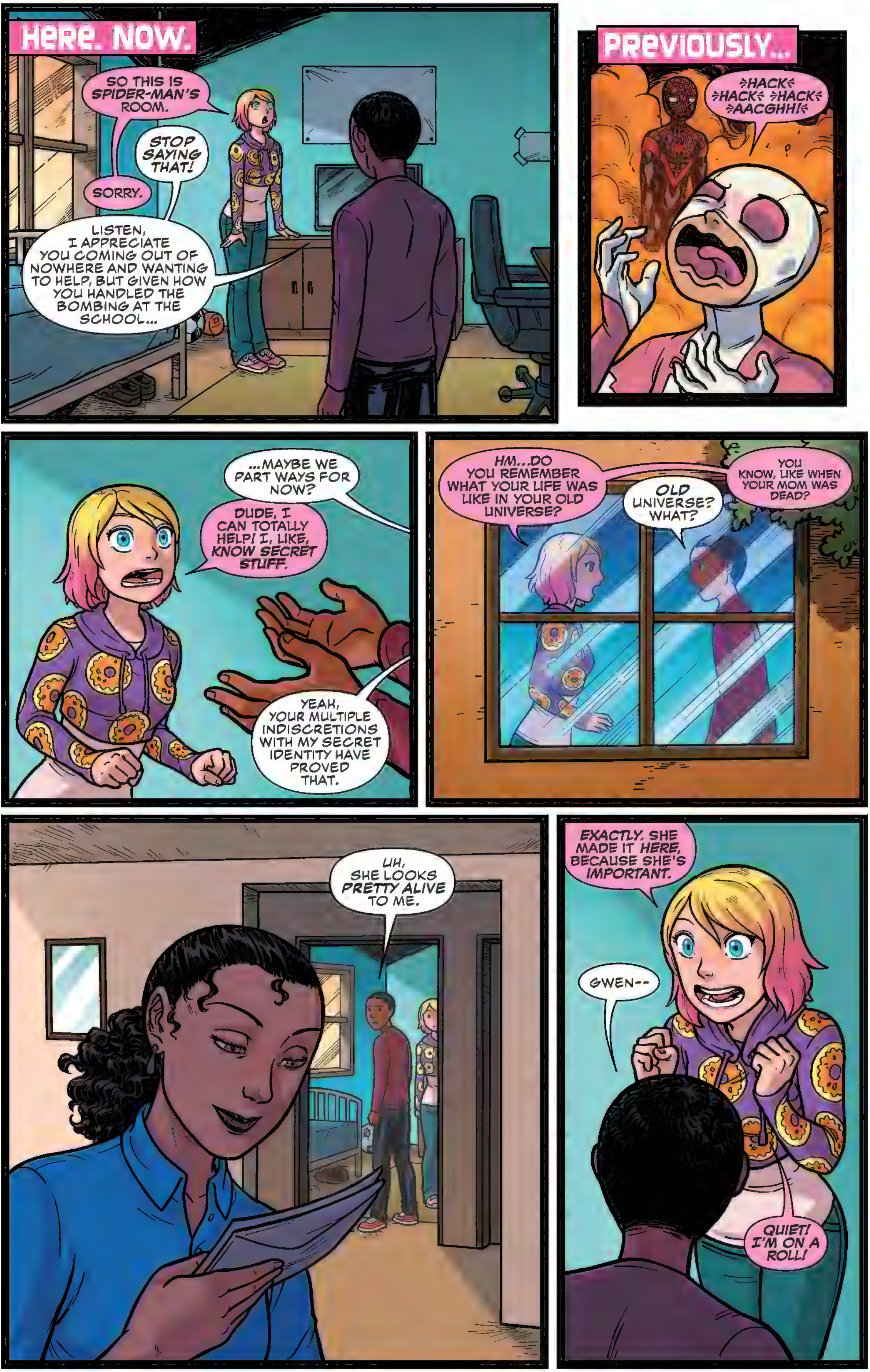

MERCI, MONSIEUR. IF WE HEAR ANYTHING WE'LL LET YOU KNOW.
GWEN NEVER MADE IT TO ZE MEETING. SHE'S NOT ANSWERING HER PHONE.
INCOMING CALL
OH, NO...
A CALL FROM SPACE! IT'S M.O.D.O.K.! HE FOUND A PHONE IN SPACE!
QUIET, TONY. YOU'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG.
BONJOUR! THIS IS M.O.D.O.K. TEAM.
WHERE ZE HELL ARE YOU, GWEN?

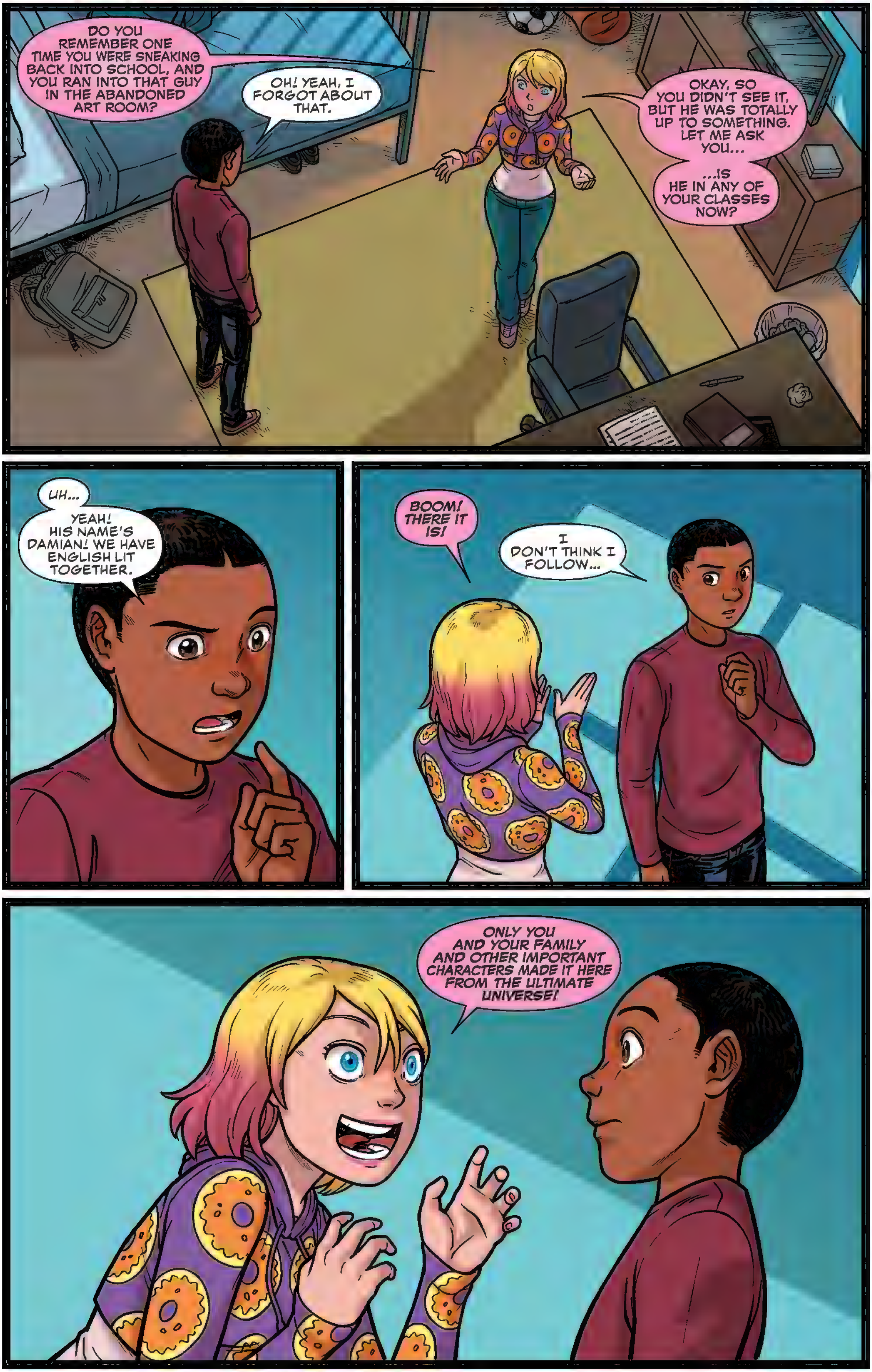

CIVIL WAR
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL

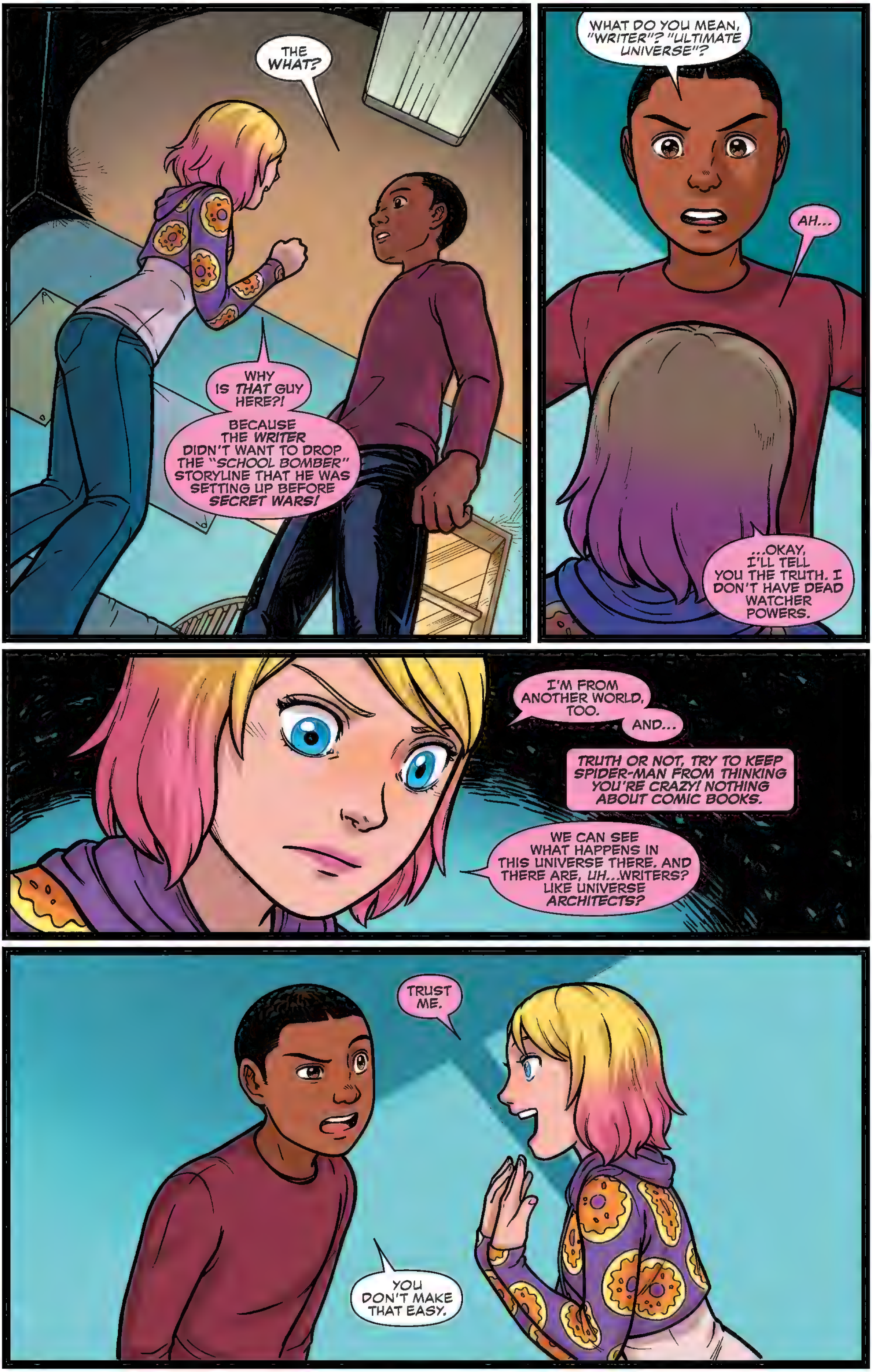
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #6

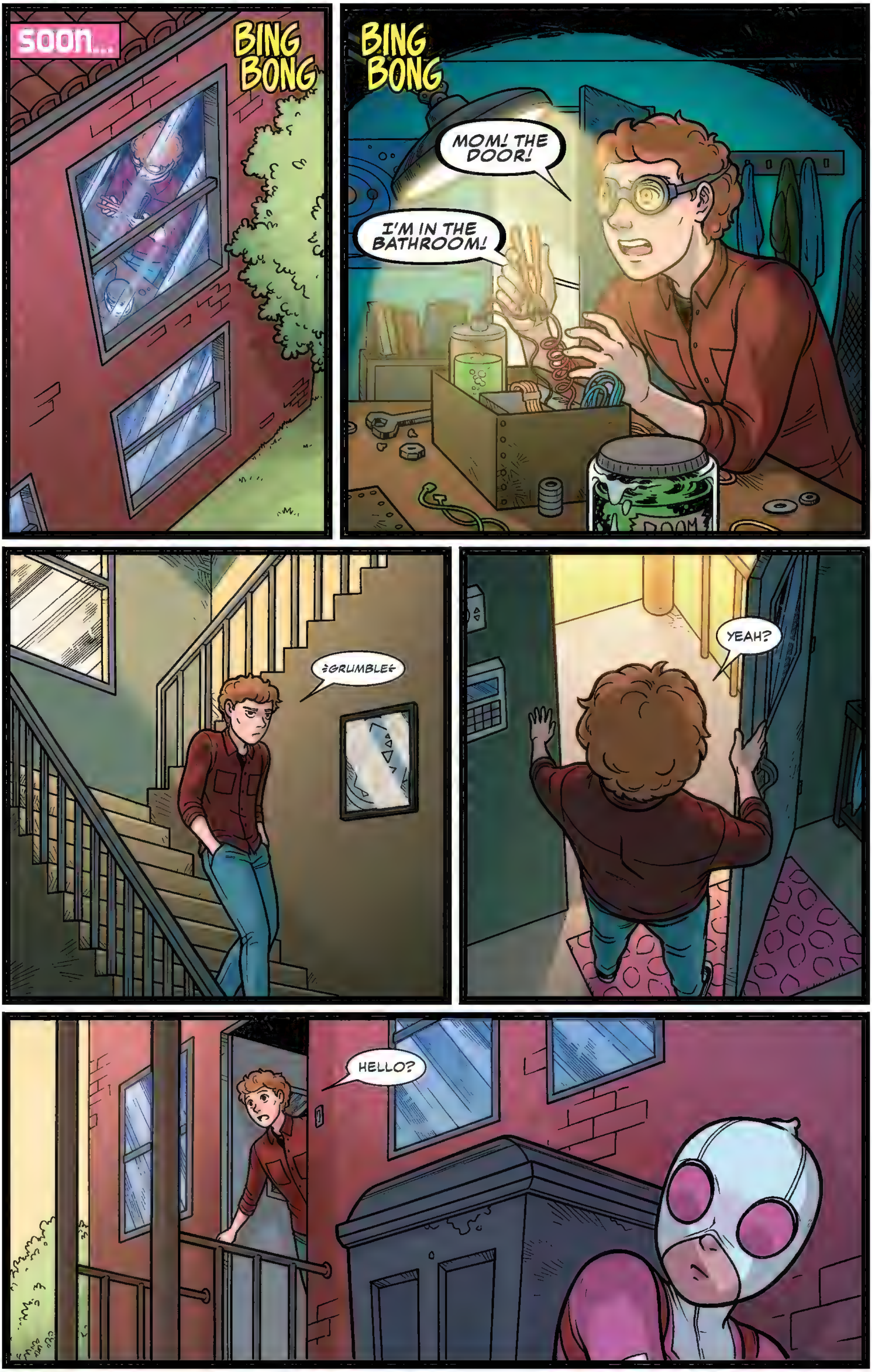

ANOTHER TIME. ANOTHER UNIVERSE.
Forty-five seconds to spare 'til homeroom! I *am* the Amazing Spider-Man.
Thank you, abandoned pottery room. Thank you, arts education in America.
There's that *buzzing* in my *head* again. What *is* that?
IT'S YOUR *SPIDEY-SENSE,* DUDE!
TCHKT
...
...
Uh...
What are you doing in here?
What are *you* doing in here?
I like to nap in here. *Usually* I'm not bothered.
Oh yeah, me too.
Boys.
RIIIING
CERAMICS
I'm *quite* sure neither of you have homeroom in the old ceramics lab, so...
EXIT
Gr...my mistake.
Sorry!
B30
OOOOH!

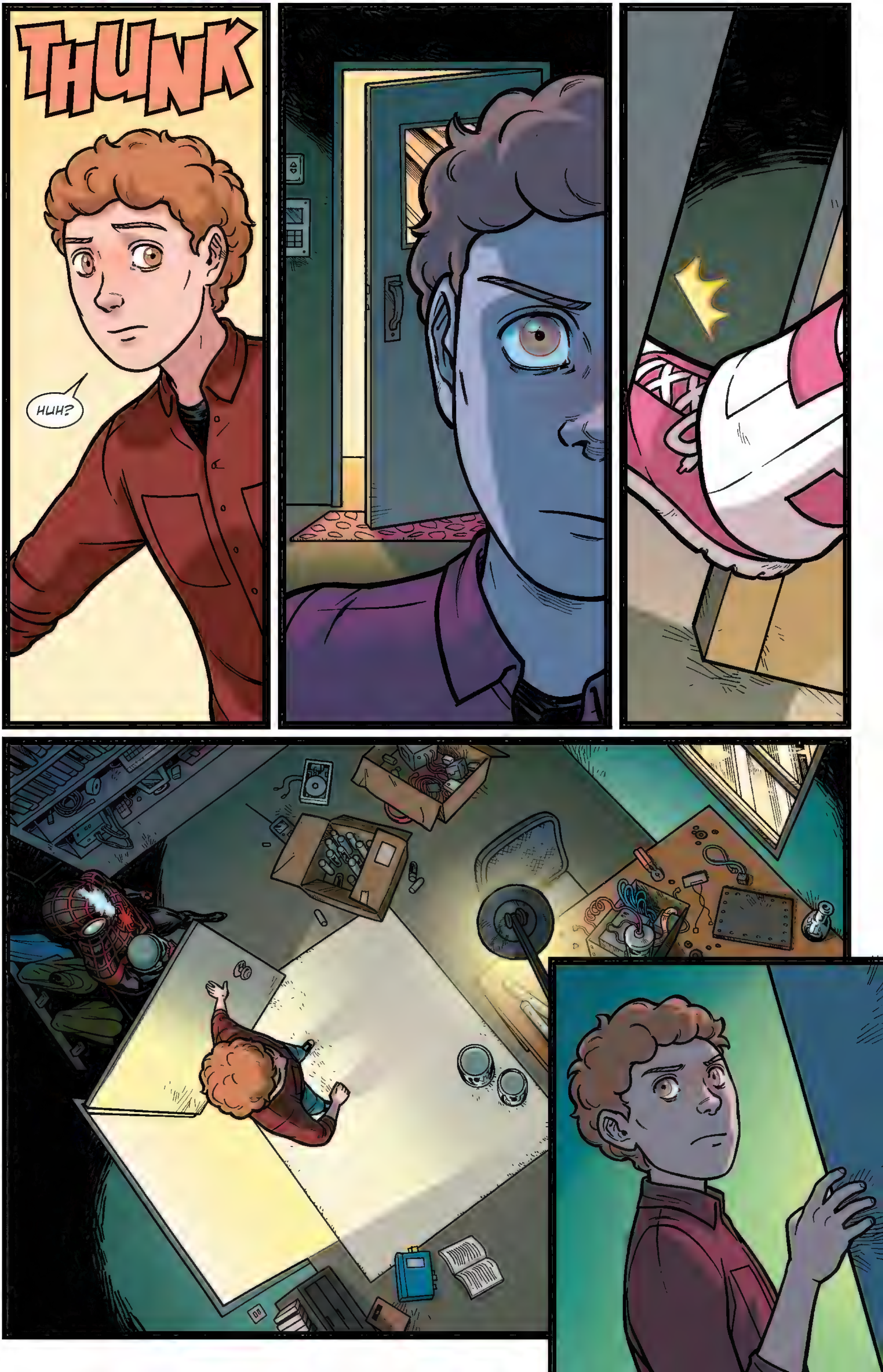

AND IN A VERY DIFFERENT UNIVERSE ENTIRELY.
MILES, THAT DUDE DOESN'T LIKE YOOOOU!
WELL, WHATEVER THAT GUY WAS PLANNING, SECRET WARS IS PROBABLY GOING TO TOTALLY MESS IT UP...
WHAT WITH THE UNIVERSES GETTING ALL BLOWN UP AND--
MARVEL ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN
RRRUMMMBBLLEE
NEW
HUH?

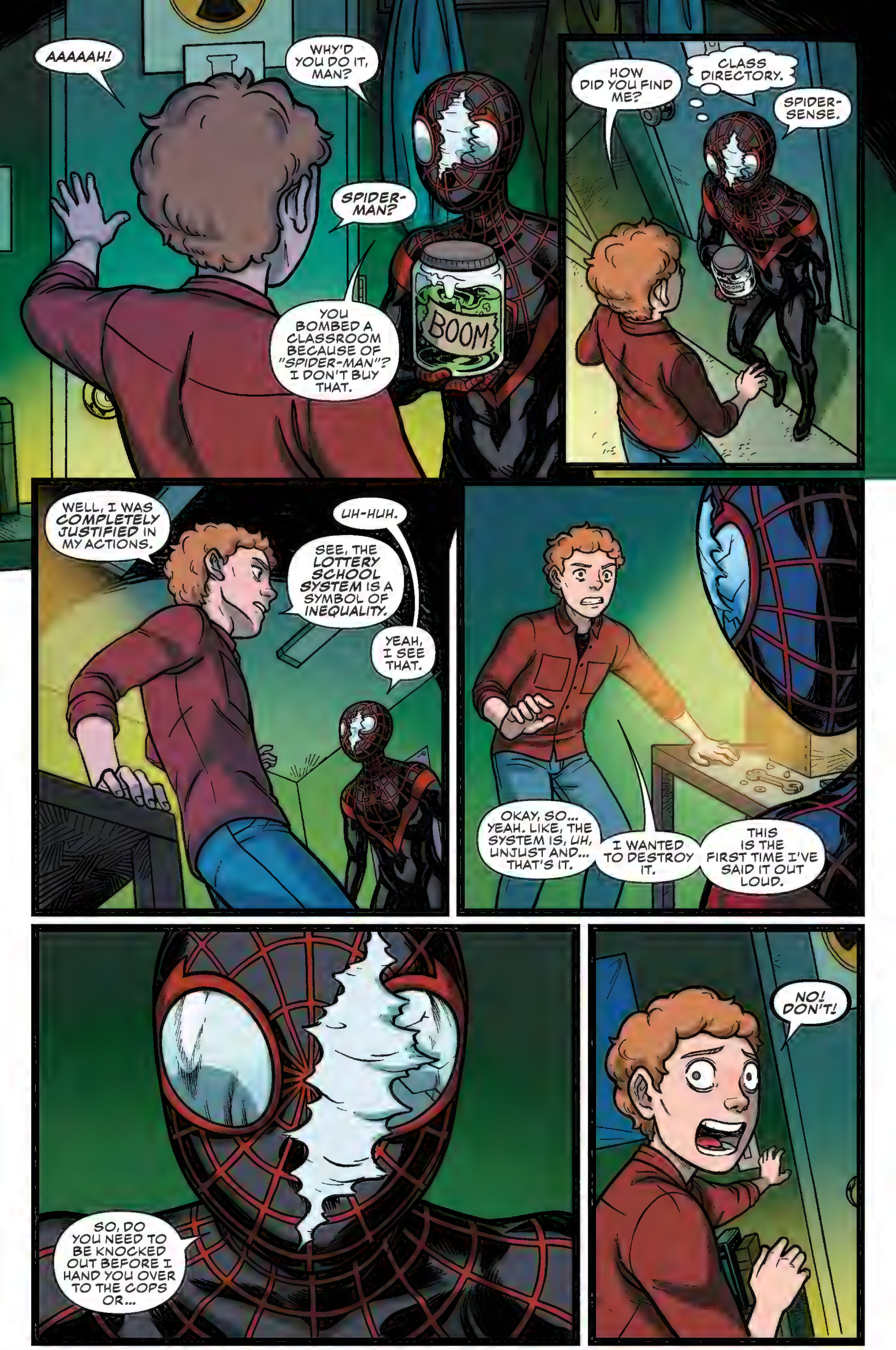

HERE. NOW.
SO THIS IS SPIDER-MAN'S ROOM.
STOP SAYING THAT!
SORRY.
LISTEN, I APPRECIATE YOU COMING OUT OF NOWHERE AND WANTING TO HELP, BUT GIVEN HOW YOU HANDLED THE BOMBING AT THE SCHOOL...
PREVIOUSLY...
HACK HACK HACK AACGHH!
...MAYBE WE PART WAYS FOR NOW?
DUDE, I CAN TOTALLY HELP! I, LIKE, KNOW SECRET STUFF.
YEAH, YOUR MULTIPLE INDISCRETIONS WITH MY SECRET IDENTITY HAVE PROVED THAT.
HM...DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOUR LIFE WAS LIKE IN YOUR OLD UNIVERSE?
OLD UNIVERSE? WHAT?
YOU KNOW, LIKE WHEN YOUR MOM WAS DEAD?
UH, SHE LOOKS PRETTY ALIVE TO ME.
EXACTLY. SHE MADE IT HERE, BECAUSE SHE'S IMPORTANT.
GWEN--
QUIET! I'M ON A ROLL!

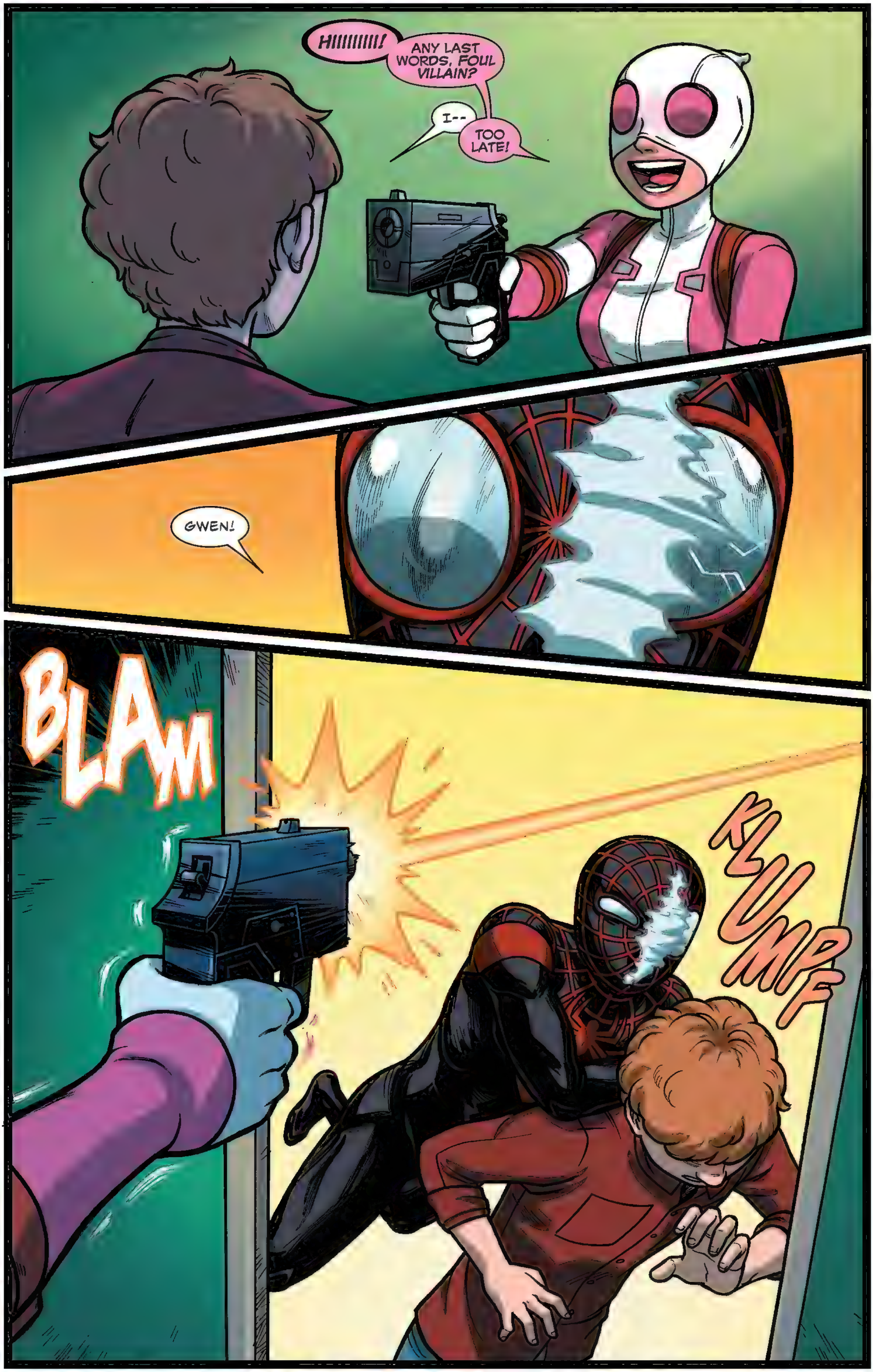

DO YOU REMEMBER ONE TIME YOU WERE SNEAKING BACK INTO SCHOOL, AND YOU RAN INTO THAT GUY IN THE ABANDONED ART ROOM?
OH! YEAH, I FORGOT ABOUT THAT.
OKAY, SO YOU DIDN'T SEE IT, BUT HE WAS TOTALLY UP TO SOMETHING. LET ME ASK YOU...
...IS HE IN ANY OF YOUR CLASSES NOW?
UH...
YEAH! HIS NAME'S DAMIAN! WE HAVE ENGLISH LIT TOGETHER.
BOOM! THERE IT IS!
I DON'T THINK I FOLLOW...
ONLY YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AND OTHER IMPORTANT CHARACTERS MADE IT HERE FROM THE ULTIMATE UNIVERSE!

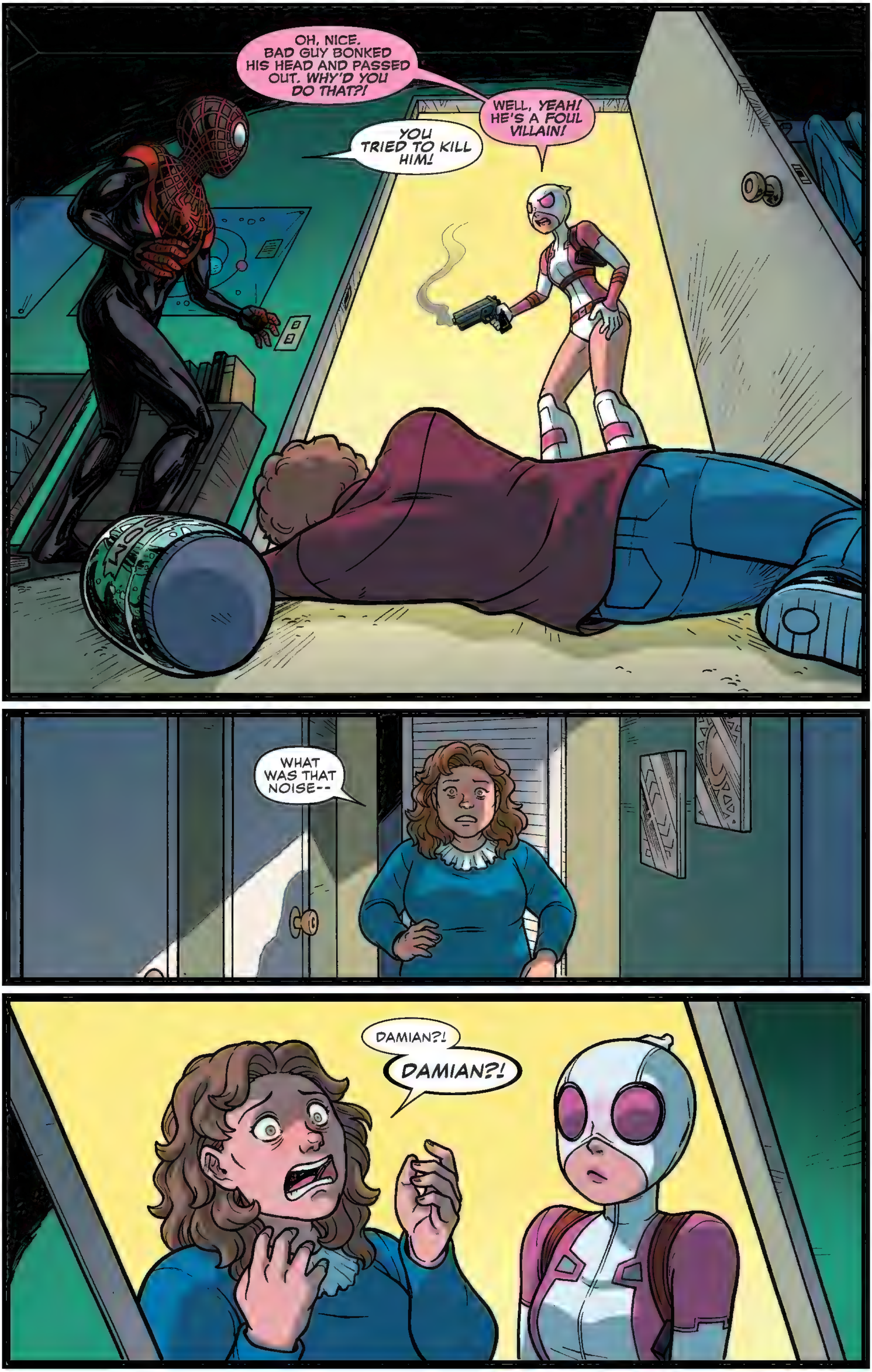

THE WHAT?
WHY IS *THAT* GUY HERE?!
BECAUSE THE *WRITER* DIDN'T WANT TO DROP THE "*SCHOOL BOMBER*" STORYLINE THAT HE WAS SETTING UP BEFORE *SECRET WARS!*
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "WRITER"? "ULTIMATE UNIVERSE"?
AH...
...OKAY, I'LL TELL YOU THE TRUTH. I DON'T HAVE DEAD WATCHER POWERS.
I'M FROM ANOTHER WORLD, TOO.
AND...
TRUTH OR NOT, TRY TO KEEP SPIDER-MAN FROM THINKING YOU'RE CRAZY! NOTHING ABOUT COMIC BOOKS.
WE CAN SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS UNIVERSE THERE. AND THERE ARE, *UH*...WRITERS? LIKE UNIVERSE *ARCHITECTS?*
TRUST ME.
YOU DON'T MAKE THAT EASY.

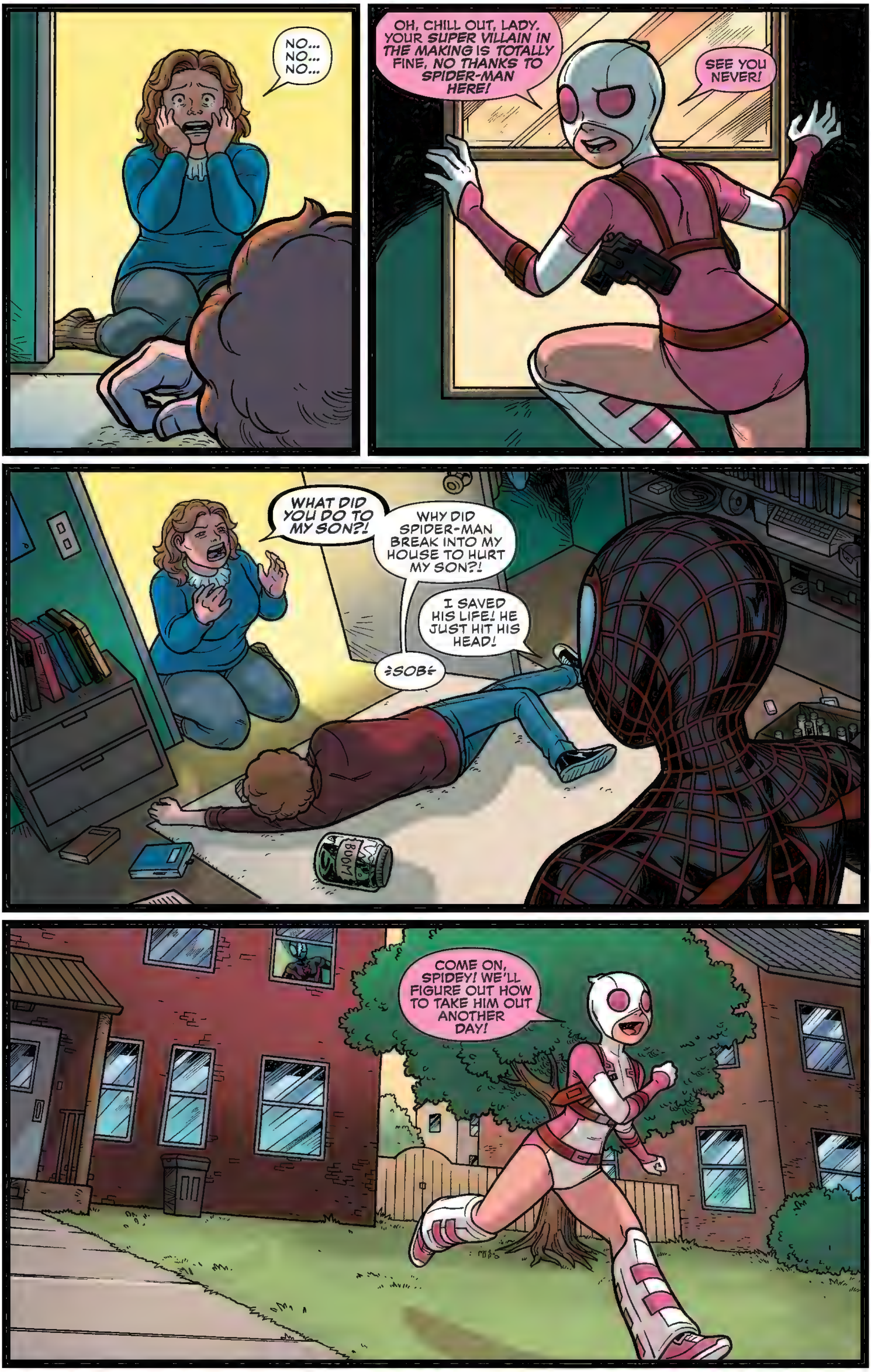

SOON...
BING BONG
BING BONG
MOM! THE DOOR!
I'M IN THE BATHROOM!
≈GRUMBLE≈
YEAH?
HELLO?

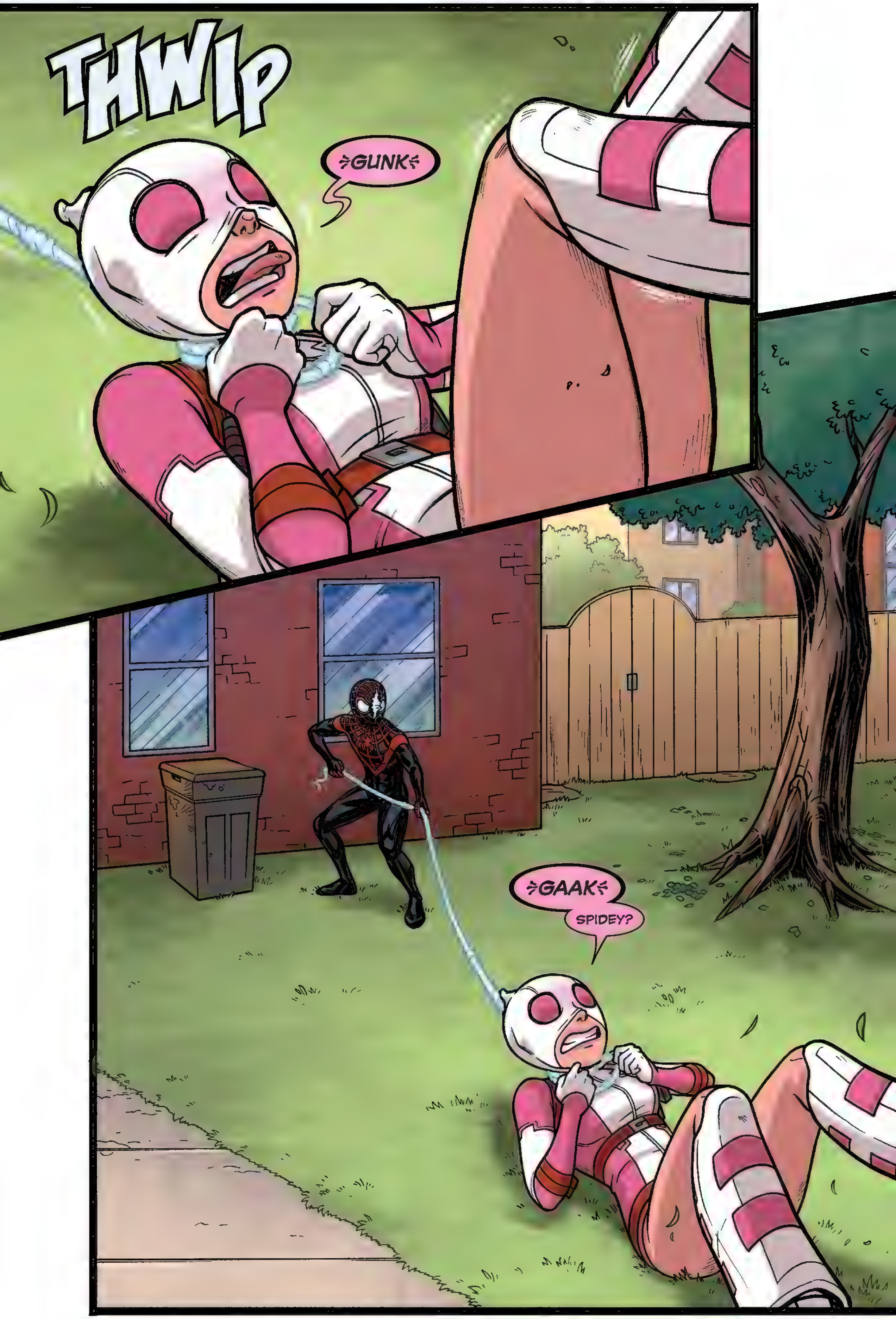

THUNK
HUH?

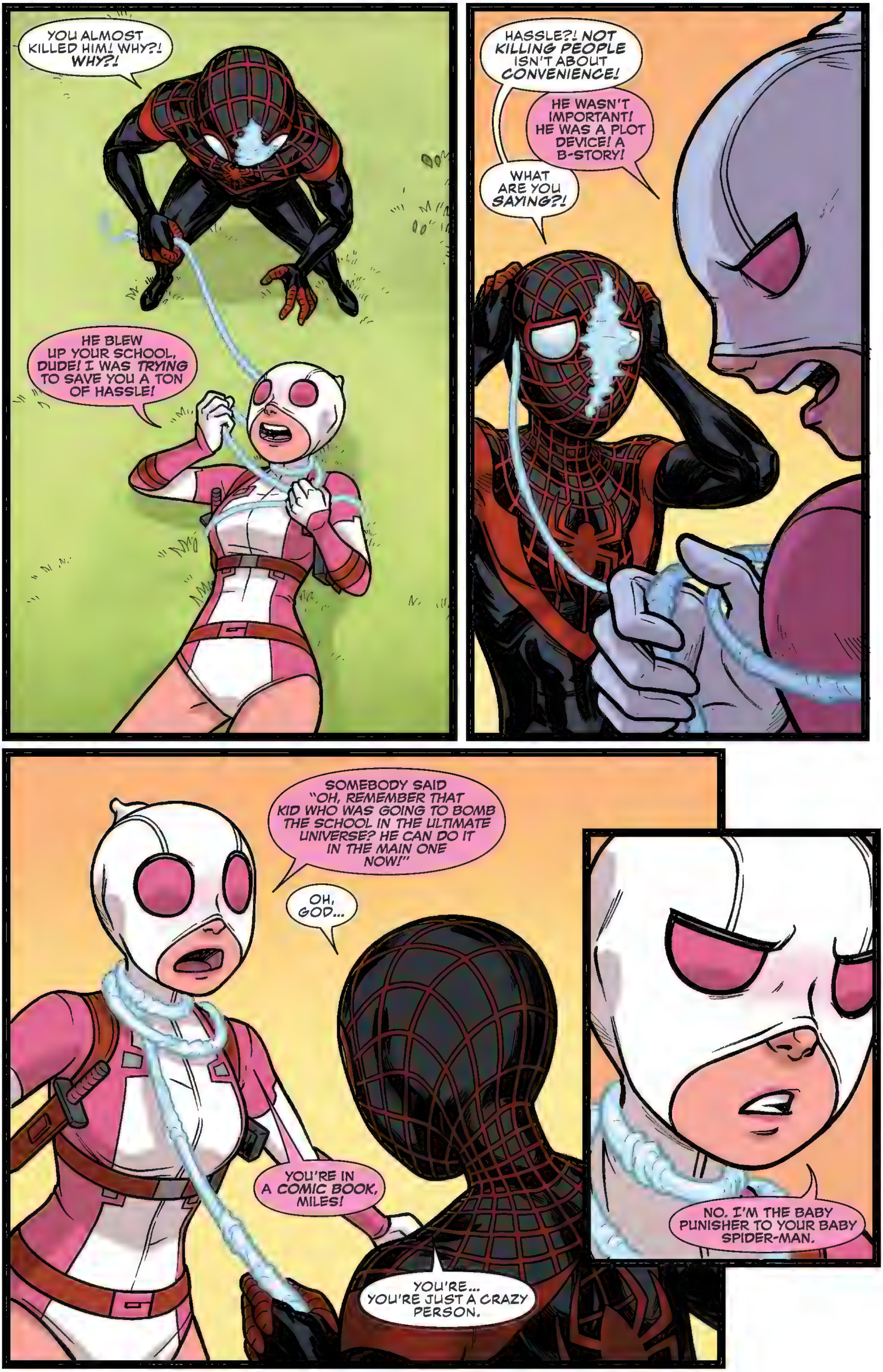

AAAAAH!
WHY'D YOU DO IT, MAN?
SPIDER-MAN?
YOU BOMBED A CLASSROOM BECAUSE OF "SPIDER-MAN"? I DON'T BUY THAT.
BOOM
HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
CLASS DIRECTORY.
SPIDER-SENSE.
WELL, I WAS COMPLETELY JUSTIFIED IN MY ACTIONS.
UH-HUH.
SEE, THE LOTTERY SCHOOL SYSTEM IS A SYMBOL OF INEQUALITY.
YEAH, I SEE THAT.
OKAY, SO... YEAH. LIKE, THE SYSTEM IS, UH, UNJUST AND... THAT'S IT.
I WANTED TO DESTROY IT.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SAID IT OUT LOUD.
SO, DO YOU NEED TO BE KNOCKED OUT BEFORE I HAND YOU OVER TO THE COPS OR...
NO! DON'T!

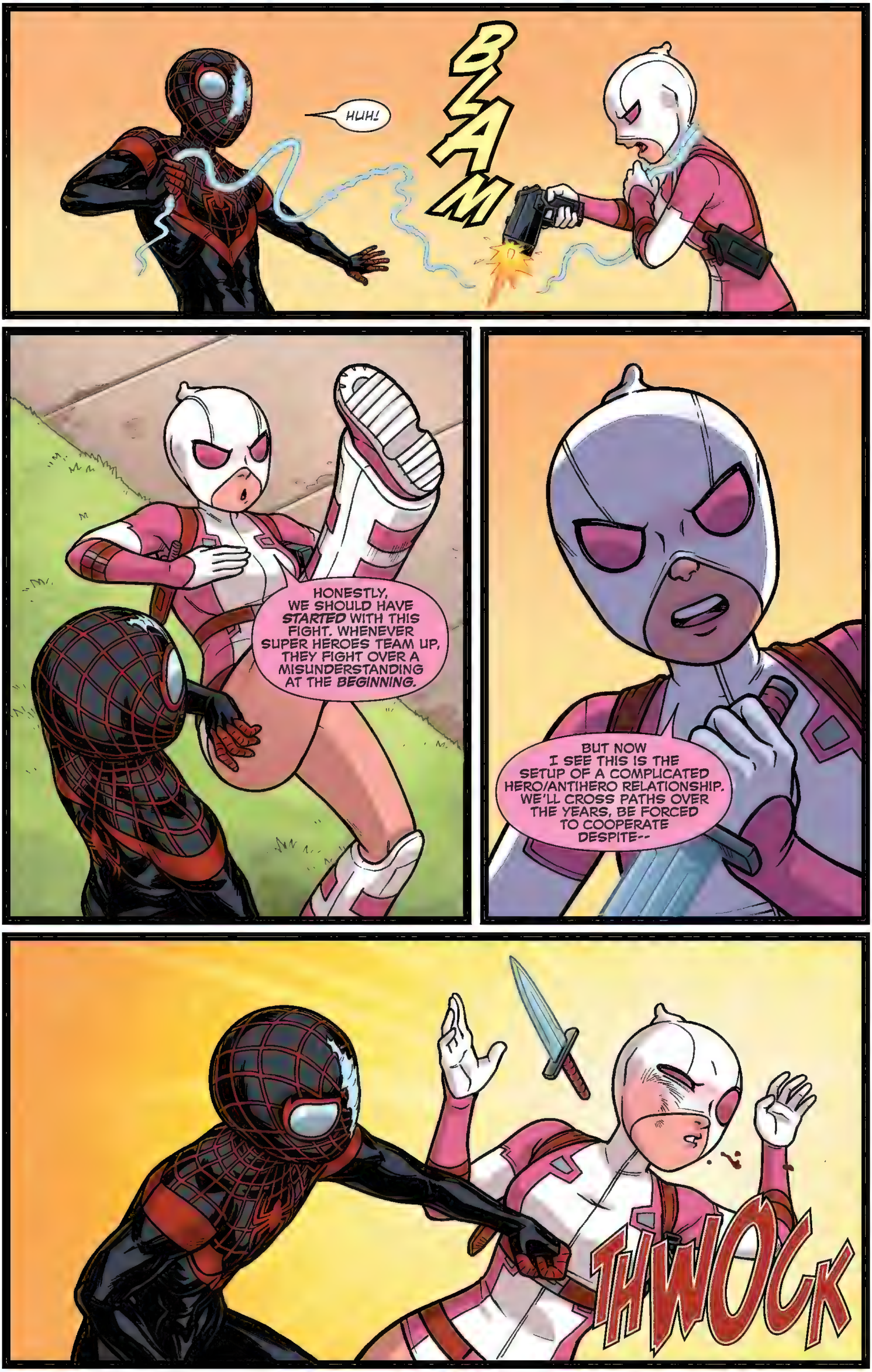

HIIIIIIIII!
ANY LAST WORDS, FOUL VILLAIN?
I--
TOO LATE!
GWEN!
BLAM
KLUMPF

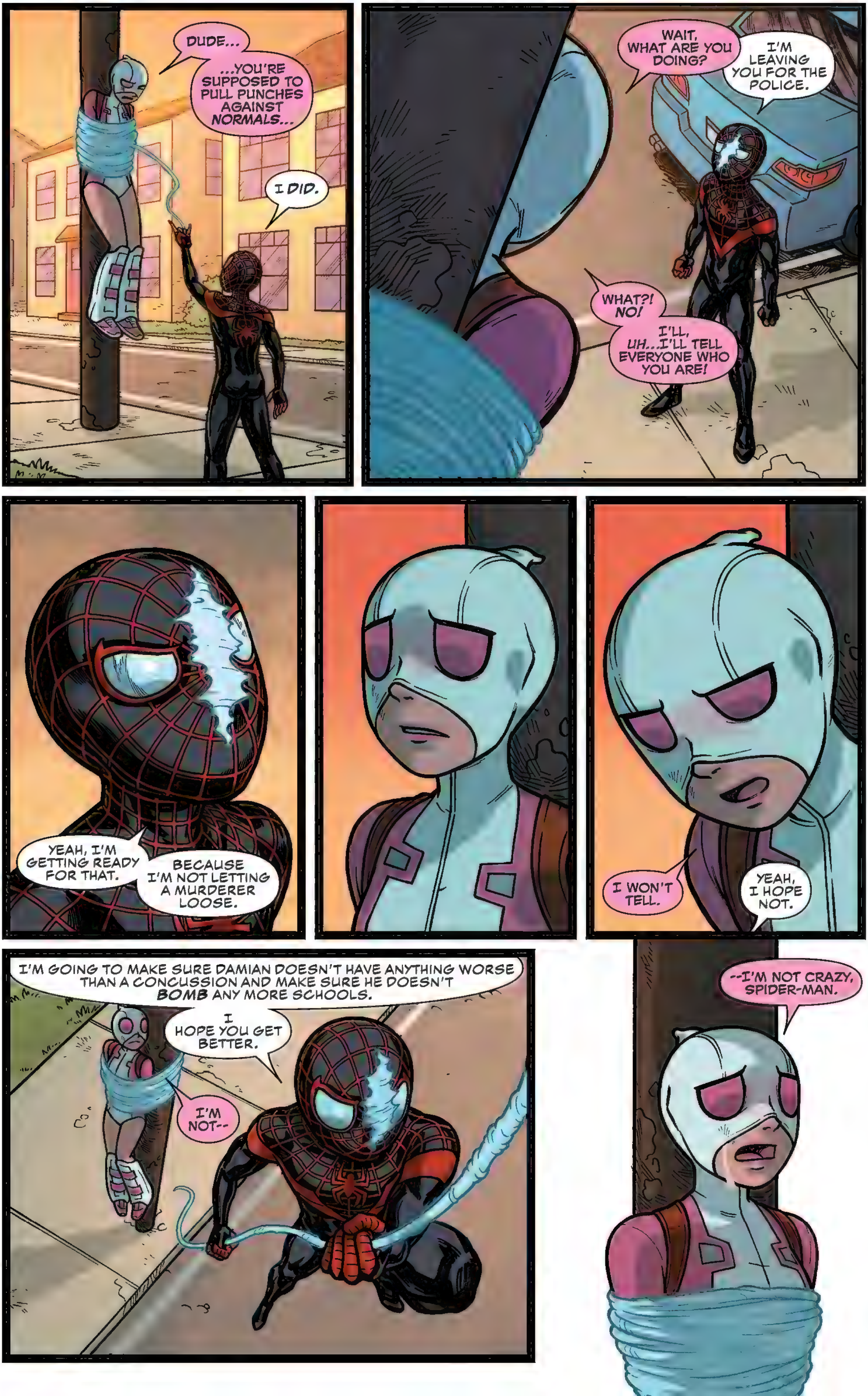

OH, NICE. BAD GUY BONKED HIS HEAD AND PASSED OUT. WHY'D YOU DO THAT?!
YOU TRIED TO KILL HIM!
WELL, YEAH! HE'S A FOUL VILLAIN!
WHAT WAS THAT NOISE--
DAMIAN?!
DAMIAN?!

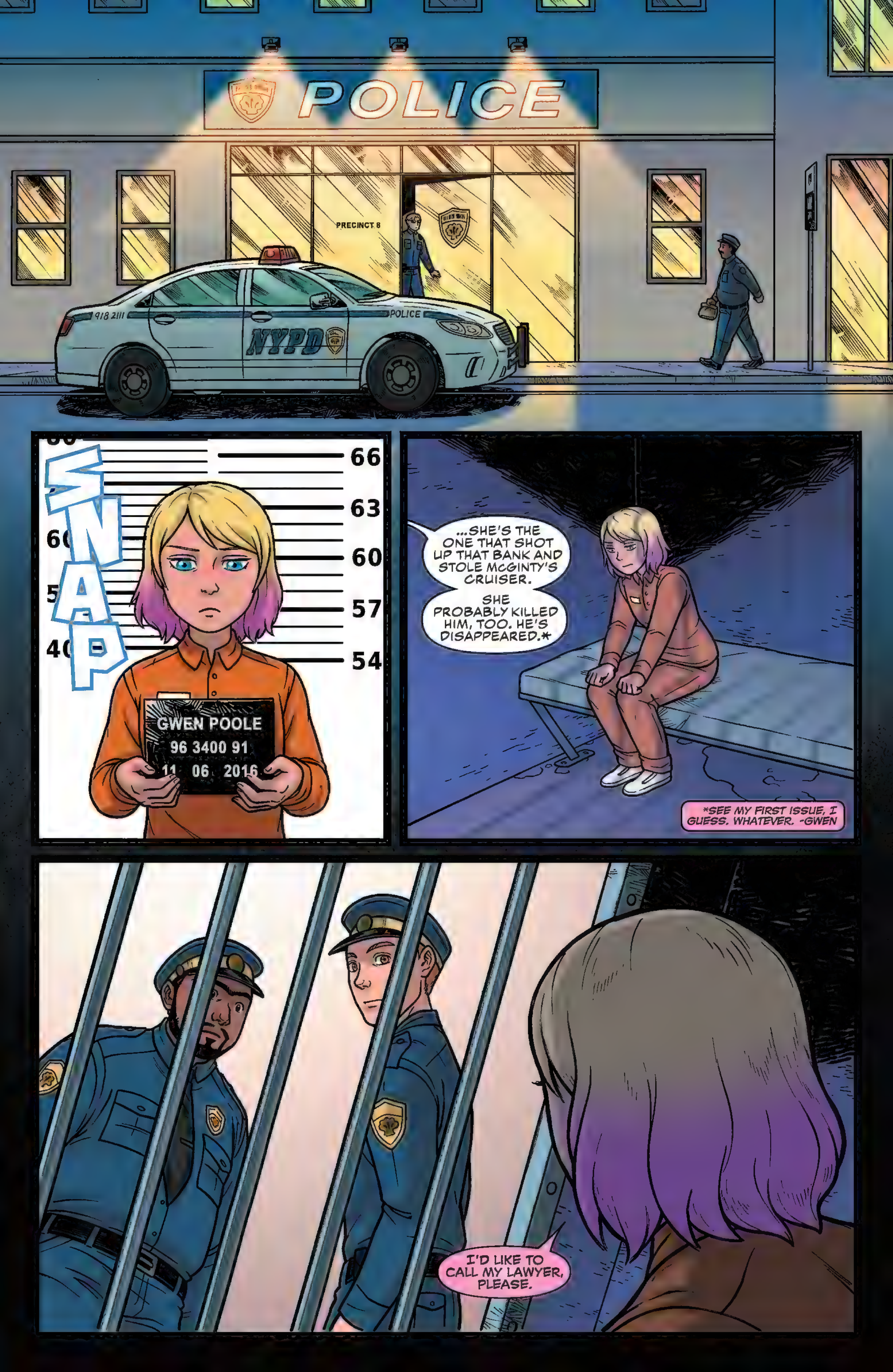

NO... NO... NO...
OH, CHILL OUT, LADY. YOUR SUPER VILLAIN IN THE MAKING IS TOTALLY FINE, NO THANKS TO SPIDER-MAN HERE!
SEE YOU NEVER!
WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY SON?!
WHY DID SPIDER-MAN BREAK INTO MY HOUSE TO HURT MY SON?!
≠SOB≠
I SAVED HIS LIFE! HE JUST HIT HIS HEAD!
COME ON, SPIDEY! WE'LL FIGURE OUT HOW TO TAKE HIM OUT ANOTHER DAY!

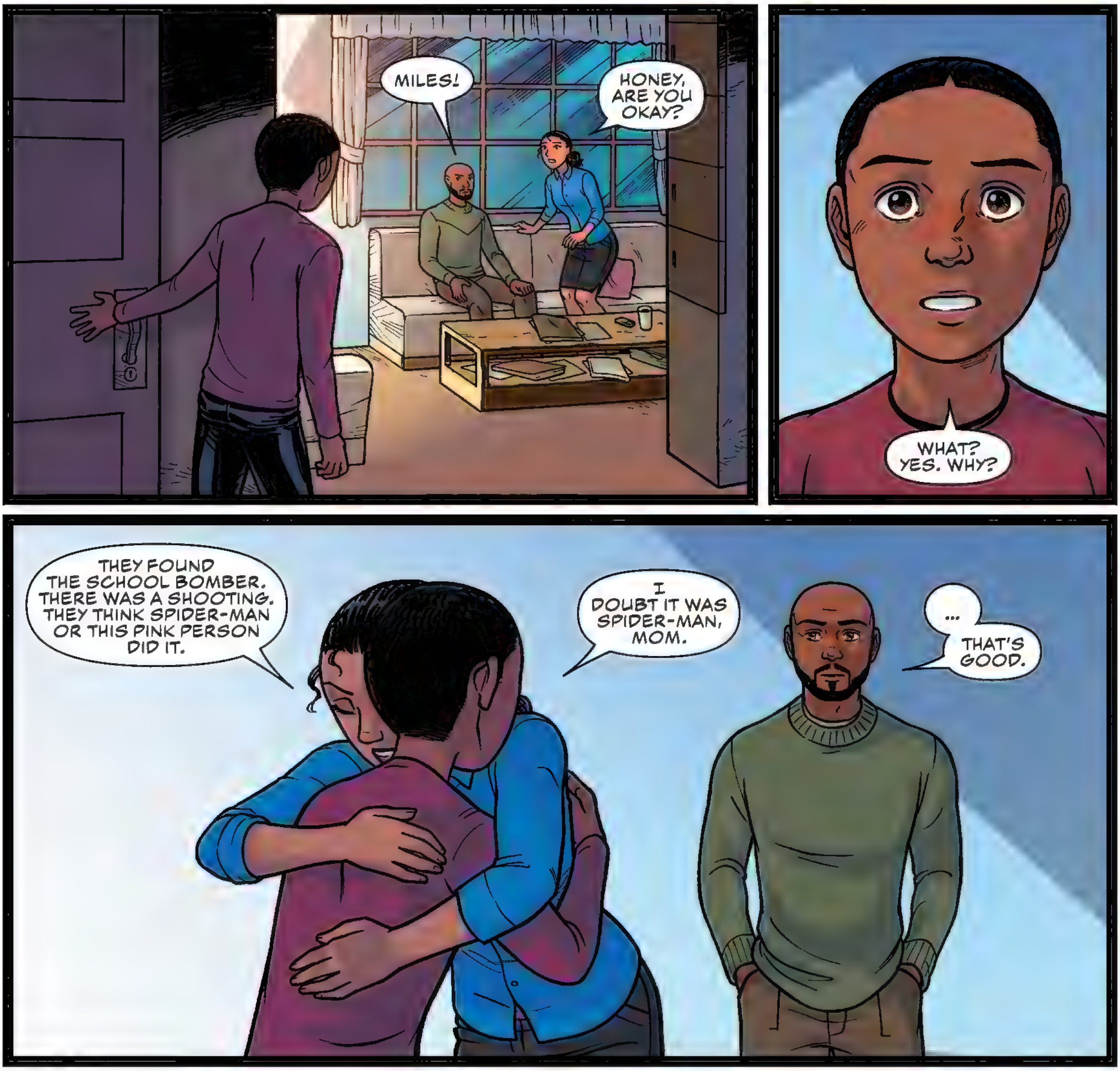

THWIP
GUNK
GAAK
SPIDEY?

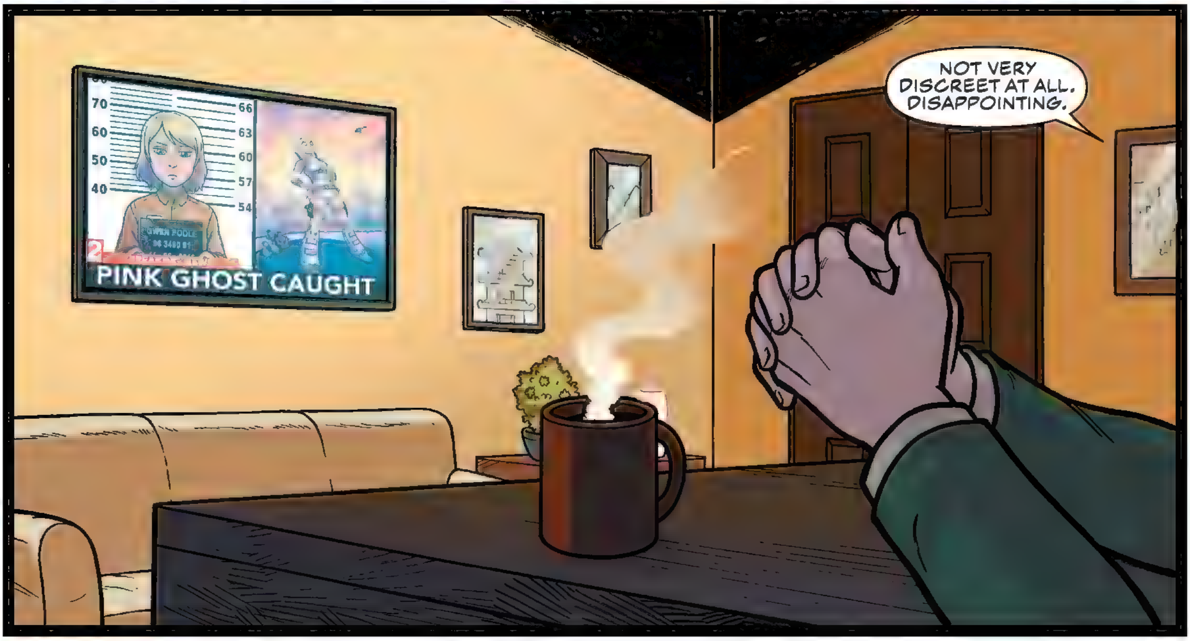

YOU ALMOST KILLED HIM! WHY?! WHY?!
HE BLEW UP YOUR SCHOOL, DUDE! I WAS TRYING TO SAVE YOU A TON OF HASSLE!
HASSLE?! NOT KILLING PEOPLE ISN'T ABOUT CONVENIENCE!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!
HE WASN'T IMPORTANT! HE WAS A PLOT DEVICE! A B-STORY!
SOMEBODY SAID "OH, REMEMBER THAT KID WHO WAS GOING TO BOMB THE SCHOOL IN THE ULTIMATE UNIVERSE? HE CAN DO IT IN THE MAIN ONE NOW!"
OH, GOD...
YOU'RE IN A COMIC BOOK, MILES!
YOU'RE... YOU'RE JUST A CRAZY PERSON.
NO. I'M THE BABY PUNISHER TO YOUR BABY SPIDER-MAN.

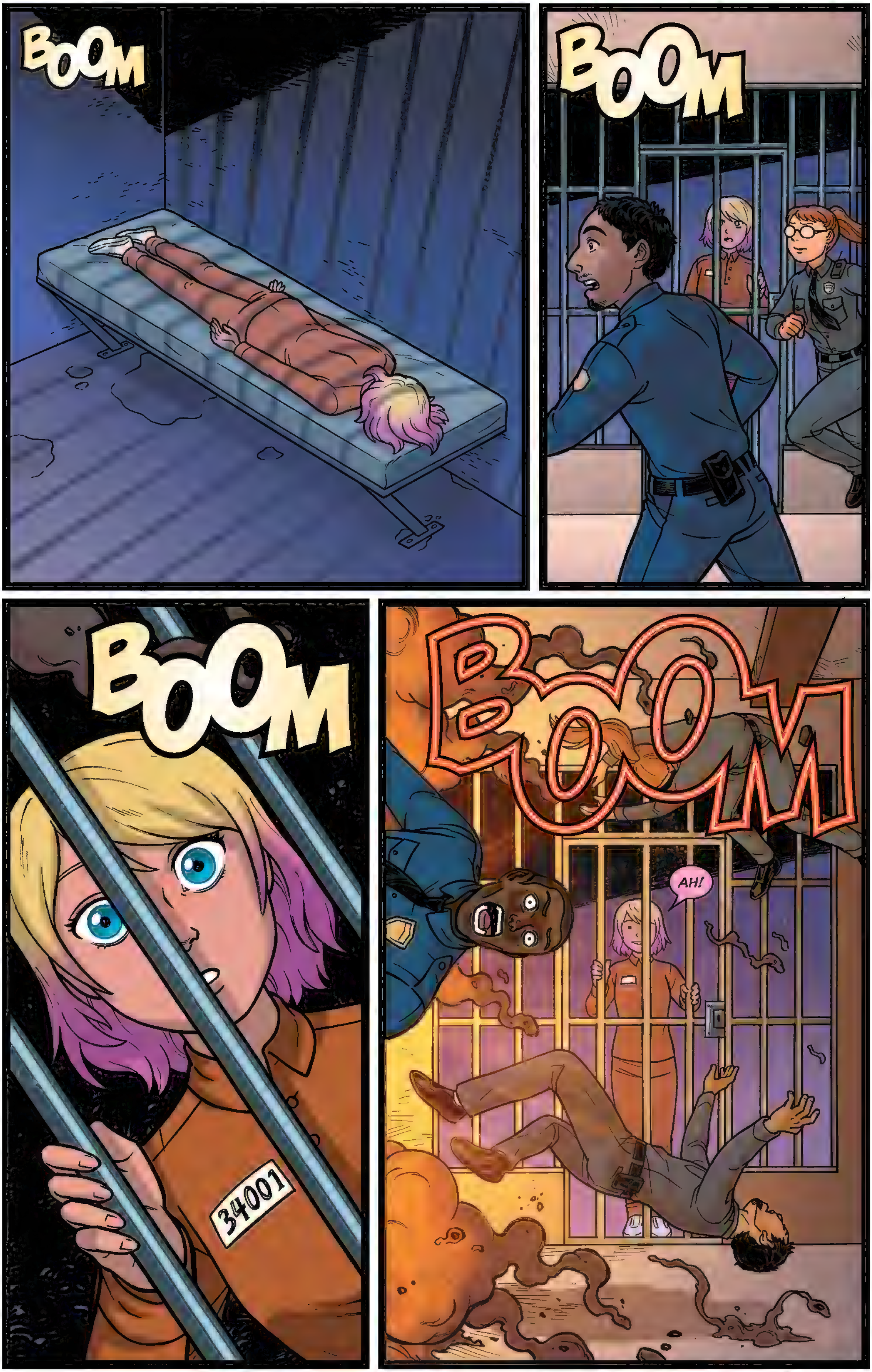

HUH!
BLAM
HONESTLY, WE SHOULD HAVE *STARTED* WITH THIS FIGHT. WHENEVER SUPER HEROES TEAM UP, THEY FIGHT OVER A MISUNDERSTANDING AT THE *BEGINNING.*
BUT NOW I SEE THIS IS THE SETUP OF A COMPLICATED HERO/ANTIHERO RELATIONSHIP. WE'LL CROSS PATHS OVER THE YEARS, BE FORCED TO COOPERATE DESPITE--
THWOCK

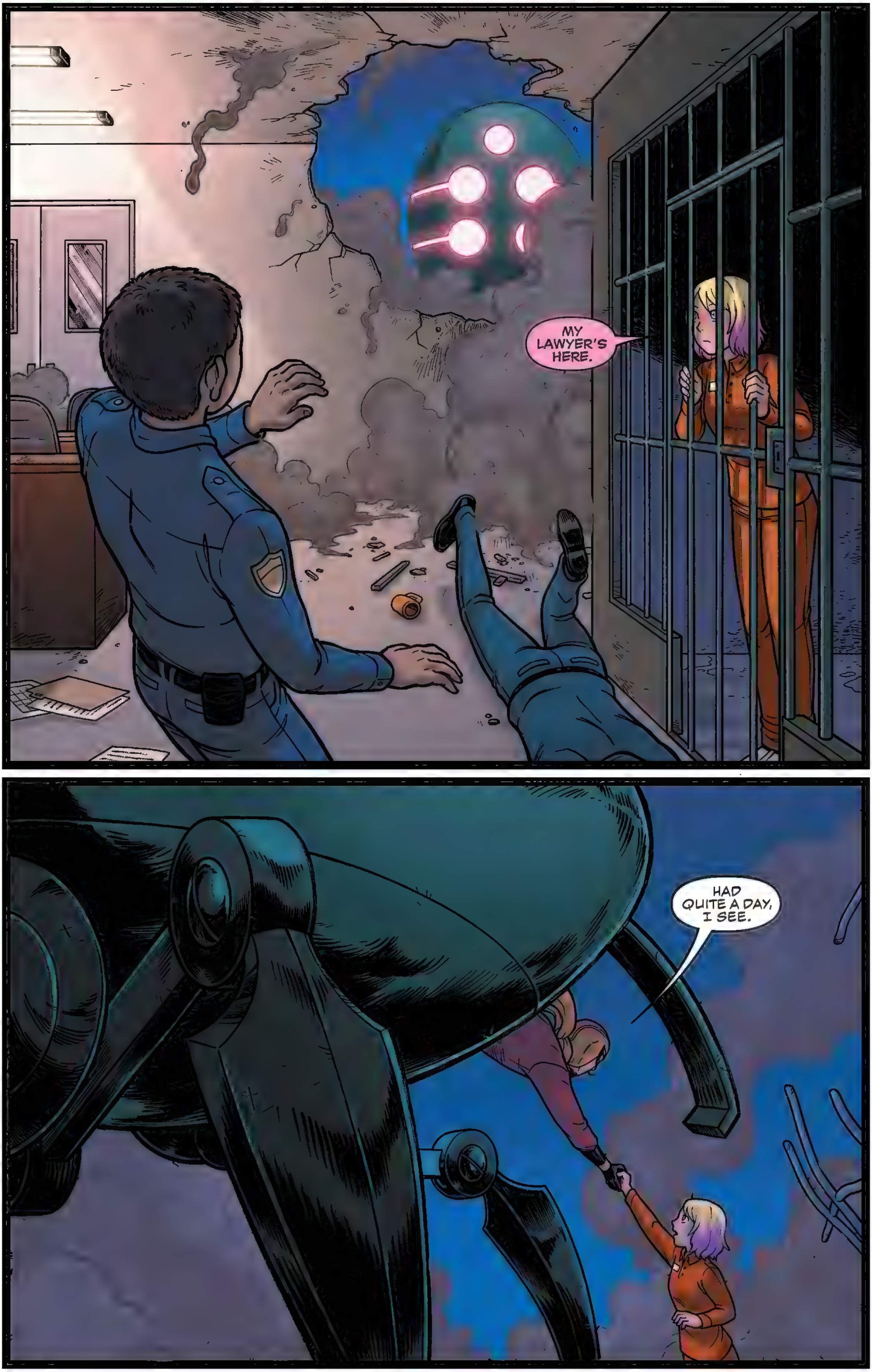

DUDE...
...YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO PULL PUNCHES AGAINST *NORMALS*...
I *DID.*
WAIT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M LEAVING YOU FOR THE POLICE.
WHAT?! *NO!*
I'LL, *UH*...I'LL TELL EVERYONE WHO YOU ARE!
YEAH, I'M GETTING READY FOR THAT.
BECAUSE I'M NOT LETTING A MURDERER LOOSE.
I WON'T TELL.
YEAH, I HOPE NOT.
I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE DAMIAN DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING WORSE THAN A CONCUSSION AND MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T *BOMB* ANY MORE SCHOOLS.
I HOPE YOU GET BETTER.
I'M NOT--
--I'M NOT CRAZY, SPIDER-MAN.

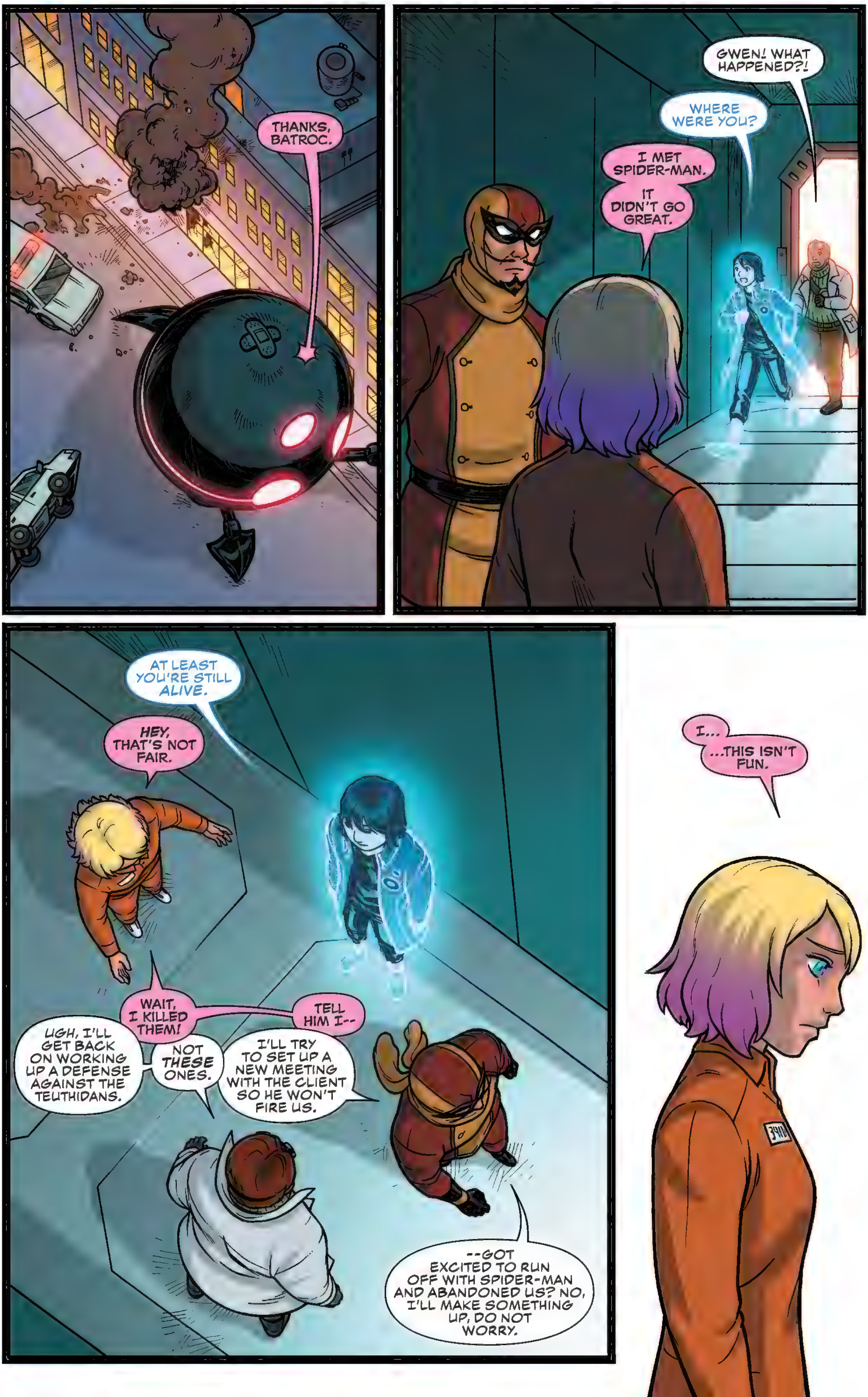

POLICE
PRECINCT 8
918 2111
POLICE
NYPD
SNAP
66
63
60
57
54
GWEN POOLE
96 3400 91
11 06 2016
...SHE'S THE ONE THAT SHOT UP THAT BANK AND STOLE McGINTY'S CRUISER.
SHE PROBABLY KILLED HIM, TOO. HE'S DISAPPEARED.*
*SEE MY FIRST ISSUE, I GUESS. WHATEVER. -GWEN
I'D LIKE TO CALL MY LAWYER, PLEASE.

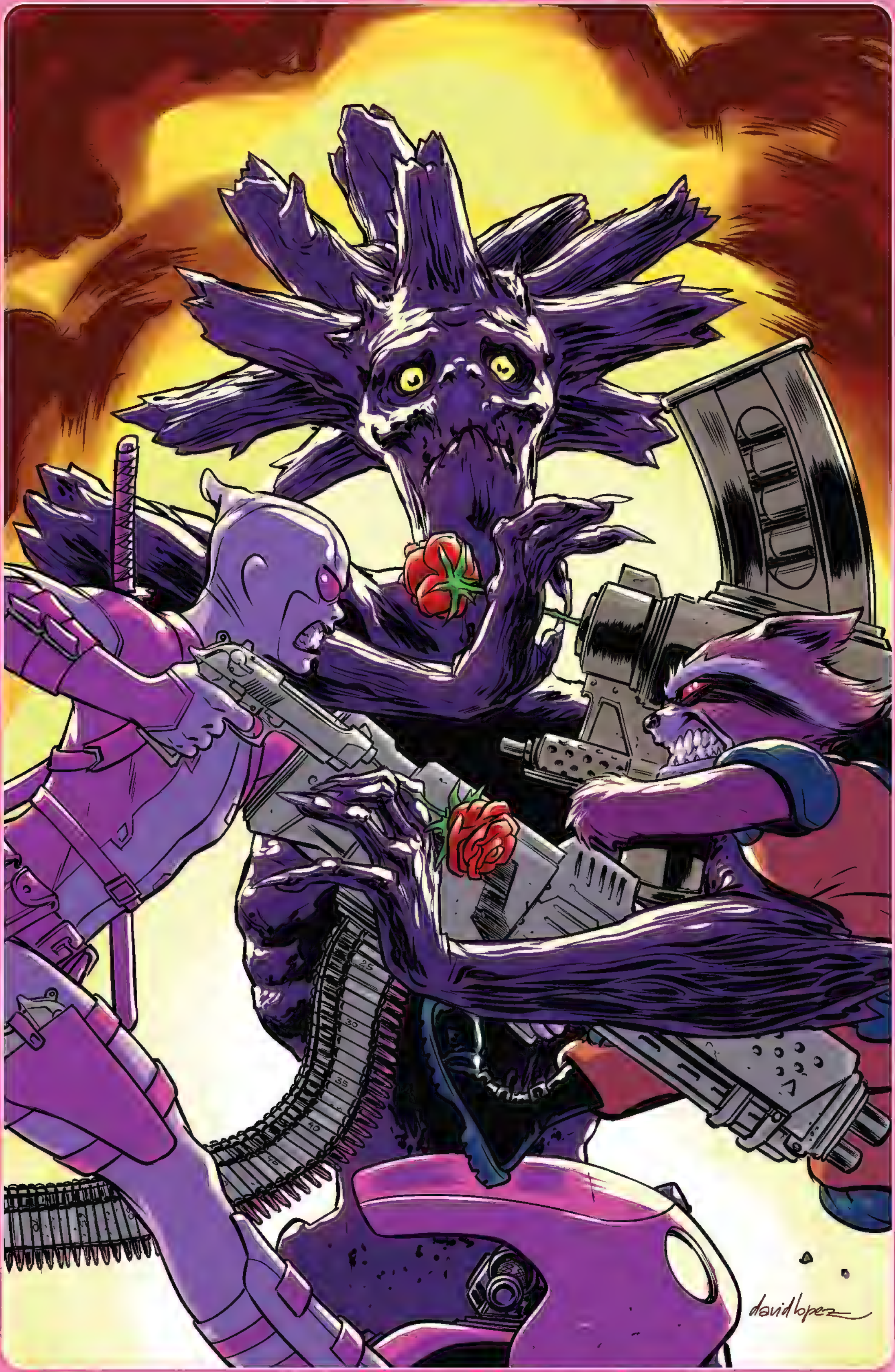

MILES!
HONEY, ARE YOU OKAY?
WHAT? YES. WHY?
THEY FOUND THE SCHOOL BOMBER. THERE WAS A SHOOTING. THEY THINK SPIDER-MAN OR THIS PINK PERSON DID IT.
I DOUBT IT WAS SPIDER-MAN, MOM.
... THAT'S GOOD.


GWEN POOLE
PINK GHOST CAUGHT
NOT VERY DISCREET AT ALL. DISAPPOINTING.


BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
34001
BOOM
AH!

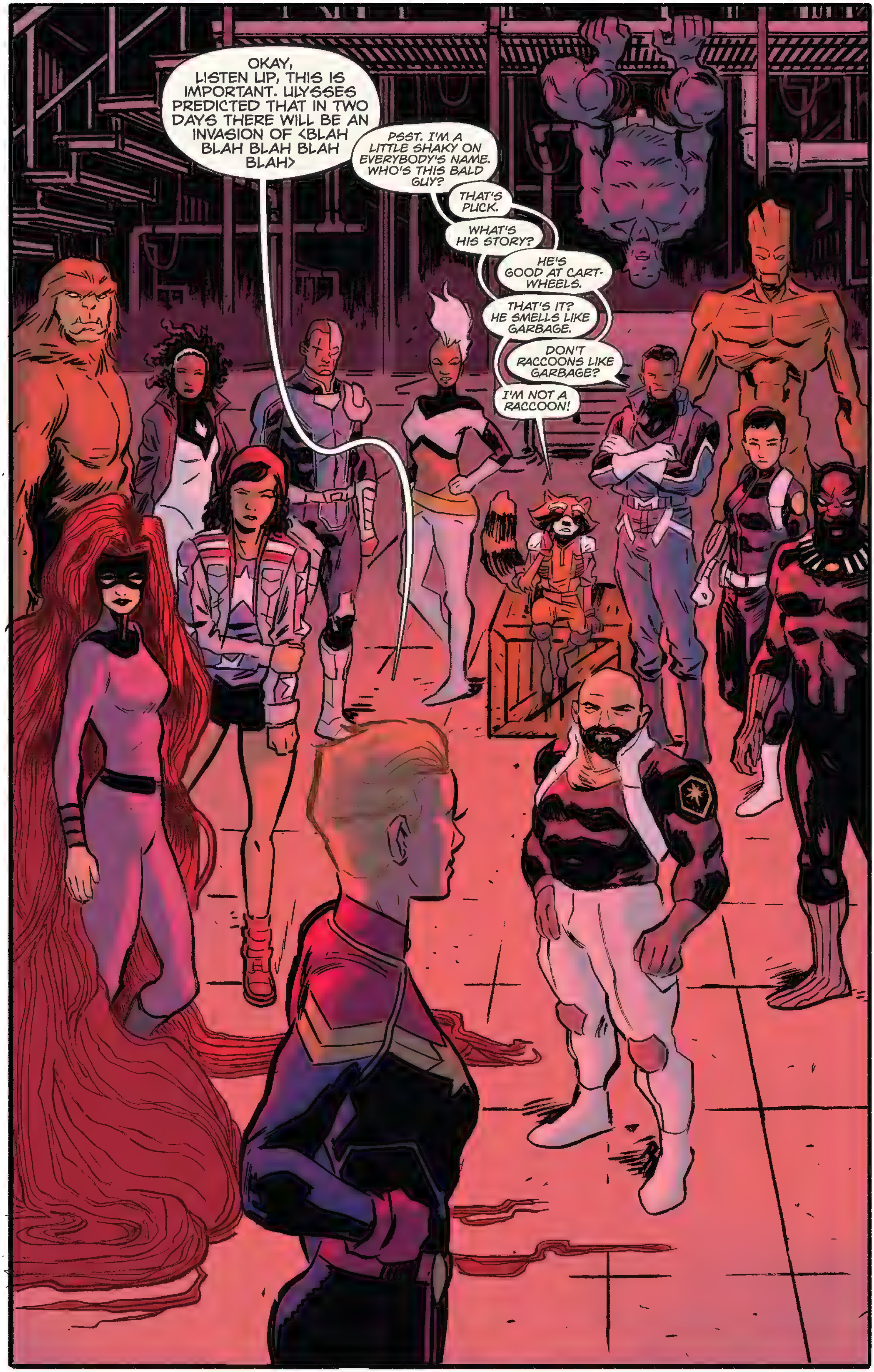

MY LAWYER'S HERE.
HAD QUITE A DAY, I SEE.

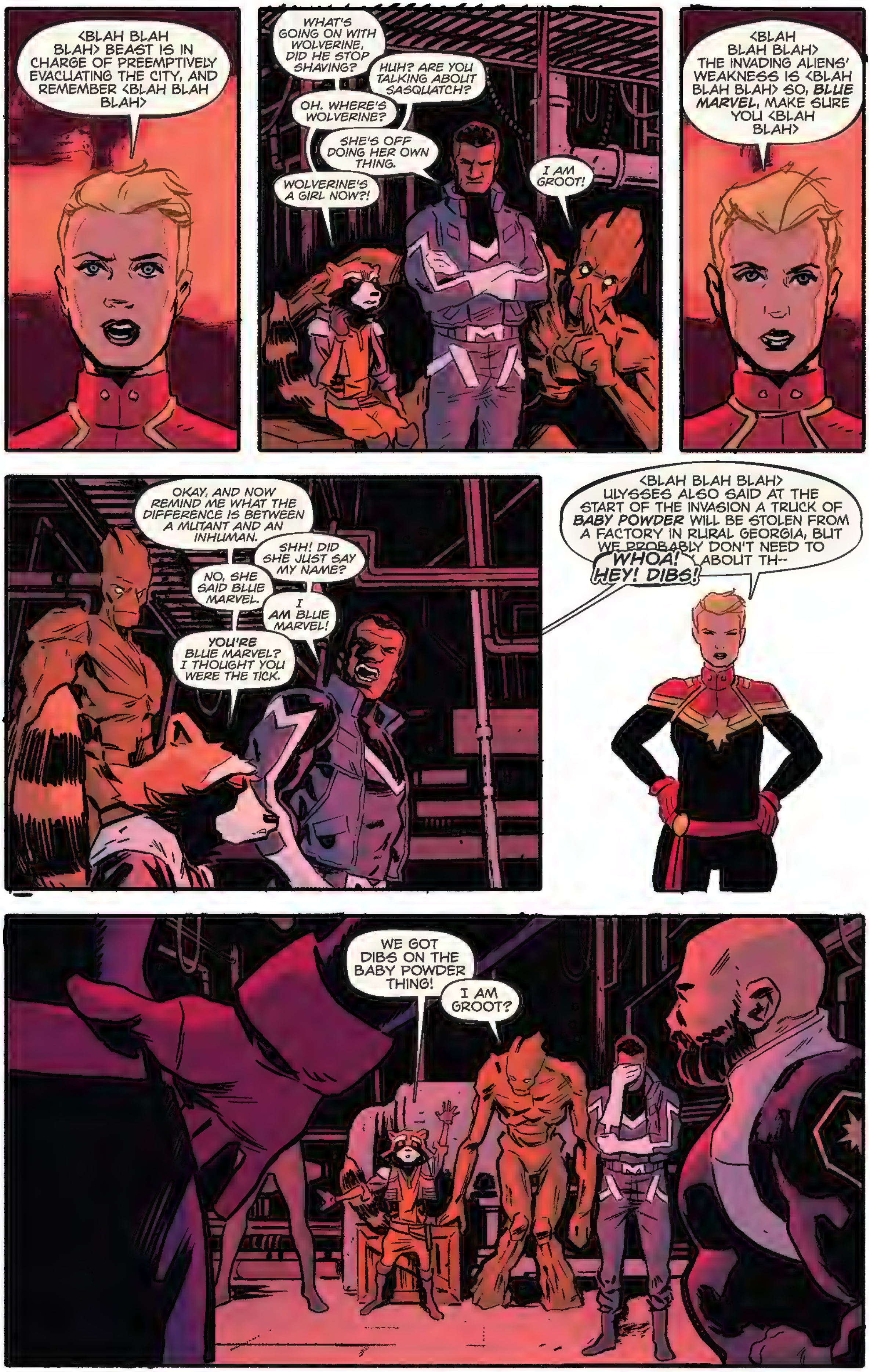

THANKS, BATROC.
GWEN! WHAT HAPPENED?!
WHERE WERE YOU?
I MET SPIDER-MAN.
IT DIDN'T GO GREAT.
AT LEAST YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.
HEY, THAT'S NOT FAIR.
WAIT, I KILLED THEM!
TELL HIM I--
UGH, I'LL GET BACK ON WORKING UP A DEFENSE AGAINST THE TEUTHIDANS.
NOT THESE ONES.
I'LL TRY TO SET UP A NEW MEETING WITH THE CLIENT SO HE WON'T FIRE US.
--GOT EXCITED TO RUN OFF WITH SPIDER-MAN AND ABANDONED US? NO, I'LL MAKE SOMETHING UP, DO NOT WORRY.
I...
...THIS ISN'T FUN.

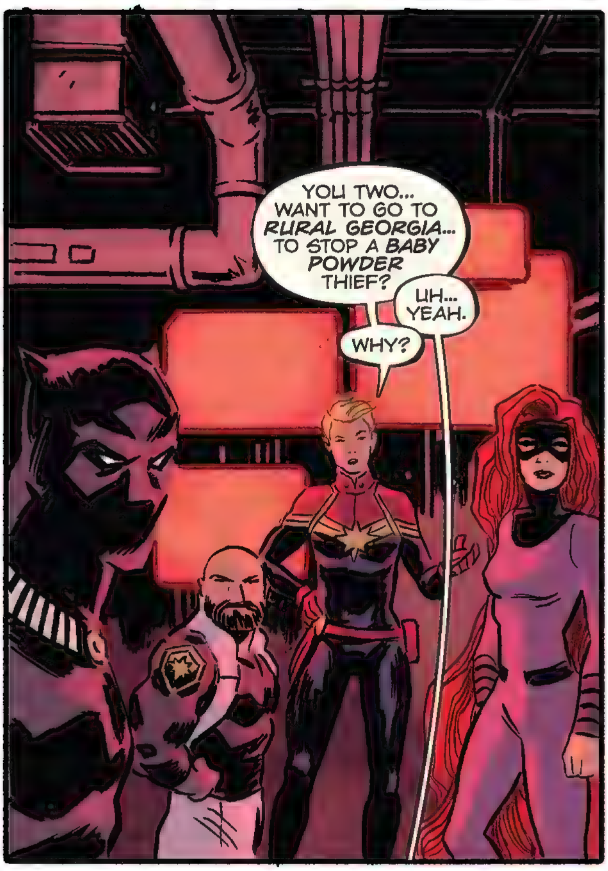

davidlopez

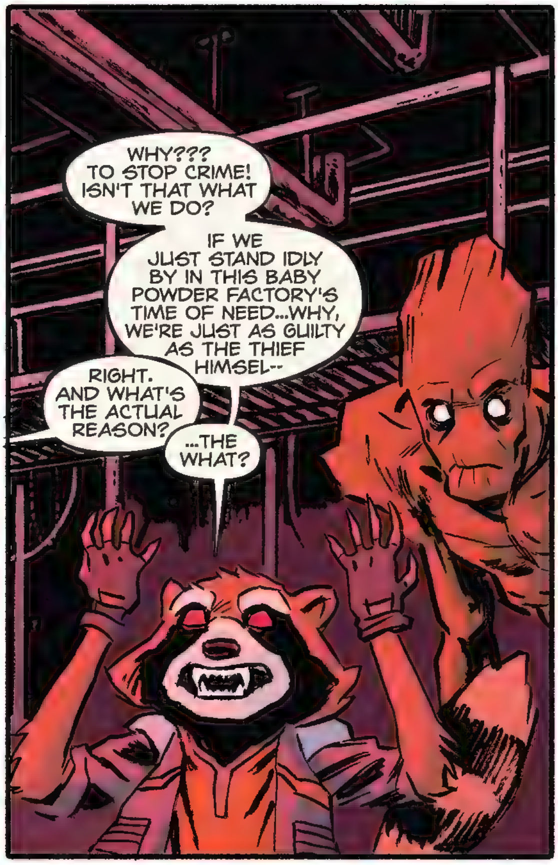
ROCKET RACCOON AND GROOT #8

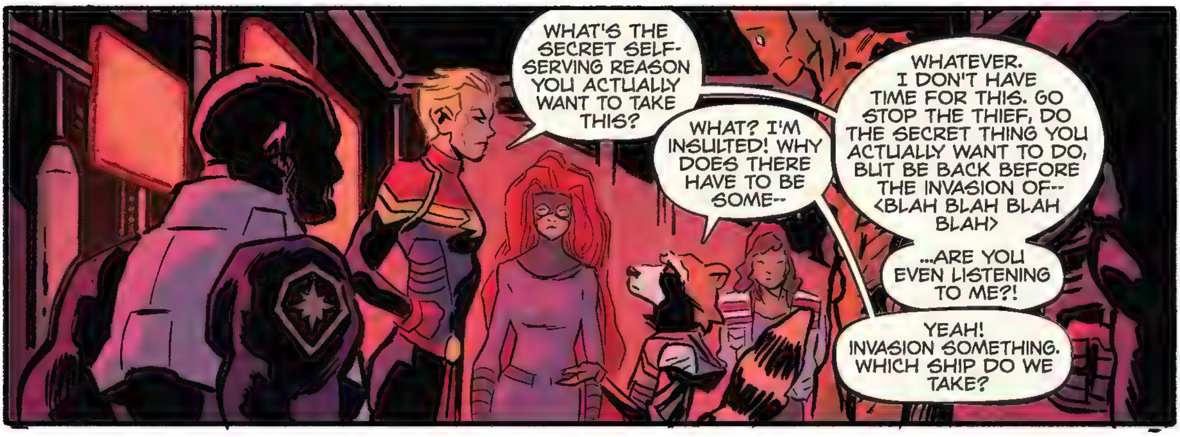
[illegible]

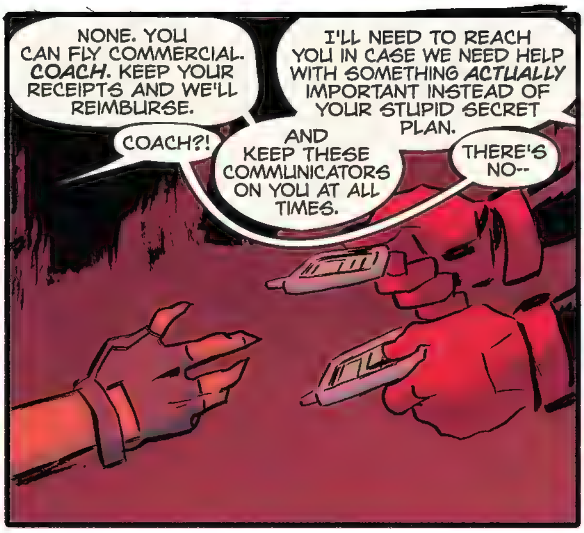

OKAY, LISTEN UP, THIS IS IMPORTANT. ULYSSES PREDICTED THAT IN TWO DAYS THERE WILL BE AN INVASION OF <BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH>
PSST. I'M A LITTLE SHAKY ON EVERYBODY'S NAME. WHO'S THIS BALD GUY?
THAT'S PUCK.
WHAT'S HIS STORY?
HE'S GOOD AT CART-WHEELS.
THAT'S IT? HE SMELLS LIKE GARBAGE.
DON'T RACCOONS LIKE GARBAGE?
I'M NOT A RACCOON!

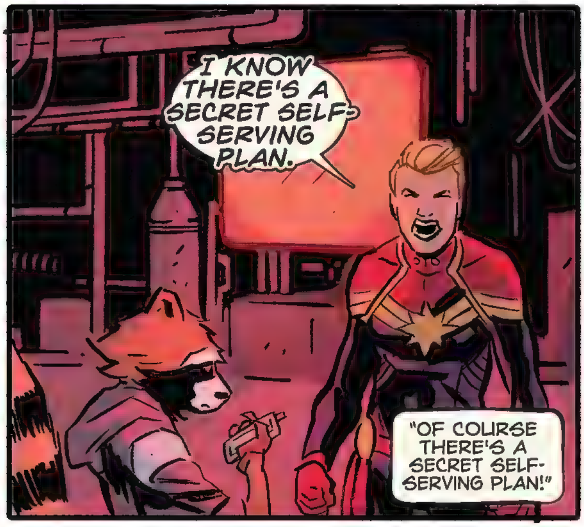

<BLAH BLAH BLAH> BEAST IS IN CHARGE OF PREEMPTIVELY EVACUATING THE CITY, AND REMEMBER <BLAH BLAH BLAH>
WHAT'S GOING ON WITH WOLVERINE, DID HE STOP SHAVING?
HUH? ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT SASQUATCH?
OH. WHERE'S WOLVERINE?
SHE'S OFF DOING HER OWN THING.
WOLVERINE'S A GIRL NOW?!
I AM GROOT!
<BLAH BLAH BLAH> THE INVADING ALIENS' WEAKNESS IS <BLAH BLAH BLAH> SO, BLUE MARVEL, MAKE SURE YOU <BLAH BLAH>
OKAY, AND NOW REMIND ME WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN A MUTANT AND AN INHUMAN.
SHH! DID SHE JUST SAY MY NAME?
NO, SHE SAID BLUE MARVEL.
I AM BLUE MARVEL!
YOU'RE BLUE MARVEL? I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE TICK.
<BLAH BLAH BLAH> ULYSSES ALSO SAID AT THE START OF THE INVASION A TRUCK OF BABY POWDER WILL BE STOLEN FROM A FACTORY IN RURAL GEORGIA, BUT WE PROBABLY DON'T NEED TO ABOUT TH--
WHOA! HEY! DIBS!
WE GOT DIBS ON THE BABY POWDER THING!
I AM GROOT?

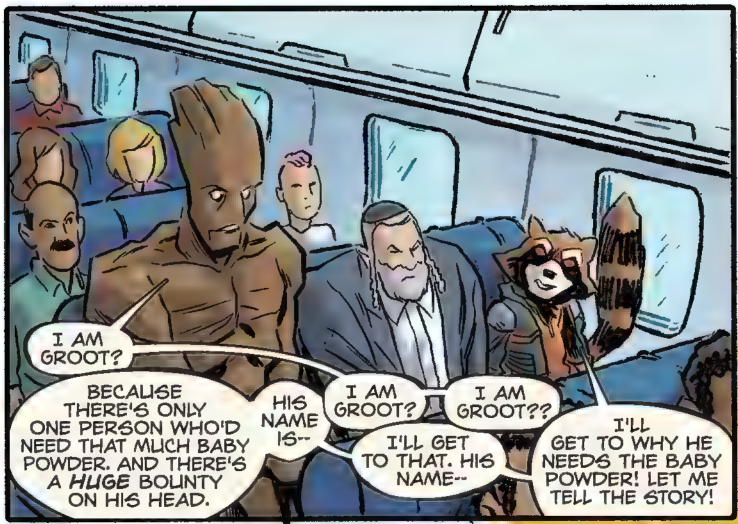

YOU TWO... WANT TO GO TO *RURAL GEORGIA*... TO STOP A *BABY POWDER* THIEF?
UH... YEAH.
WHY?

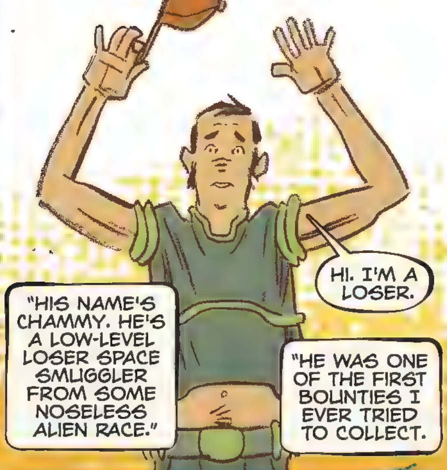

WHY??? TO STOP CRIME! ISN'T THAT WHAT WE DO?
IF WE JUST STAND IDLY BY IN THIS BABY POWDER FACTORY'S TIME OF NEED...WHY, WE'RE JUST AS GUILTY AS THE THIEF HIMSEL--
RIGHT. AND WHAT'S THE ACTUAL REASON?
...THE WHAT?

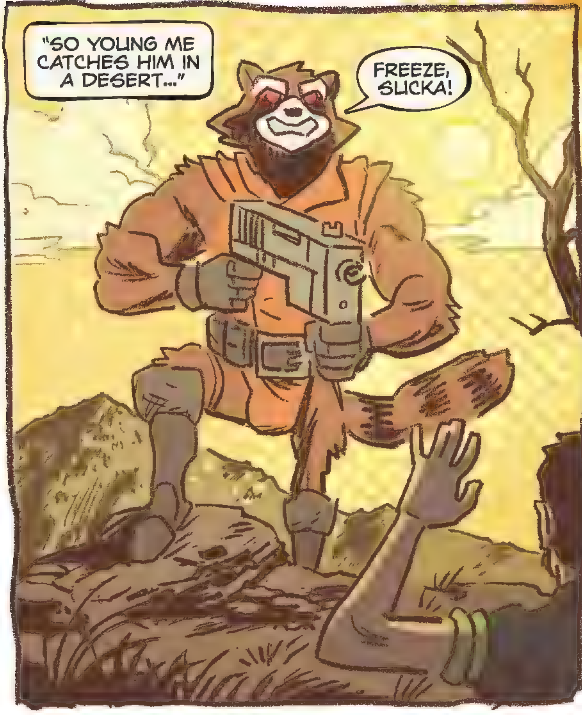

WHAT'S THE SECRET SELF-SERVING REASON YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO TAKE THIS?
WHAT? I'M INSULTED! WHY DOES THERE HAVE TO BE SOME--
WHATEVER. I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS. GO STOP THE THIEF, DO THE SECRET THING YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO DO, BUT BE BACK BEFORE THE INVASION OF-- <BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH>
...ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?!
YEAH! INVASION SOMETHING. WHICH SHIP DO WE TAKE?

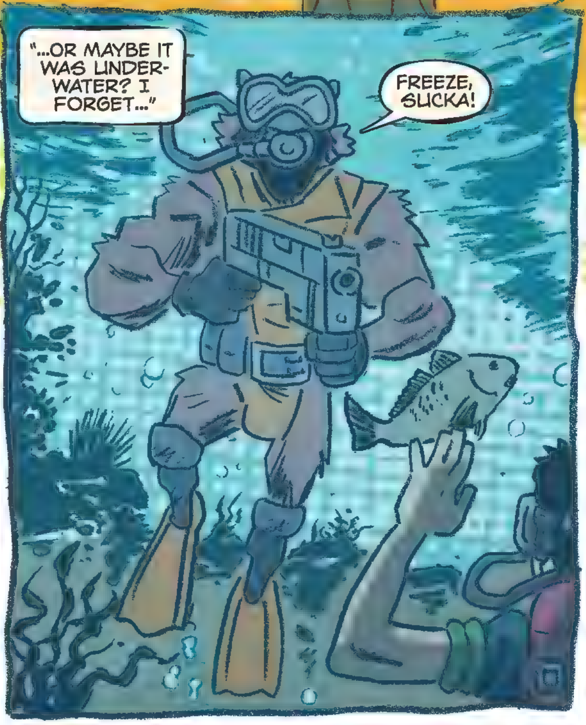

NONE. YOU CAN FLY COMMERCIAL. *COACH*. KEEP YOUR RECEIPTS AND WE'LL REIMBURSE.
I'LL NEED TO REACH YOU IN CASE WE NEED HELP WITH SOMETHING *ACTUALLY* IMPORTANT INSTEAD OF YOUR STUPID SECRET PLAN.
COACH?!
AND KEEP THESE COMMUNICATORS ON YOU AT ALL TIMES.
THERE'S NO--

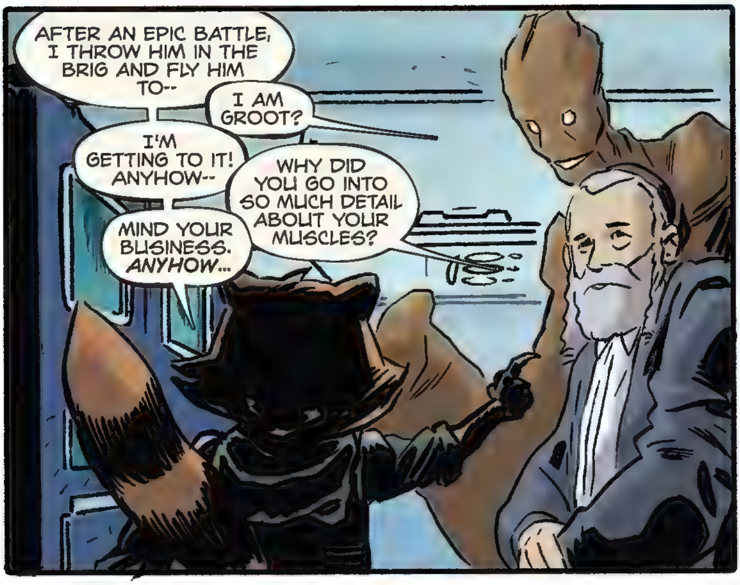

I KNOW THERE'S A SECRET SELF-SERVING PLAN.
"OF COURSE THERE'S A SECRET SELF-SERVING PLAN!"

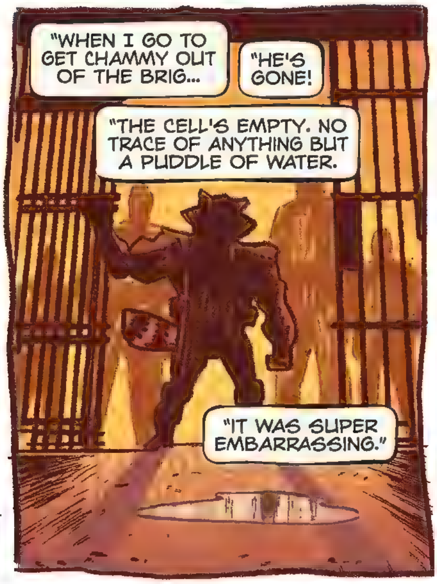

I AM GROOT?
BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON WHO'D NEED THAT MUCH BABY POWDER. AND THERE'S A *HUGE* BOUNTY ON HIS HEAD.
HIS NAME IS--
I AM GROOT?
I AM GROOT??
I'LL GET TO THAT. HIS NAME--
I'LL GET TO WHY HE NEEDS THE BABY POWDER! LET ME TELL THE STORY!

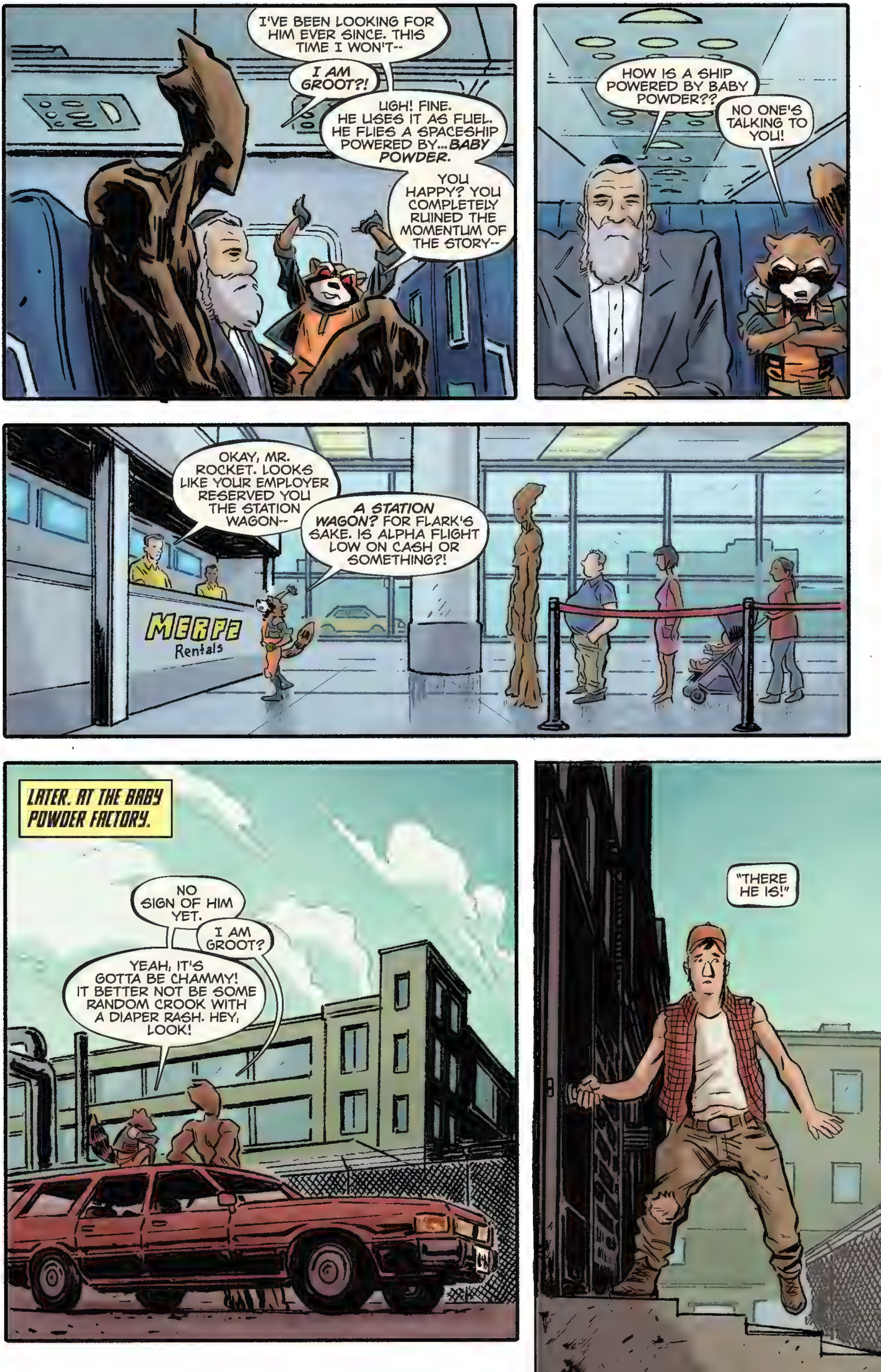

"HIS NAME'S CHAMMY. HE'S A LOW-LEVEL LOSER SPACE SMUGGLER FROM SOME NOSELESS ALIEN RACE."
HI. I'M A LOSER.
"HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST BOUNTIES I EVER TRIED TO COLLECT.

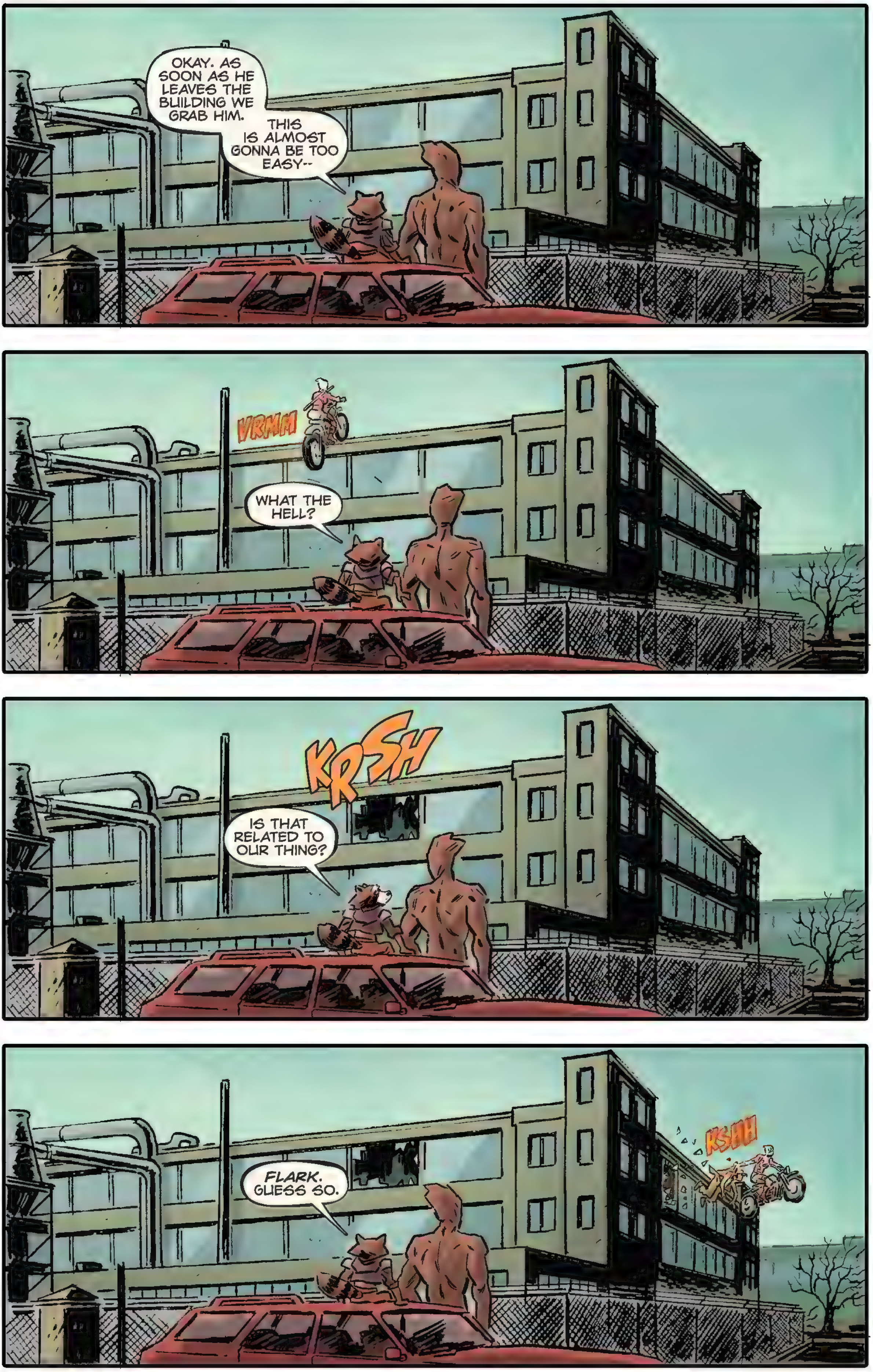

"SO YOUNG ME CATCHES HIM IN A DESERT..."
FREEZE, SUCKA!

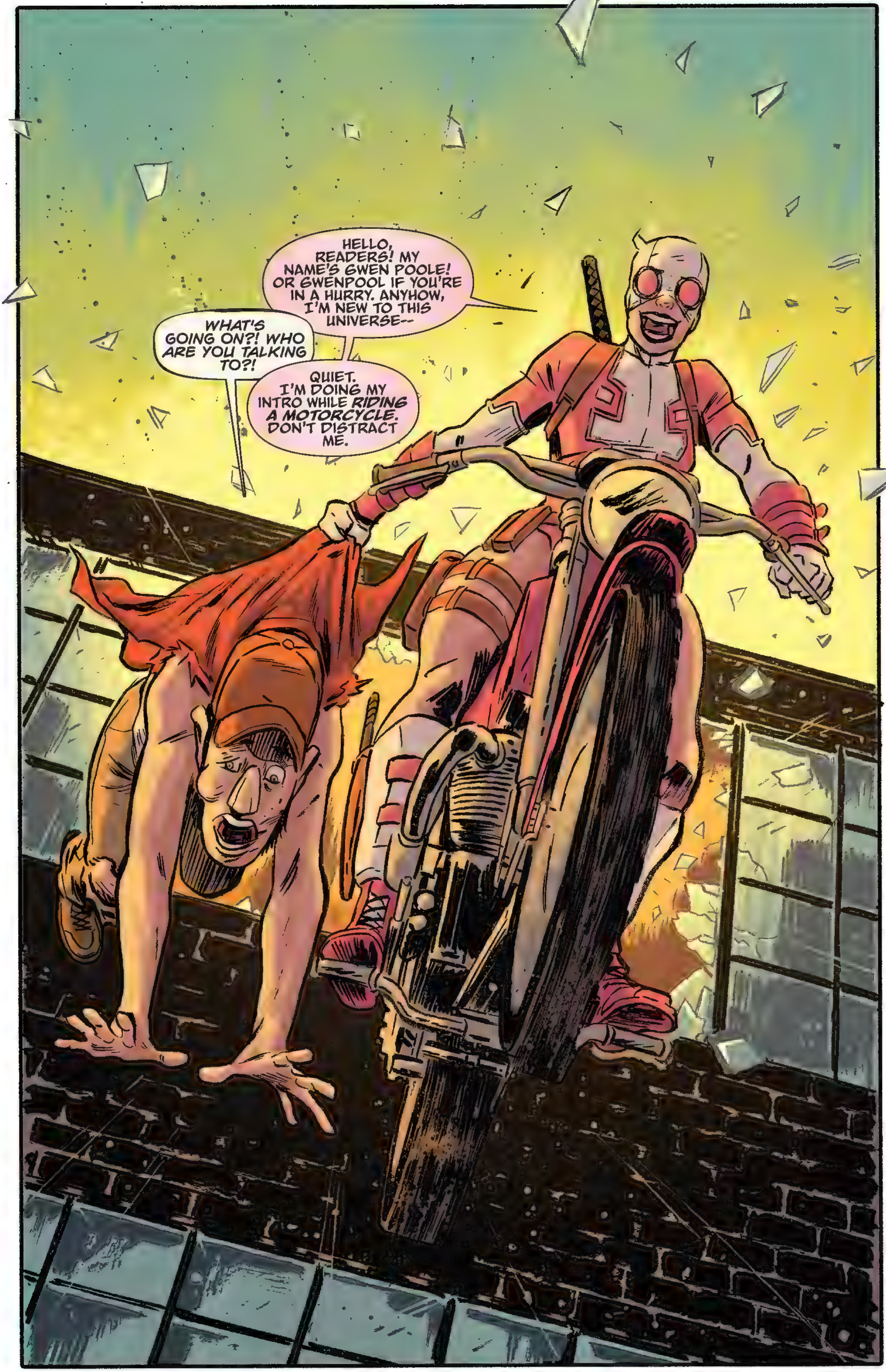

"...OR MAYBE IT WAS UNDERWATER? I FORGET..."
FREEZE, SUCKA!

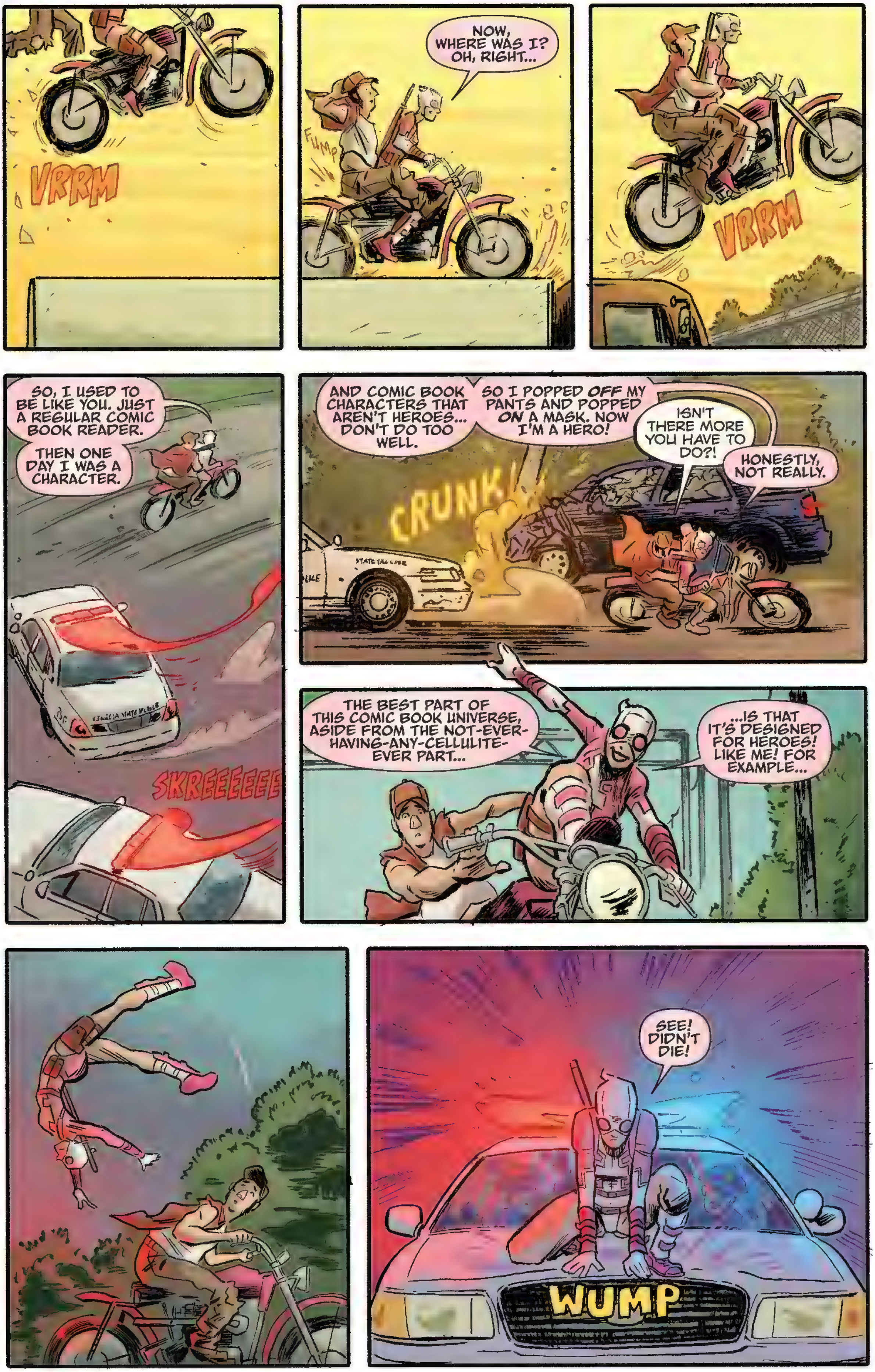

AFTER AN EPIC BATTLE, I THROW HIM IN THE BRIG AND FLY HIM TO--
I AM GROOT?
I'M GETTING TO IT! ANYHOW--
WHY DID YOU GO INTO SO MUCH DETAIL ABOUT YOUR MUSCLES?
MIND YOUR BUSINESS. *ANYHOW...*

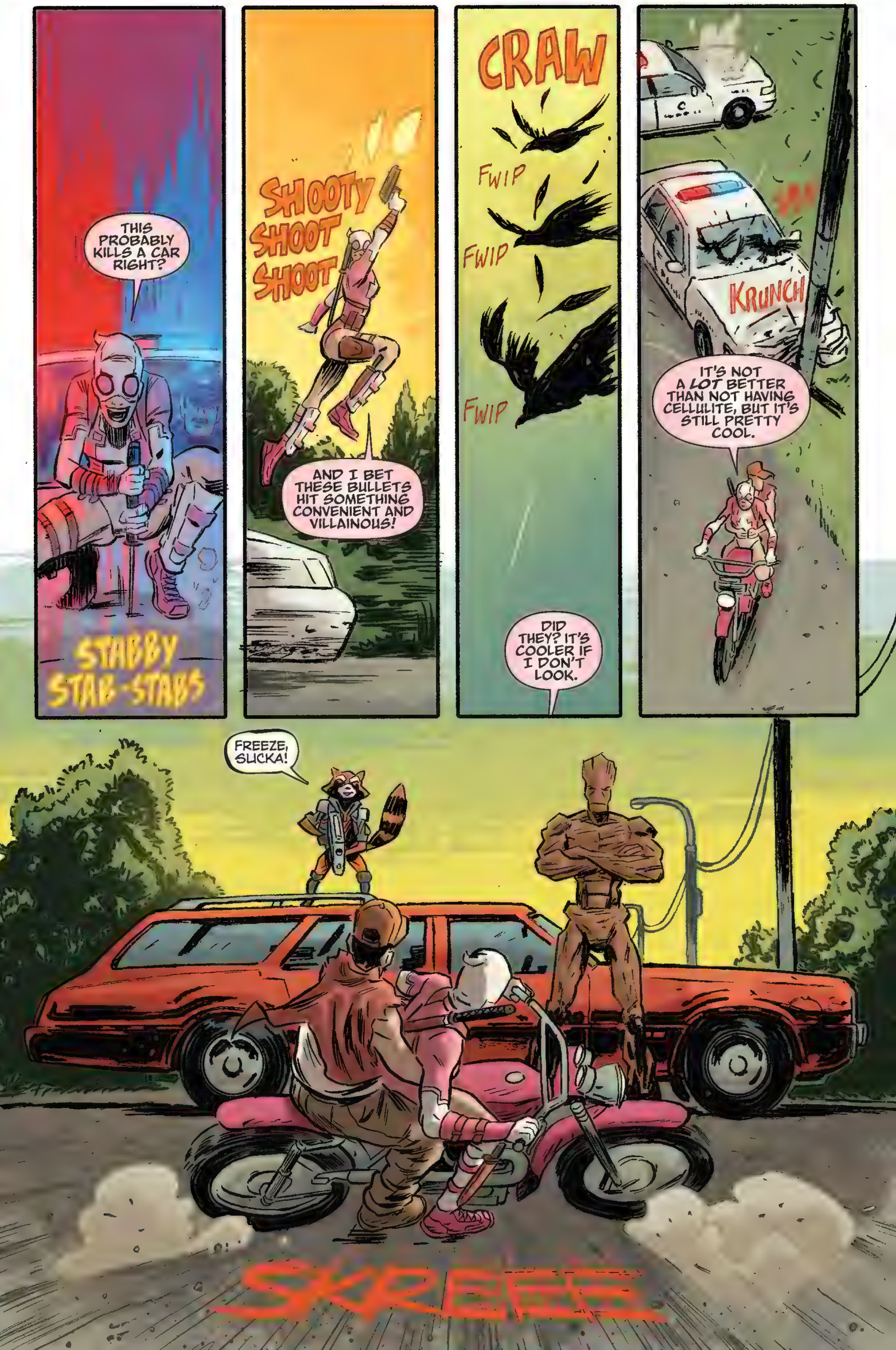

"WHEN I GO TO GET CHAMMY OUT OF THE BRIG...
"HE'S GONE!
"THE CELL'S EMPTY. NO TRACE OF ANYTHING BUT A PUDDLE OF WATER.
"IT WAS SUPER EMBARRASSING."

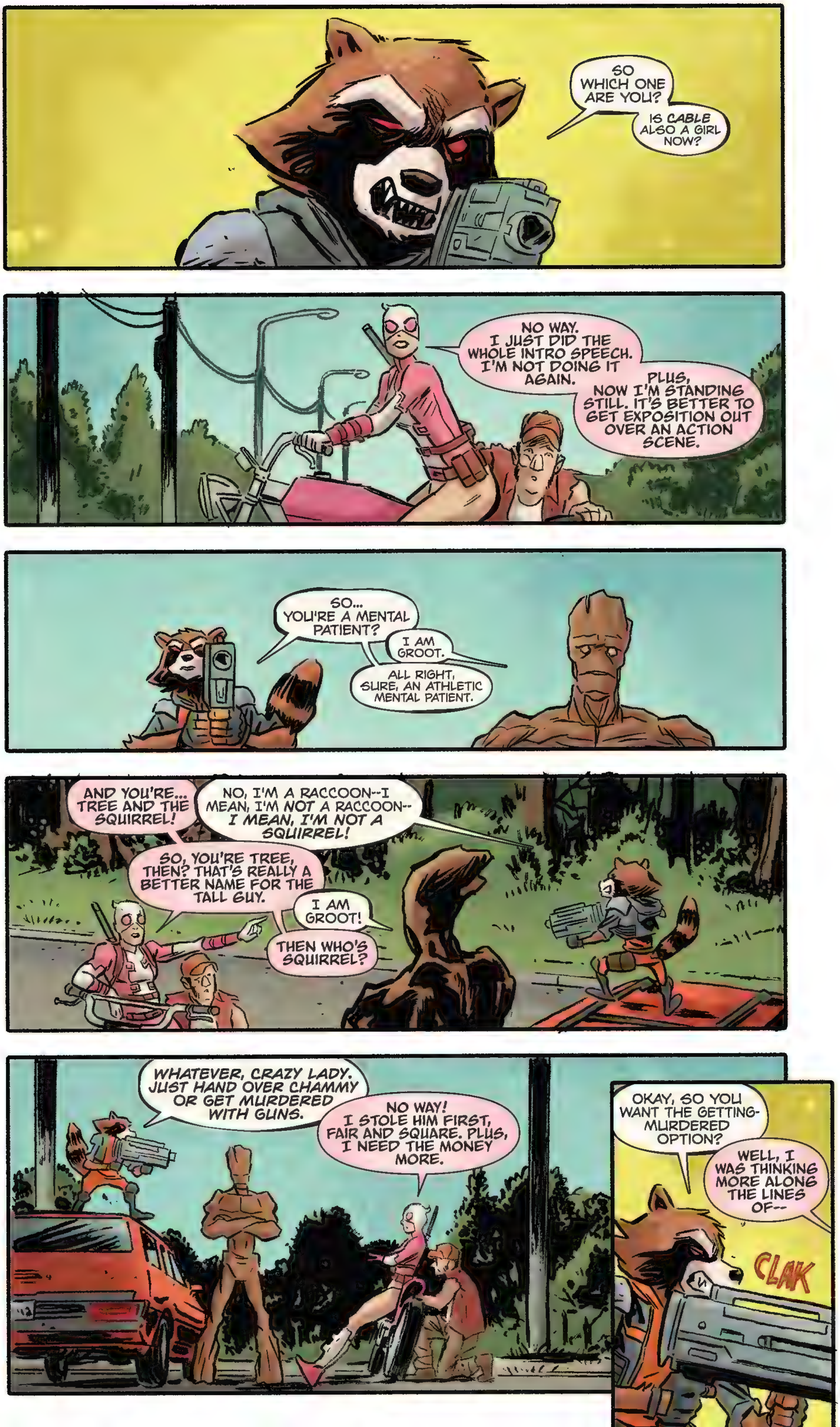

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM EVER SINCE. THIS TIME I WON'T--
I AM GROOT?!
UGH! FINE. HE USES IT AS FUEL. HE FLIES A SPACESHIP POWERED BY...BABY POWDER.
YOU HAPPY? YOU COMPLETELY RUINED THE MOMENTUM OF THE STORY--
HOW IS A SHIP POWERED BY BABY POWDER??
NO ONE'S TALKING TO YOU!
OKAY, MR. ROCKET. LOOKS LIKE YOUR EMPLOYER RESERVED YOU THE STATION WAGON--
A STATION WAGON? FOR FLARK'S SAKE. IS ALPHA FLIGHT LOW ON CASH OR SOMETHING?!
MERPA
Rentals
LATER. AT THE BABY POWDER FACTORY.
NO SIGN OF HIM YET.
I AM GROOT?
YEAH, IT'S GOTTA BE CHAMMY! IT BETTER NOT BE SOME RANDOM CROOK WITH A DIAPER RASH. HEY, LOOK!
"THERE HE IS!"

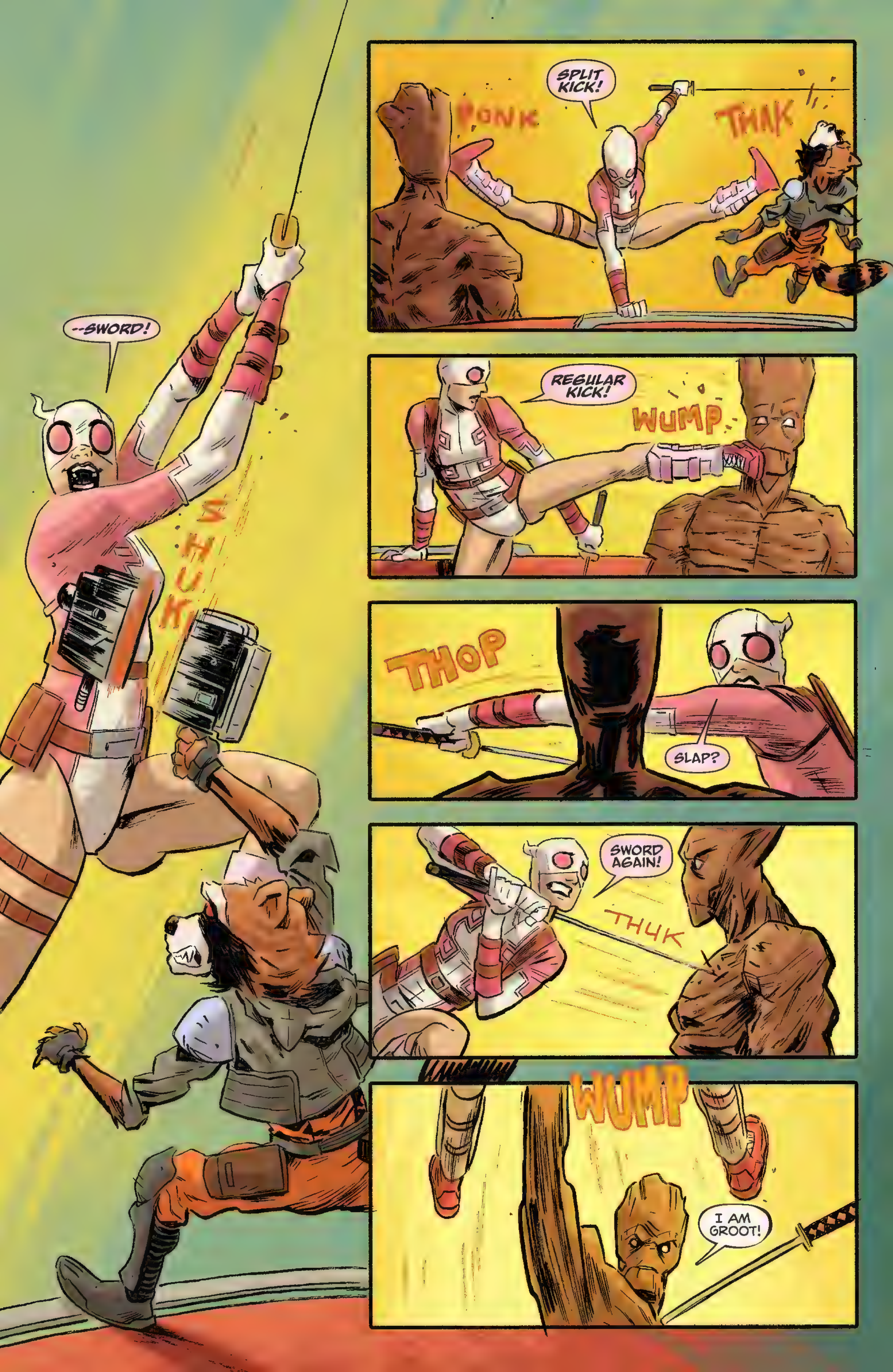

OKAY. AS SOON AS HE LEAVES THE BUILDING WE GRAB HIM.
THIS IS ALMOST GONNA BE TOO EASY--
VRMM
WHAT THE HELL?
KRSH
IS THAT RELATED TO OUR THING?
KSHH
FLARK. GUESS SO.

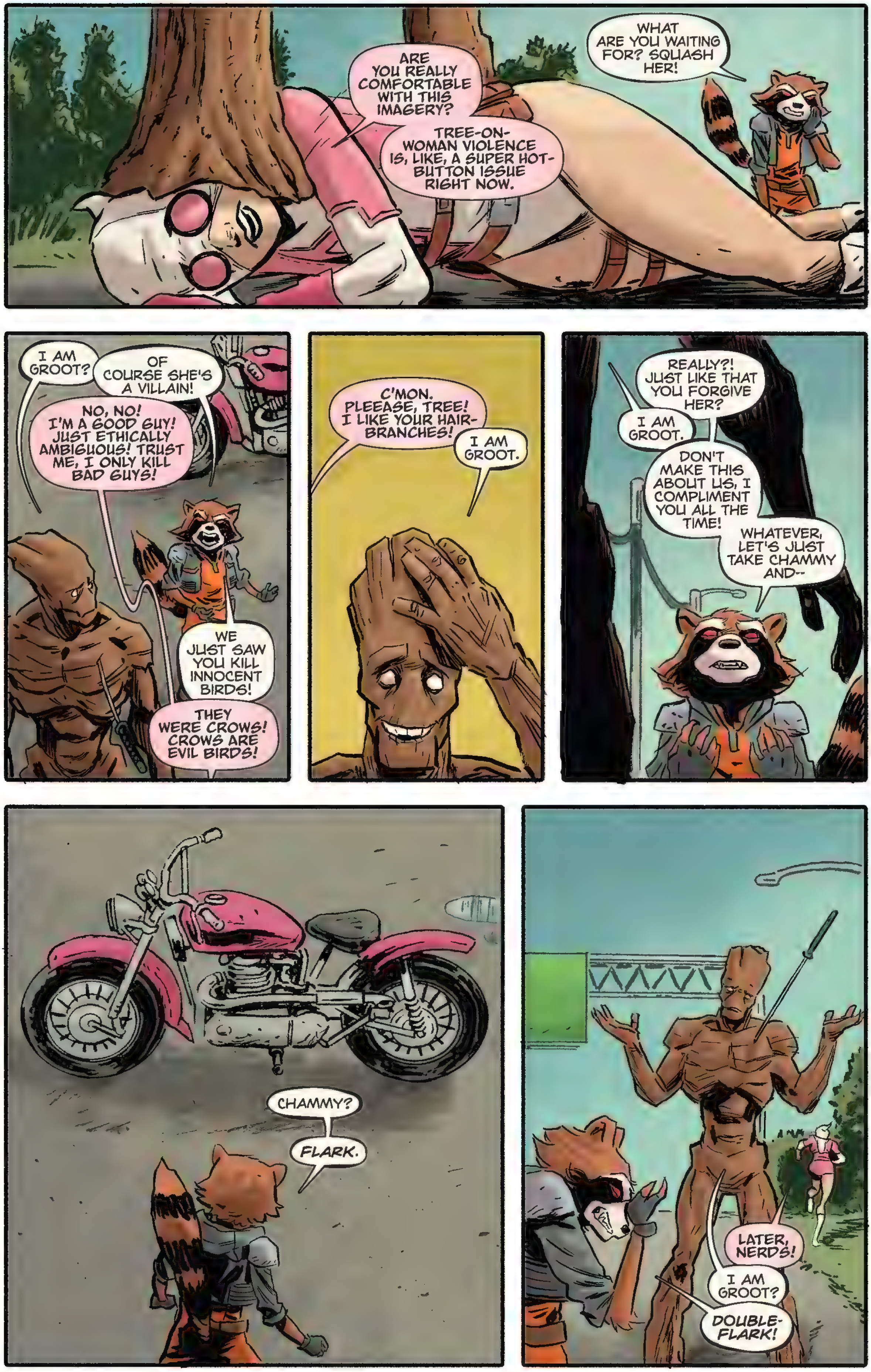

HELLO, READERS! MY NAME'S GWEN POOLE! OR GWENPOOL IF YOU'RE IN A HURRY. ANYHOW, I'M NEW TO THIS UNIVERSE--
WHAT'S GOING ON?! WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?!
QUIET. I'M DOING MY INTRO WHILE *RIDING A MOTORCYCLE.* DON'T DISTRACT ME.

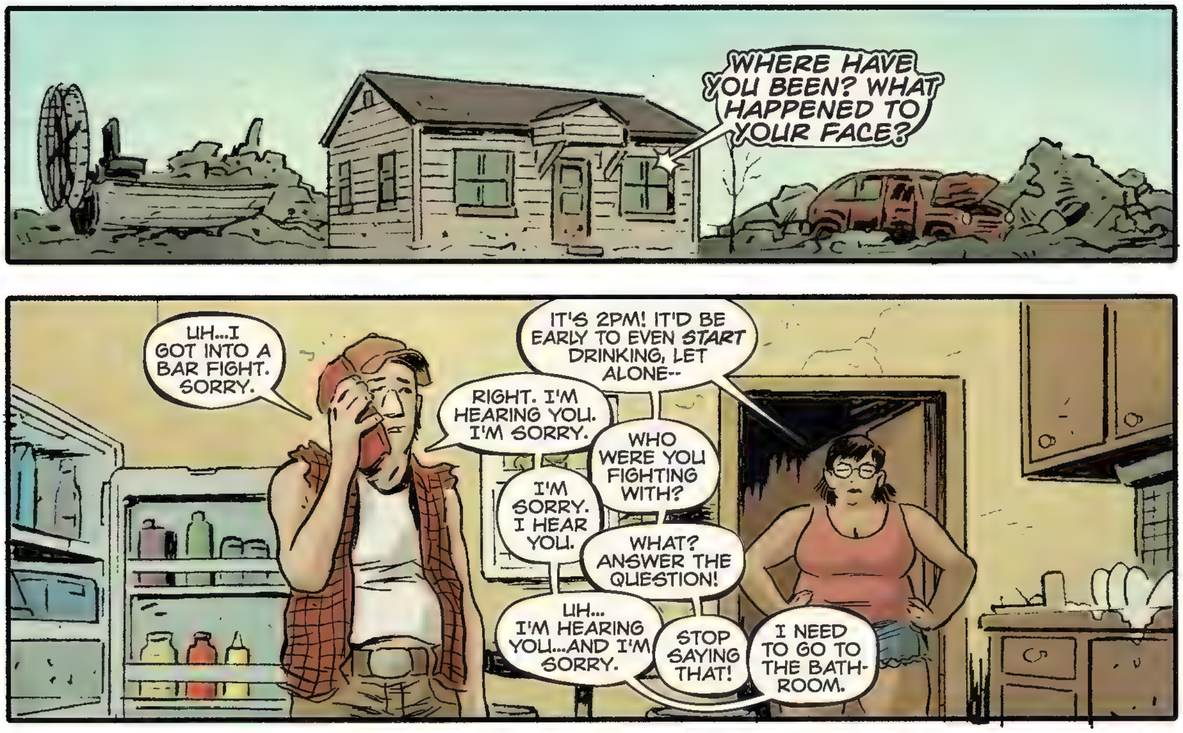

VRRM
NOW, WHERE WAS I? OH, RIGHT...
FUMP
VRRM
SO, I USED TO BE LIKE YOU. JUST A REGULAR COMIC BOOK READER.
THEN ONE DAY I WAS A CHARACTER.
SKREEEEEEE
AND COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS THAT AREN'T HEROES... DON'T DO TOO WELL.
SO I POPPED OFF MY PANTS AND POPPED ON A MASK. NOW I'M A HERO!
ISN'T THERE MORE YOU HAVE TO DO?!
HONESTLY, NOT REALLY.
CRUNK!
STATE TROOPER
THE BEST PART OF THIS COMIC BOOK UNIVERSE, ASIDE FROM THE NOT-EVER-HAVING-ANY-CELLULITE-EVER PART...
...IS THAT IT'S DESIGNED FOR HEROES! LIKE ME! FOR EXAMPLE...
SEE! DIDN'T DIE!
WUMP

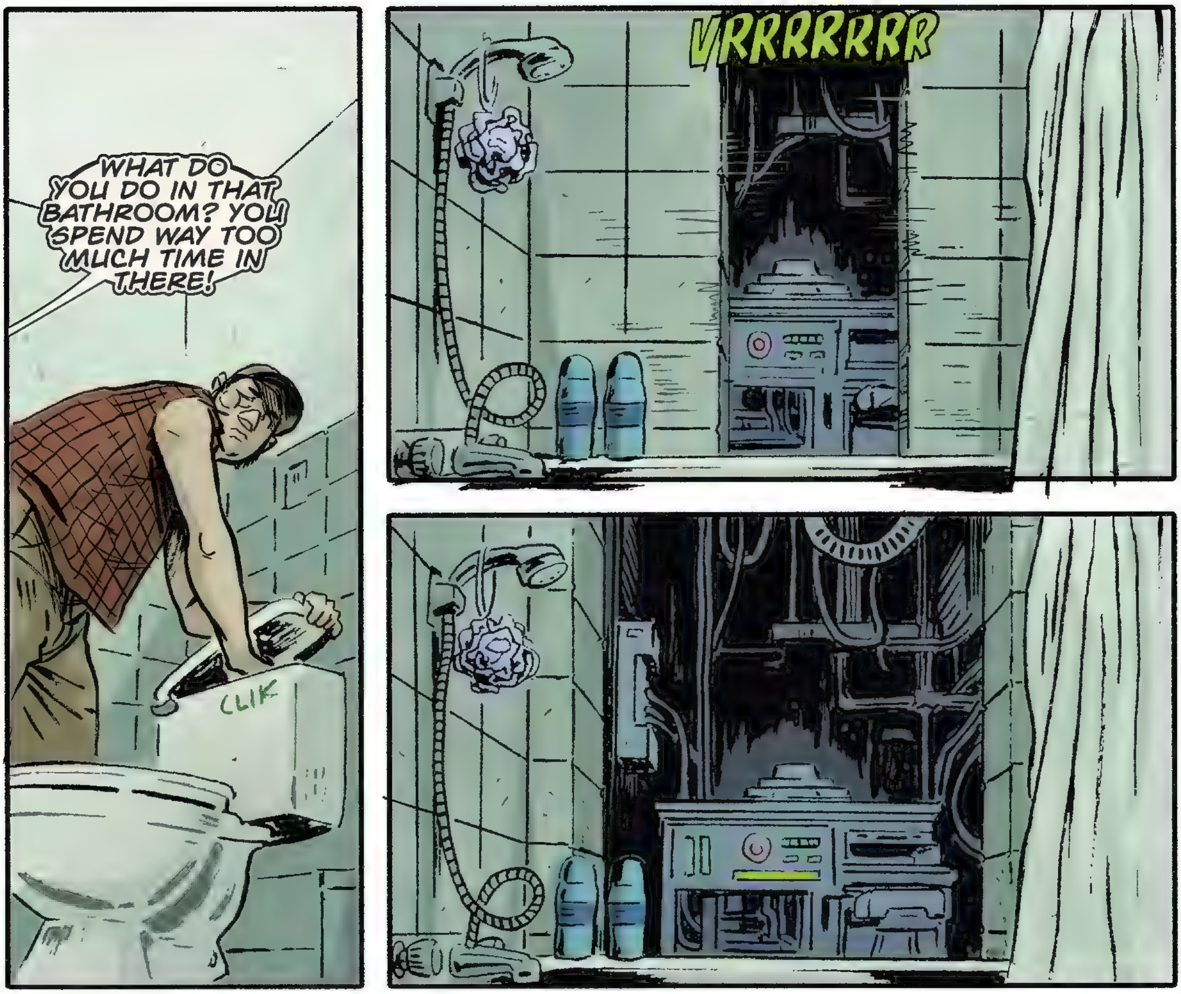

THIS PROBABLY KILLS A CAR RIGHT?
STABBY STAB-STABS
SHOOTY SHOOT SHOOT
AND I BET THESE BULLETS HIT SOMETHING CONVENIENT AND VILLAINOUS!
CRAW
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
DID THEY? IT'S COOLER IF I DON'T LOOK.
KRUNCH
IT'S NOT A *LOT* BETTER THAN NOT HAVING CELLULITE, BUT IT'S STILL PRETTY COOL.
FREEZE, SUCKA!
SKREEE

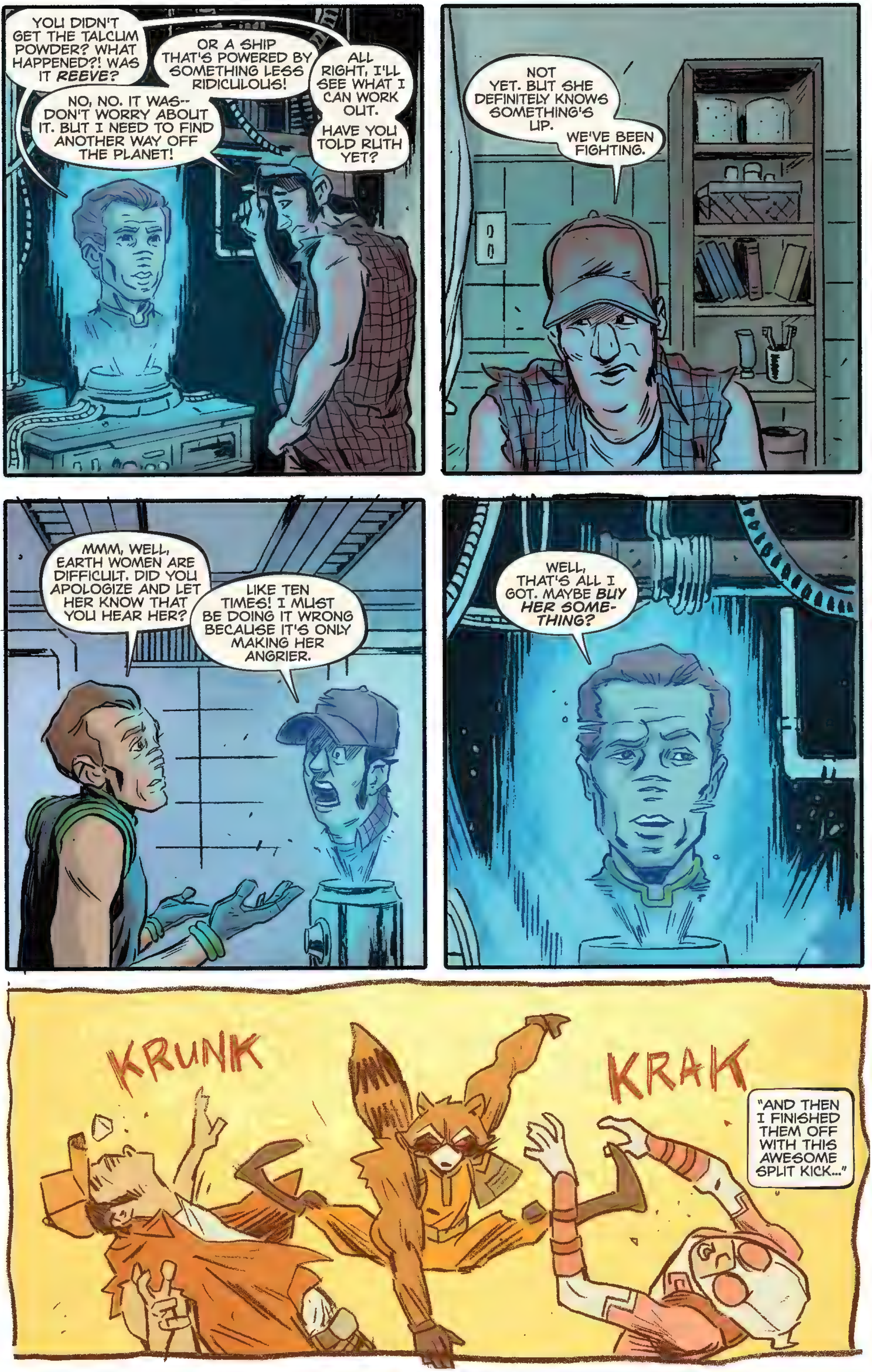

SO WHICH ONE ARE YOU?
IS *CABLE* ALSO A GIRL NOW?
NO WAY. I JUST DID THE WHOLE INTRO SPEECH. I'M NOT DOING IT AGAIN.
PLUS, NOW I'M STANDING STILL. IT'S BETTER TO GET EXPOSITION OUT OVER AN ACTION SCENE.
SO... YOU'RE A MENTAL PATIENT?
I AM GROOT.
ALL RIGHT, SURE, AN ATHLETIC MENTAL PATIENT.
AND YOU'RE... TREE AND THE SQUIRREL!
NO, I'M A RACCOON--I MEAN, I'M *NOT* A RACCOON-- *I MEAN, I'M NOT A SQUIRREL!*
SO, YOU'RE TREE, THEN? THAT'S REALLY A BETTER NAME FOR THE TALL GUY.
I AM GROOT!
THEN WHO'S SQUIRREL?
WHATEVER, CRAZY LADY. JUST HAND OVER CHAMMY OR GET MURDERED WITH GUNS.
NO WAY! I STOLE HIM FIRST, FAIR AND SQUARE. PLUS, I NEED THE MONEY MORE.
OKAY, SO YOU WANT THE GETTING-MURDERED OPTION?
WELL, I WAS THINKING MORE ALONG THE LINES OF--
CLAK

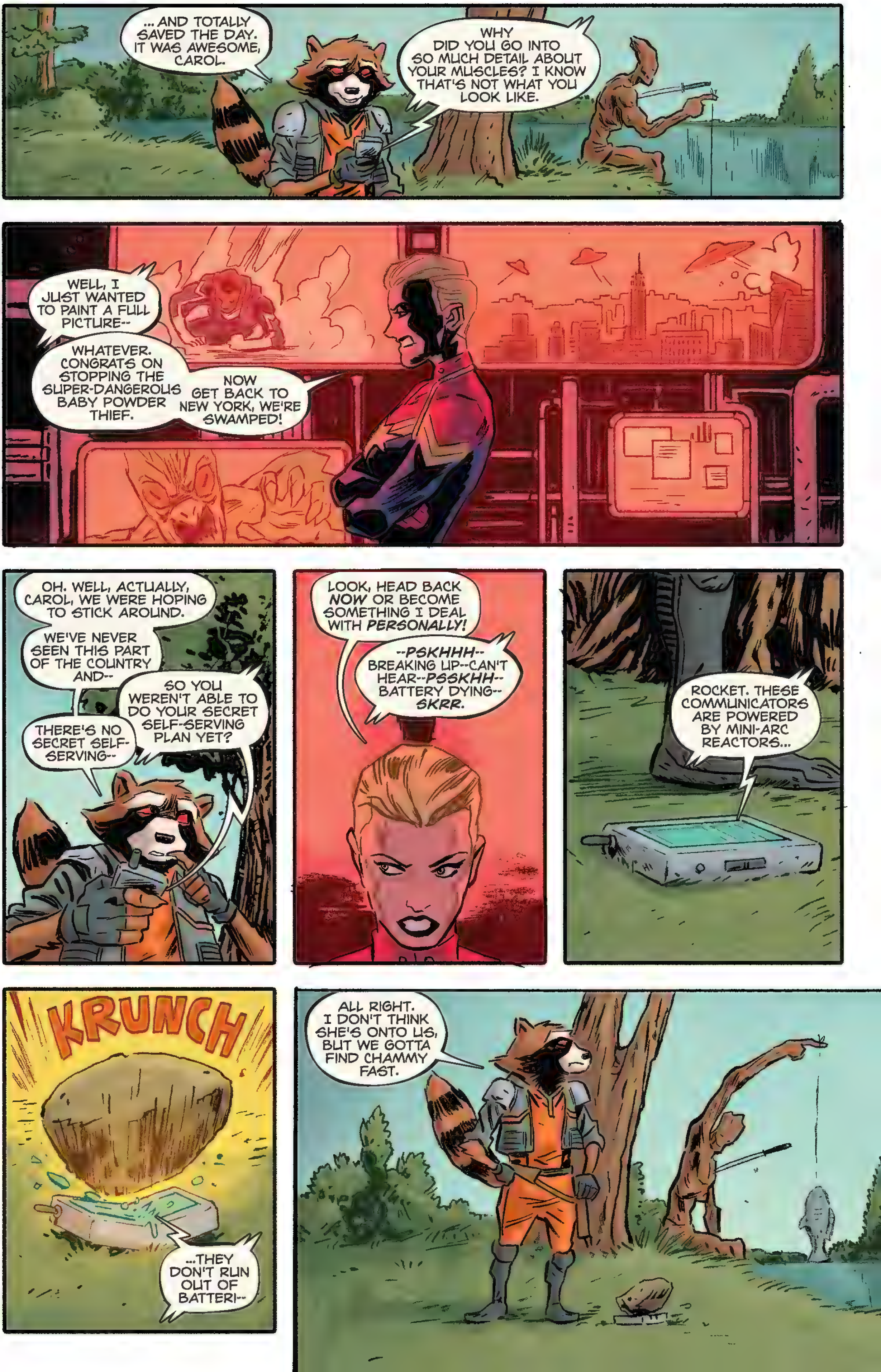

--SWORD!
SHUK
PONK
SPLIT KICK!
THAK
REGULAR KICK!
WUMP
THOP
SLAP?
SWORD AGAIN!
THUK
WUMP
I AM GROOT!

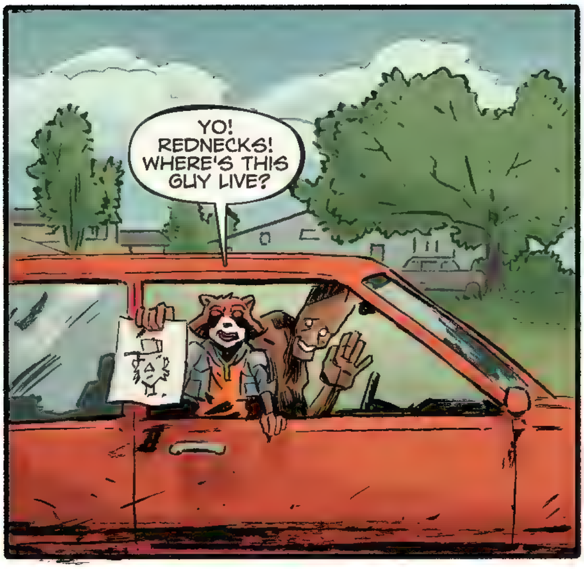

ARE YOU REALLY COMFORTABLE WITH THIS IMAGERY?
TREE-ON-WOMAN VIOLENCE IS, LIKE, A SUPER HOT-BUTTON ISSUE RIGHT NOW.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? SQUASH HER!
I AM GROOT?
OF COURSE SHE'S A VILLAIN!
NO, NO! I'M A GOOD GUY! JUST ETHICALLY AMBIGUOUS! TRUST ME, I ONLY KILL BAD GUYS!
WE JUST SAW YOU KILL INNOCENT BIRDS!
THEY WERE CROWS! CROWS ARE EVIL BIRDS!
C'MON. PLEEASE, TREE! I LIKE YOUR HAIR-BRANCHES!
I AM GROOT.
REALLY?! JUST LIKE THAT YOU FORGIVE HER?
I AM GROOT.
DON'T MAKE THIS ABOUT US, I COMPLIMENT YOU ALL THE TIME!
WHATEVER, LET'S JUST TAKE CHAMMY AND--
CHAMMY?
FLARK.
LATER, NERDS!
I AM GROOT?
DOUBLE-FLARK!

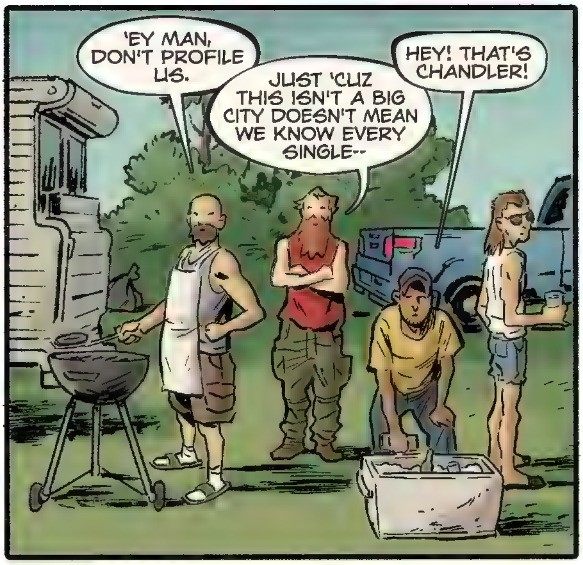

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE?
UH...I GOT INTO A BAR FIGHT. SORRY.
IT'S 2PM! IT'D BE EARLY TO EVEN *START* DRINKING, LET ALONE--
RIGHT. I'M HEARING YOU. I'M SORRY.
WHO WERE YOU FIGHTING WITH?
I'M SORRY. I HEAR YOU.
WHAT? ANSWER THE QUESTION!
UH... I'M HEARING YOU...AND I'M SORRY.
STOP SAYING THAT!
I NEED TO GO TO THE BATHROOM.

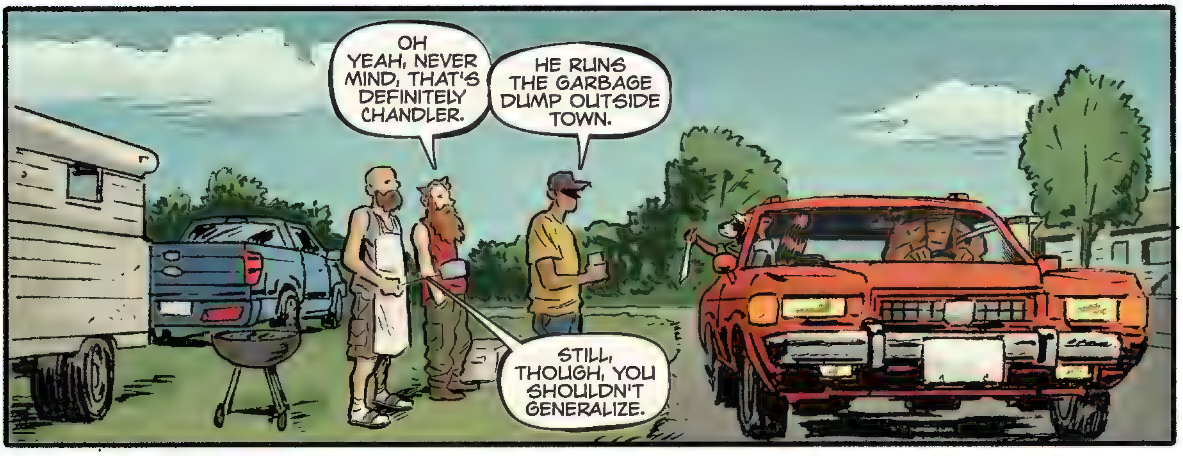

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THAT BATHROOM? YOU SPEND WAY TOO MUCH TIME IN THERE!
CLIK
VRRRRRRR

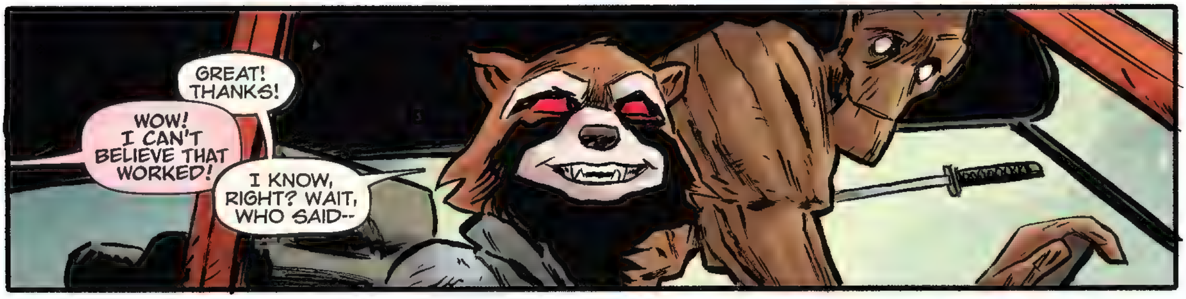

YOU DIDN'T GET THE TALCUM POWDER? WHAT HAPPENED?! WAS IT *REEVE*?
NO, NO. IT WAS-- DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. BUT I NEED TO FIND ANOTHER WAY OFF THE PLANET!
OR A SHIP THAT'S POWERED BY SOMETHING LESS RIDICULOUS!
ALL RIGHT, I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN WORK OUT.
HAVE YOU TOLD RUTH YET?
NOT YET. BUT SHE DEFINITELY KNOWS SOMETHING'S UP.
WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING.
MMM, WELL, EARTH WOMEN ARE DIFFICULT. DID YOU APOLOGIZE AND LET HER KNOW THAT YOU HEAR HER?
LIKE TEN TIMES! I MUST BE DOING IT WRONG BECAUSE IT'S ONLY MAKING HER ANGRIER.
WELL, THAT'S ALL I GOT. MAYBE *BUY HER SOME-THING?*
KRUNK
KRAK
"AND THEN I FINISHED THEM OFF WITH THIS AWESOME SPLIT KICK..."

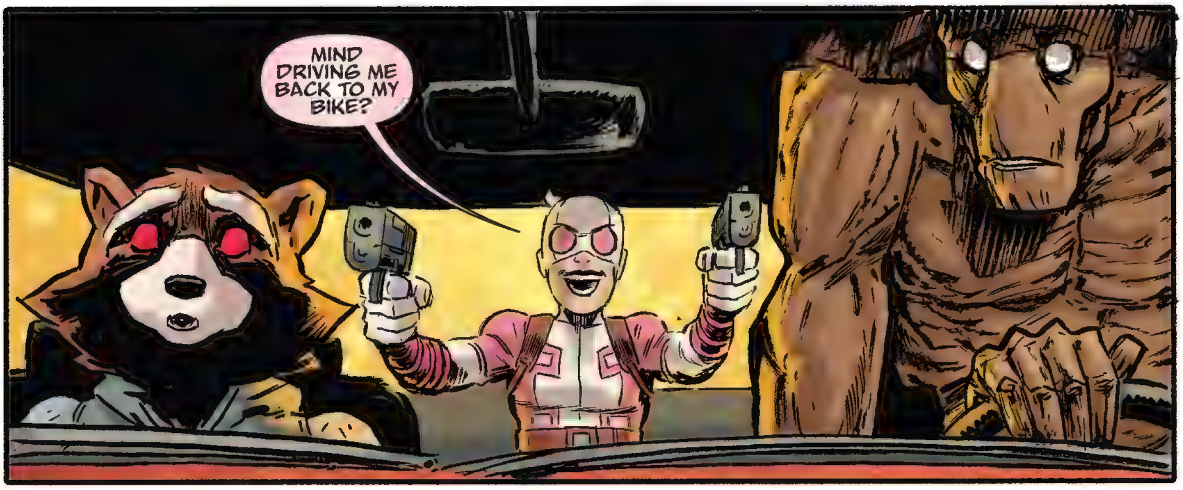

...AND TOTALLY SAVED THE DAY. IT WAS AWESOME, CAROL.
WHY DID YOU GO INTO SO MUCH DETAIL ABOUT YOUR MUSCLES? I KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE.
WELL, I JUST WANTED TO PAINT A FULL PICTURE--
WHATEVER. CONGRATS ON STOPPING THE SUPER-DANGEROUS BABY POWDER THIEF.
NOW GET BACK TO NEW YORK, WE'RE SWAMPED!
OH. WELL, ACTUALLY, CAROL, WE WERE HOPING TO STICK AROUND.
WE'VE NEVER SEEN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY AND--
SO YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO DO YOUR SECRET SELF-SERVING PLAN YET?
THERE'S NO SECRET SELF-SERVING--
LOOK, HEAD BACK *NOW* OR BECOME SOMETHING I DEAL WITH *PERSONALLY!*
--PSKHHH-- BREAKING UP--CAN'T HEAR--*PSSKHH--* BATTERY DYING-- *SKRR.*
ROCKET. THESE COMMUNICATORS ARE POWERED BY MINI-ARC REACTORS...
KRUNCH
...THEY DON'T RUN OUT OF BATTERI--
ALL RIGHT. I DON'T THINK SHE'S ONTO US, BUT WE GOTTA FIND CHAMMY FAST.

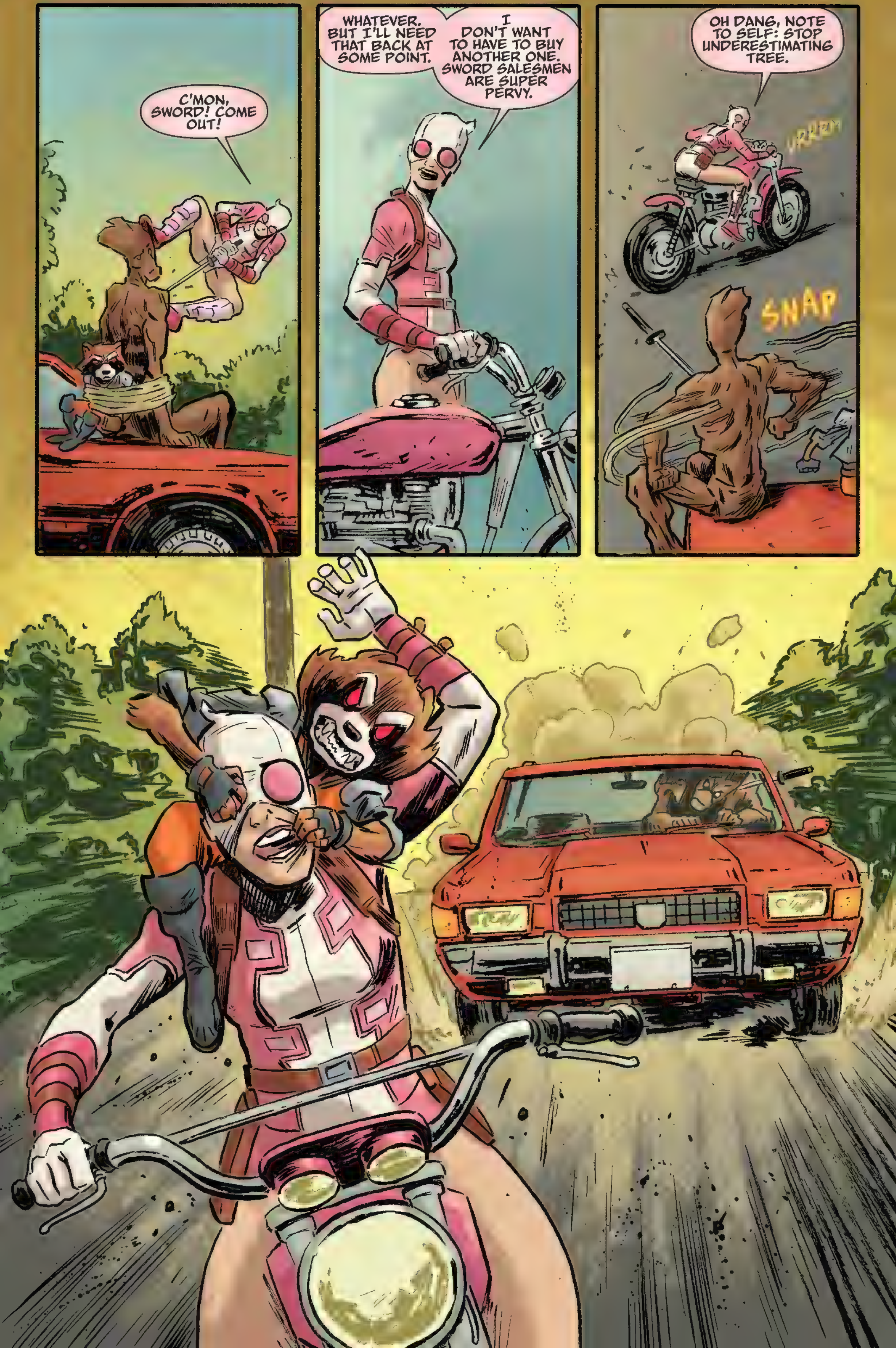

YO! REDNECKS! WHERE'S THIS GUY LIVE?

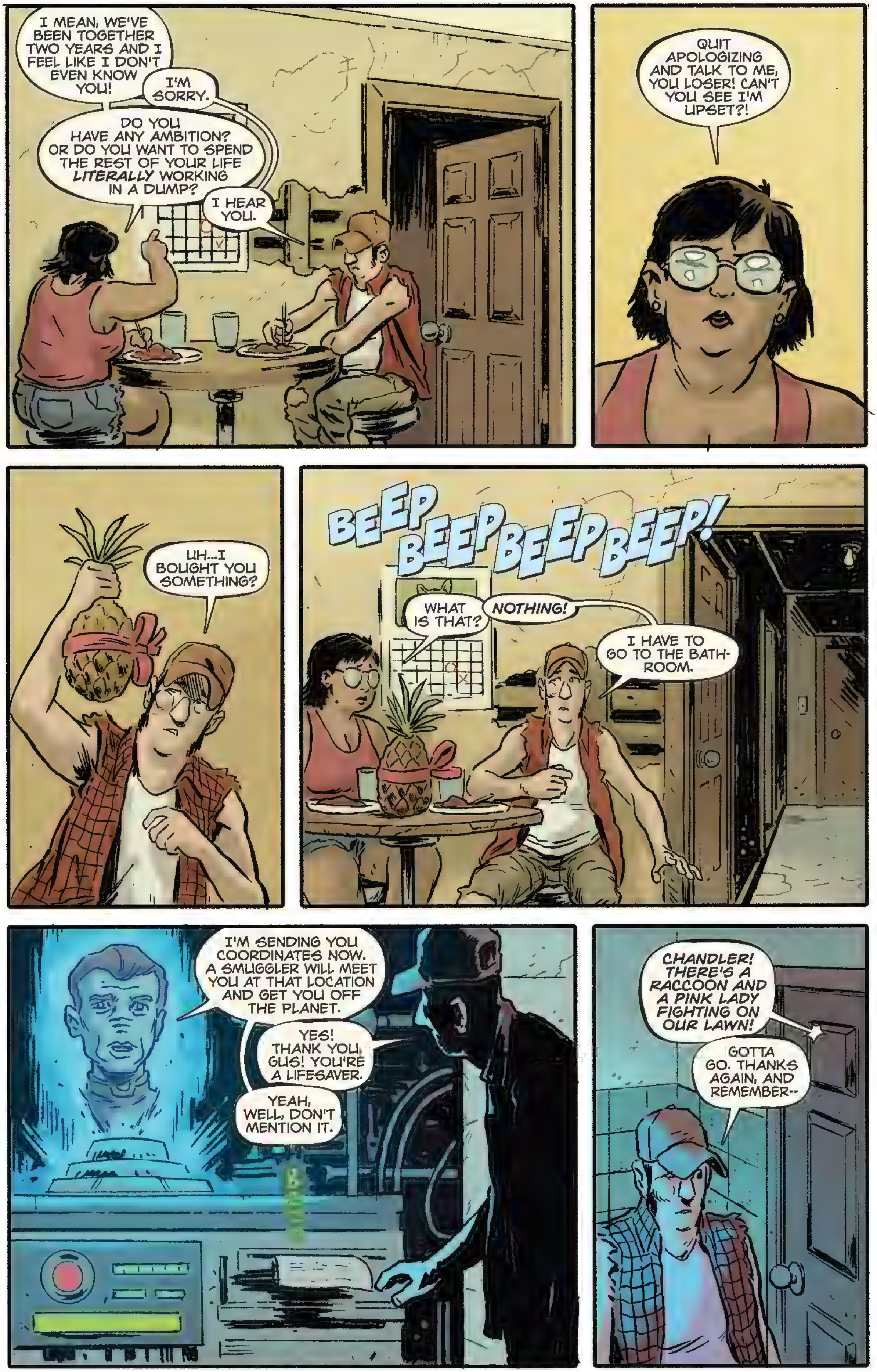

'EY MAN, DON'T PROFILE US.
JUST 'CUZ THIS ISN'T A BIG CITY DOESN'T MEAN WE KNOW EVERY SINGLE--
HEY! THAT'S CHANDLER!

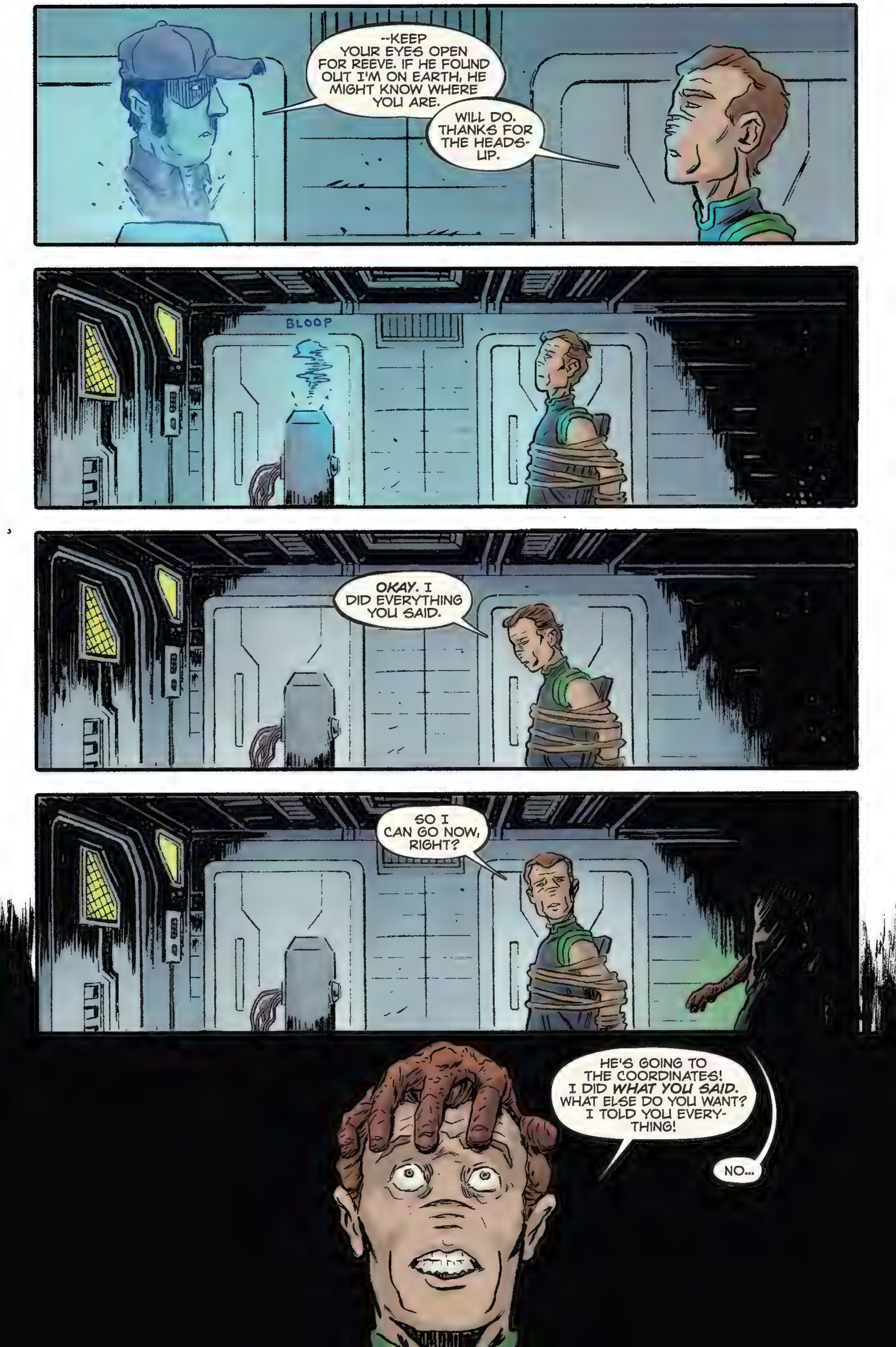

OH YEAH, NEVER MIND, THAT'S DEFINITELY CHANDLER.
HE RUNS THE GARBAGE DUMP OUTSIDE TOWN.
STILL, THOUGH, YOU SHOULDN'T GENERALIZE.

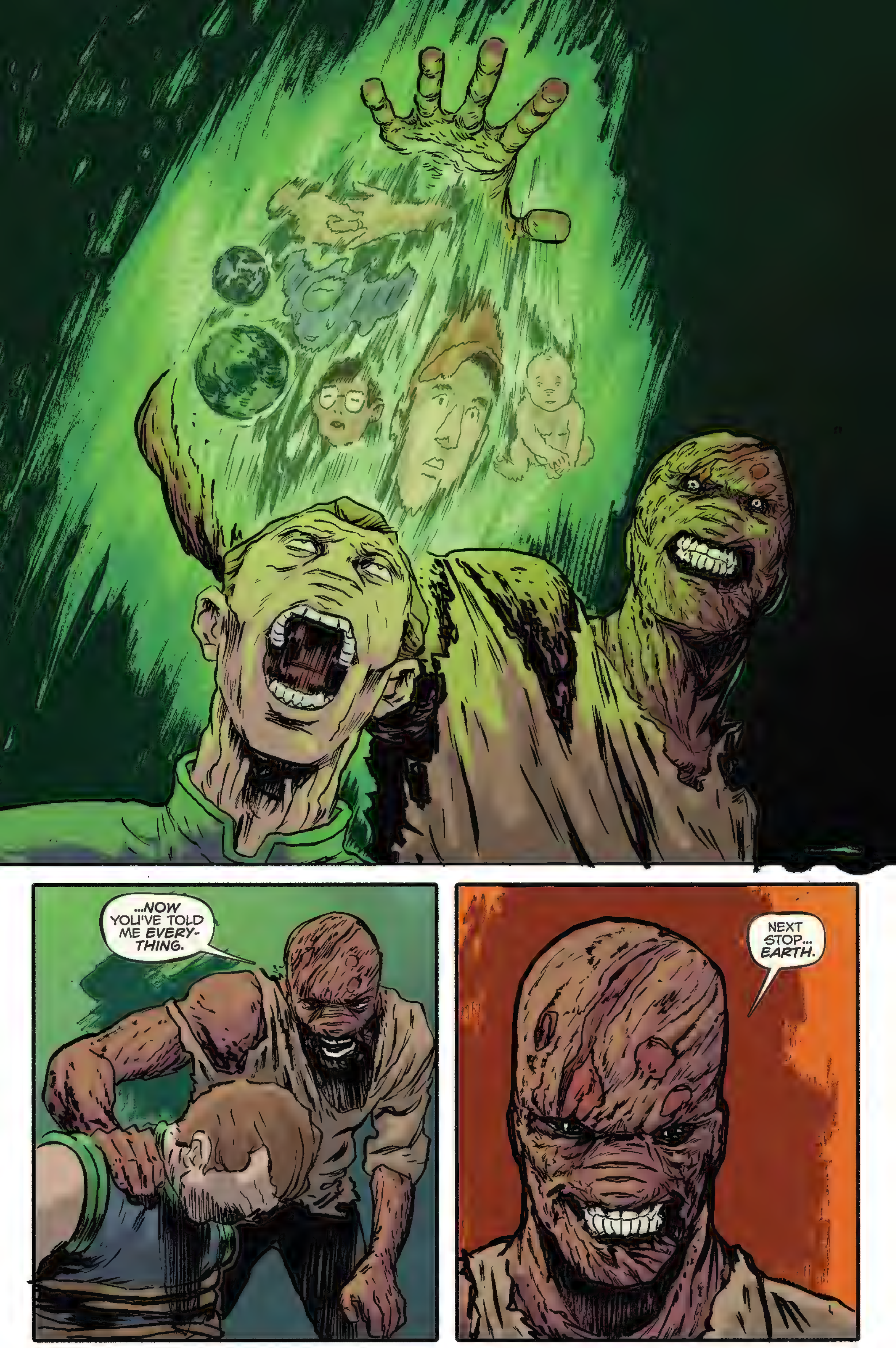

GREAT! THANKS!
WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WORKED!
I KNOW, RIGHT? WAIT, WHO SAID--


MIND DRIVING ME BACK TO MY BIKE?


C'MON, SWORD! COME OUT!
WHATEVER. BUT I'LL NEED THAT BACK AT SOME POINT.
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO BUY ANOTHER ONE. SWORD SALESMEN ARE SUPER PERVY.
OH DANG, NOTE TO SELF: STOP UNDERESTIMATING TREE.
VRRRM
SNAP


I MEAN, WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER TWO YEARS AND I FEEL LIKE I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU!
I'M SORRY.
DO YOU HAVE ANY AMBITION? OR DO YOU WANT TO SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE *LITERALLY* WORKING IN A DUMP?
I HEAR YOU.
QUIT APOLOGIZING AND TALK TO ME, YOU LOSER! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M UPSET?!
UH...I BOUGHT YOU SOMETHING?
BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP!
WHAT IS THAT?
NOTHING!
I HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHROOM.
I'M SENDING YOU COORDINATES NOW. A SMUGGLER WILL MEET YOU AT THAT LOCATION AND GET YOU OFF THE PLANET.
YES! THANK YOU, GUS! YOU'RE A LIFESAVER.
YEAH, WELL, DON'T MENTION IT.
CHANDLER! THERE'S A RACCOON AND A PINK LADY FIGHTING ON OUR LAWN!
GOTTA GO. THANKS AGAIN, AND REMEMBER--


--KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR REEVE. IF HE FOUND OUT I'M ON EARTH, HE MIGHT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE.
WILL DO. THANKS FOR THE HEADS-UP.
BLOOP
OKAY. I DID EVERYTHING YOU SAID.
SO I CAN GO NOW, RIGHT?
HE'S GOING TO THE COORDINATES! I DID *WHAT YOU SAID.* WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT? I TOLD YOU EVERYTHING!
NO...


...NOW YOU'VE TOLD ME *EVERYTHING*.
NEXT STOP... *EARTH*.

ROCKET RACCOON AND GROOT #9

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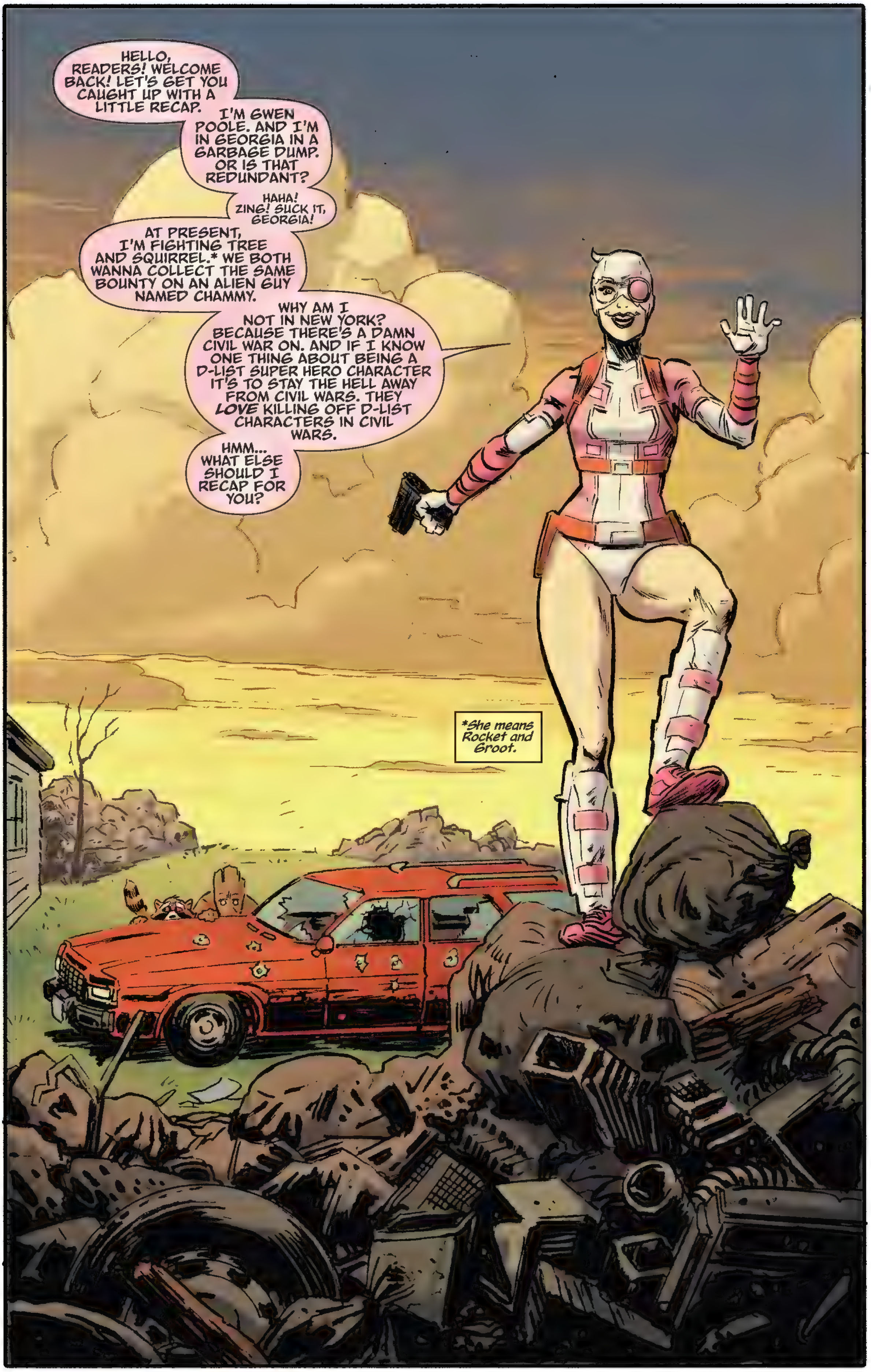
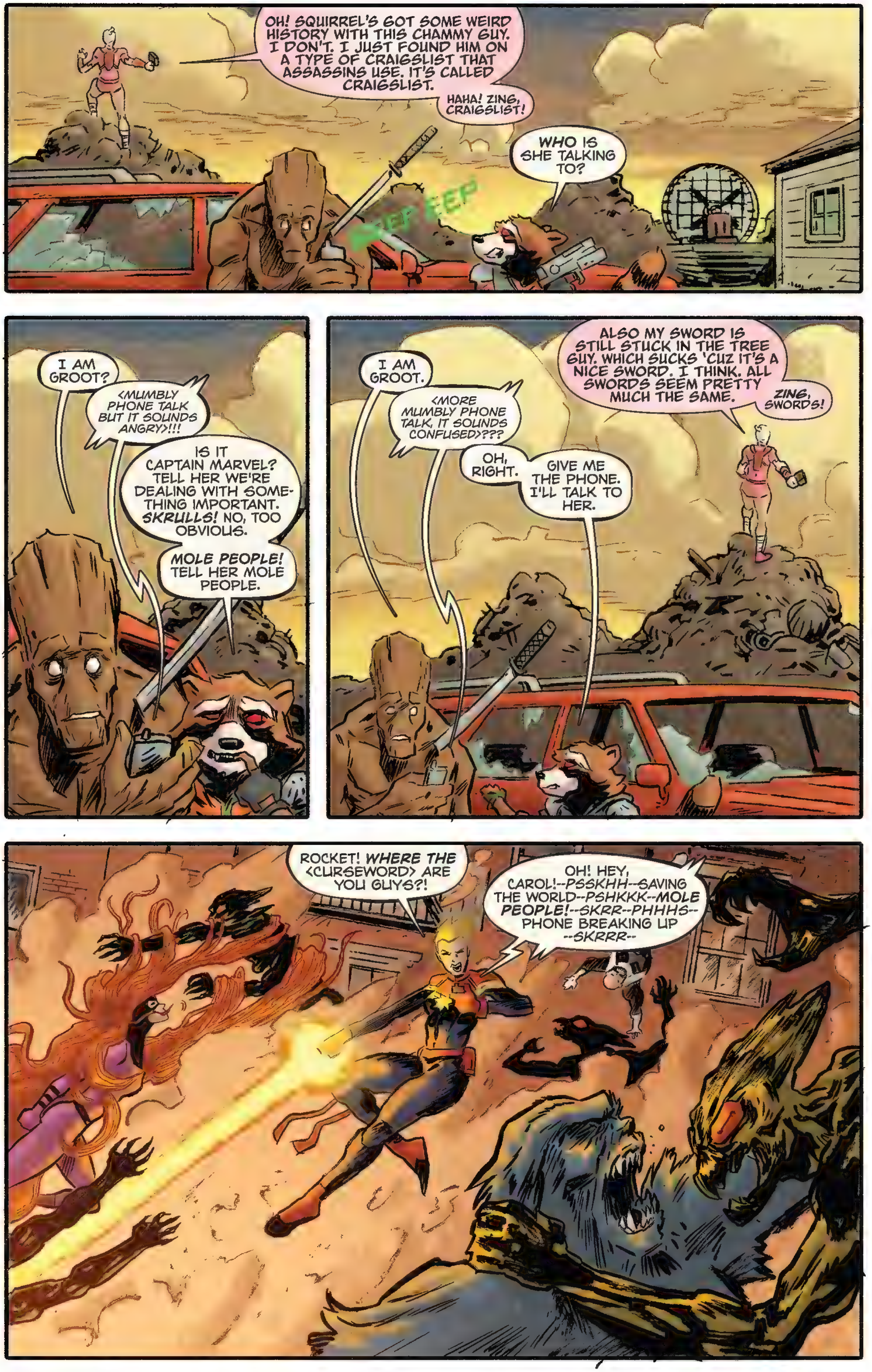
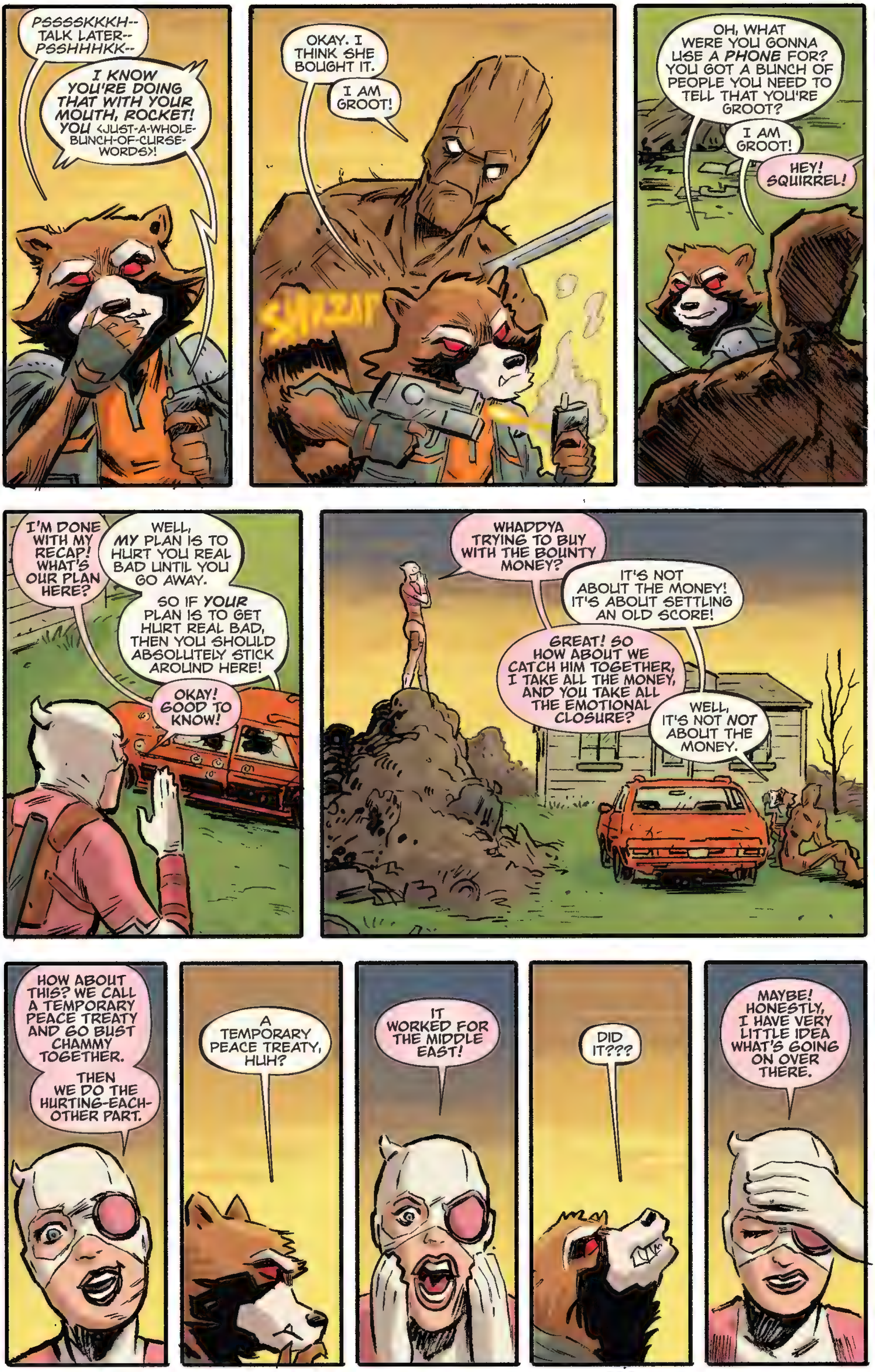
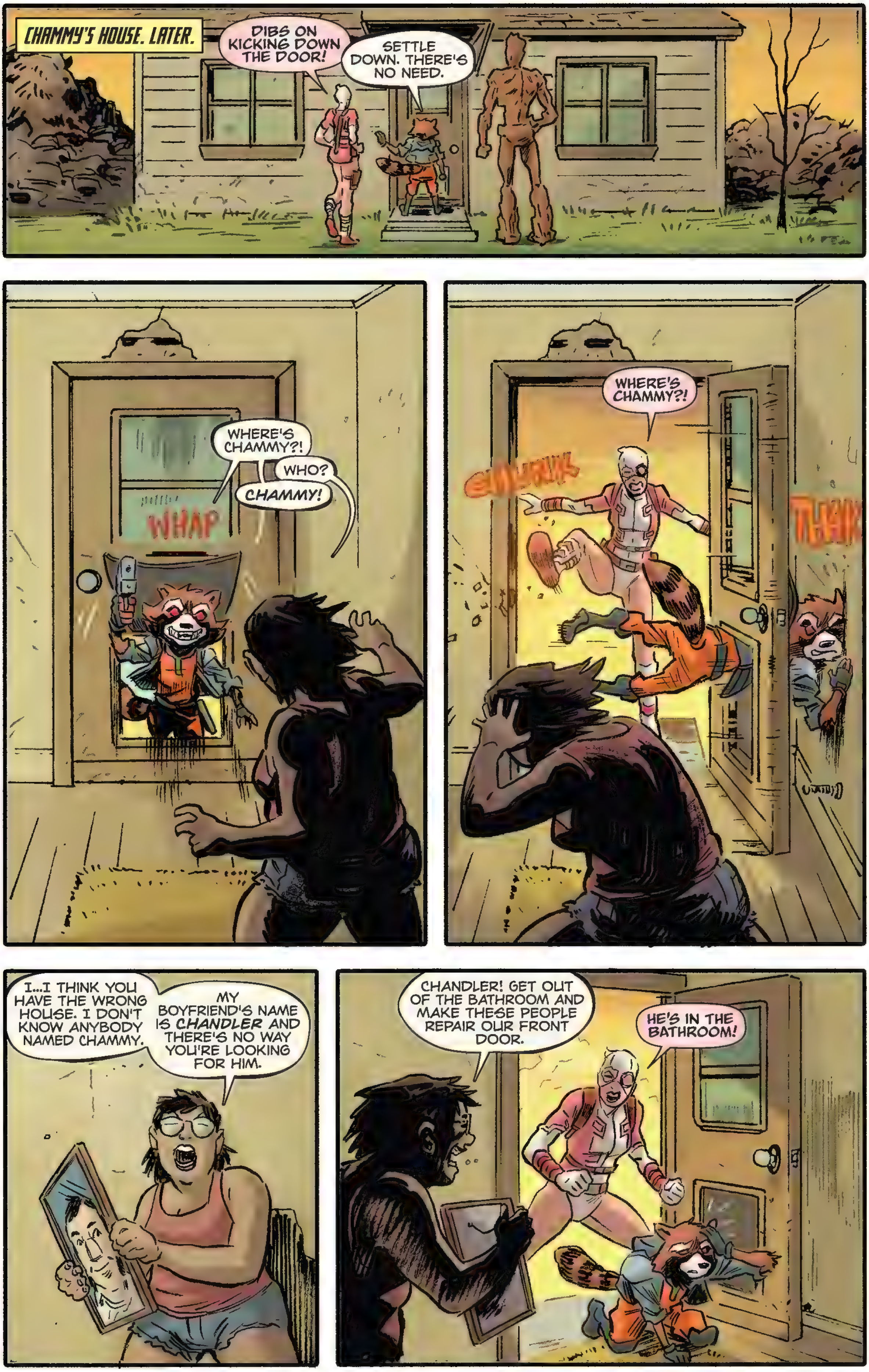
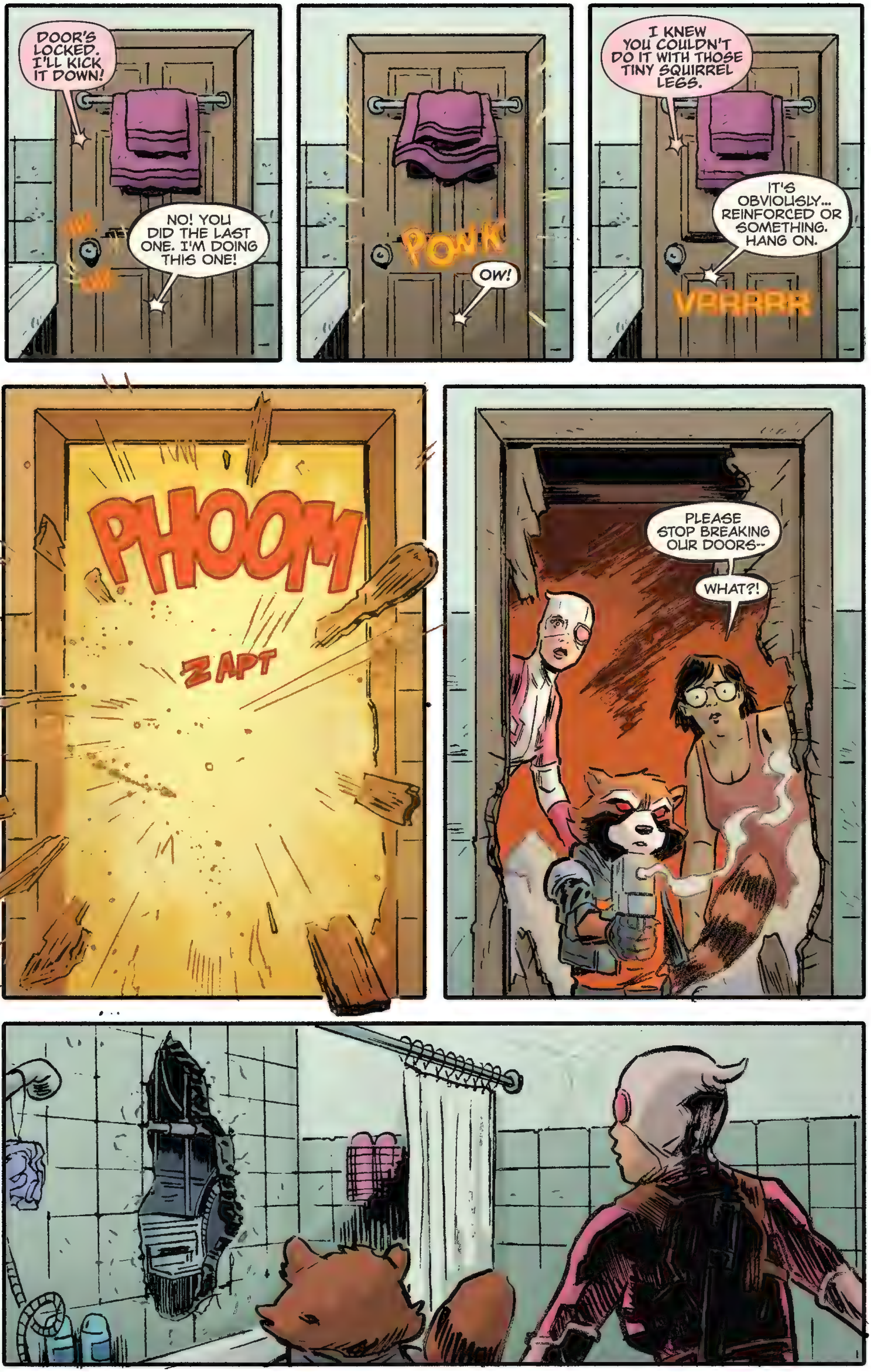
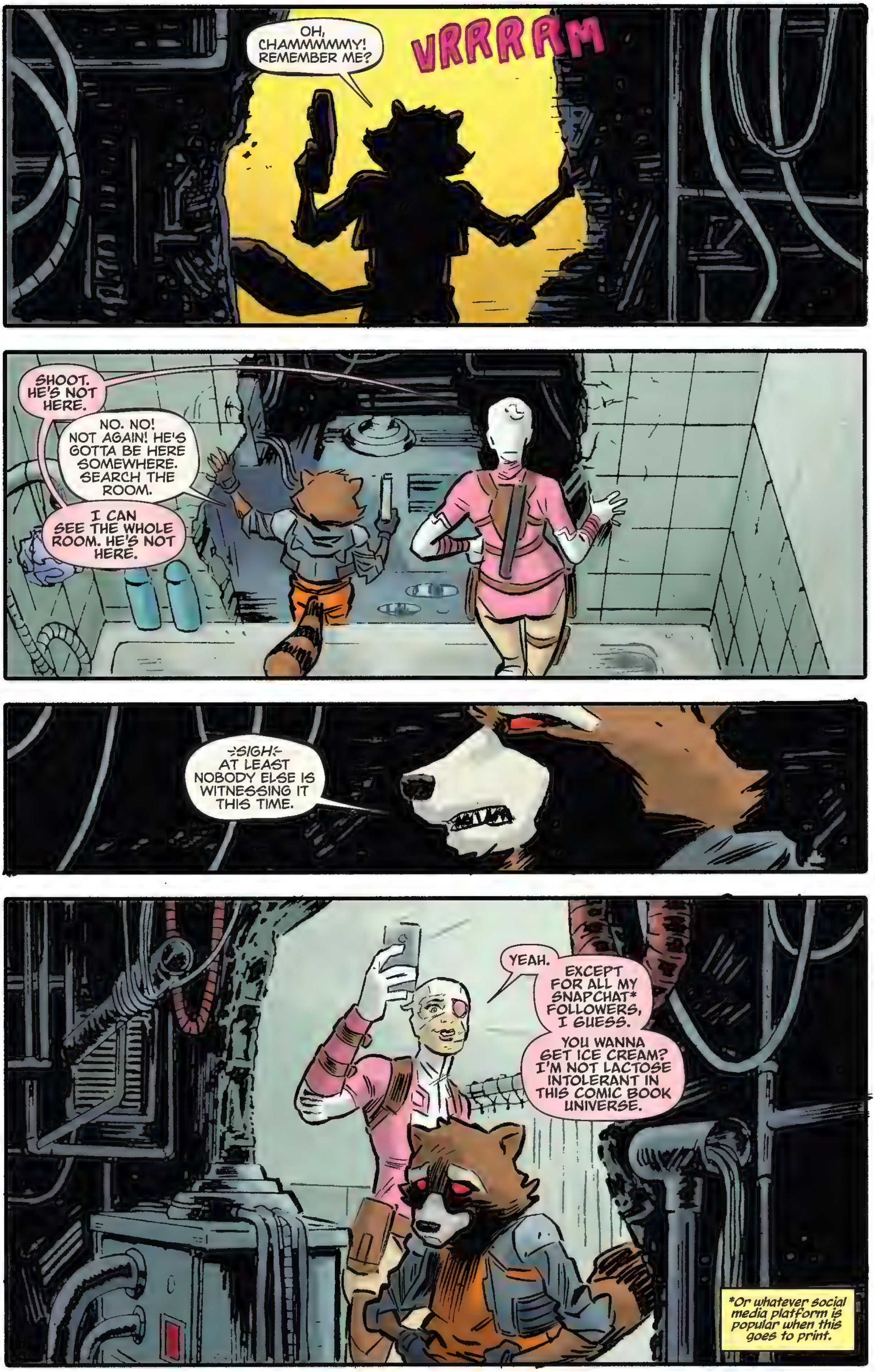

HELLO, READERS! WELCOME BACK! LET'S GET YOU CAUGHT UP WITH A LITTLE RECAP.
I'M GWEN POOLE. AND I'M IN GEORGIA IN A GARBAGE DUMP. OR IS THAT REDUNDANT?
HAHA! ZING! SUCK IT, GEORGIA!
AT PRESENT, I'M FIGHTING TREE AND SQUIRREL.* WE BOTH WANNA COLLECT THE SAME BOUNTY ON AN ALIEN GUY NAMED CHAMMY.
WHY AM I NOT IN NEW YORK? BECAUSE THERE'S A DAMN CIVIL WAR ON. AND IF I KNOW ONE THING ABOUT BEING A D-LIST SUPER HERO CHARACTER IT'S TO STAY THE HELL AWAY FROM CIVIL WARS. THEY *LOVE* KILLING OFF D-LIST CHARACTERS IN CIVIL WARS.
HMM... WHAT ELSE SHOULD I RECAP FOR YOU?
*She means Rocket and Groot.

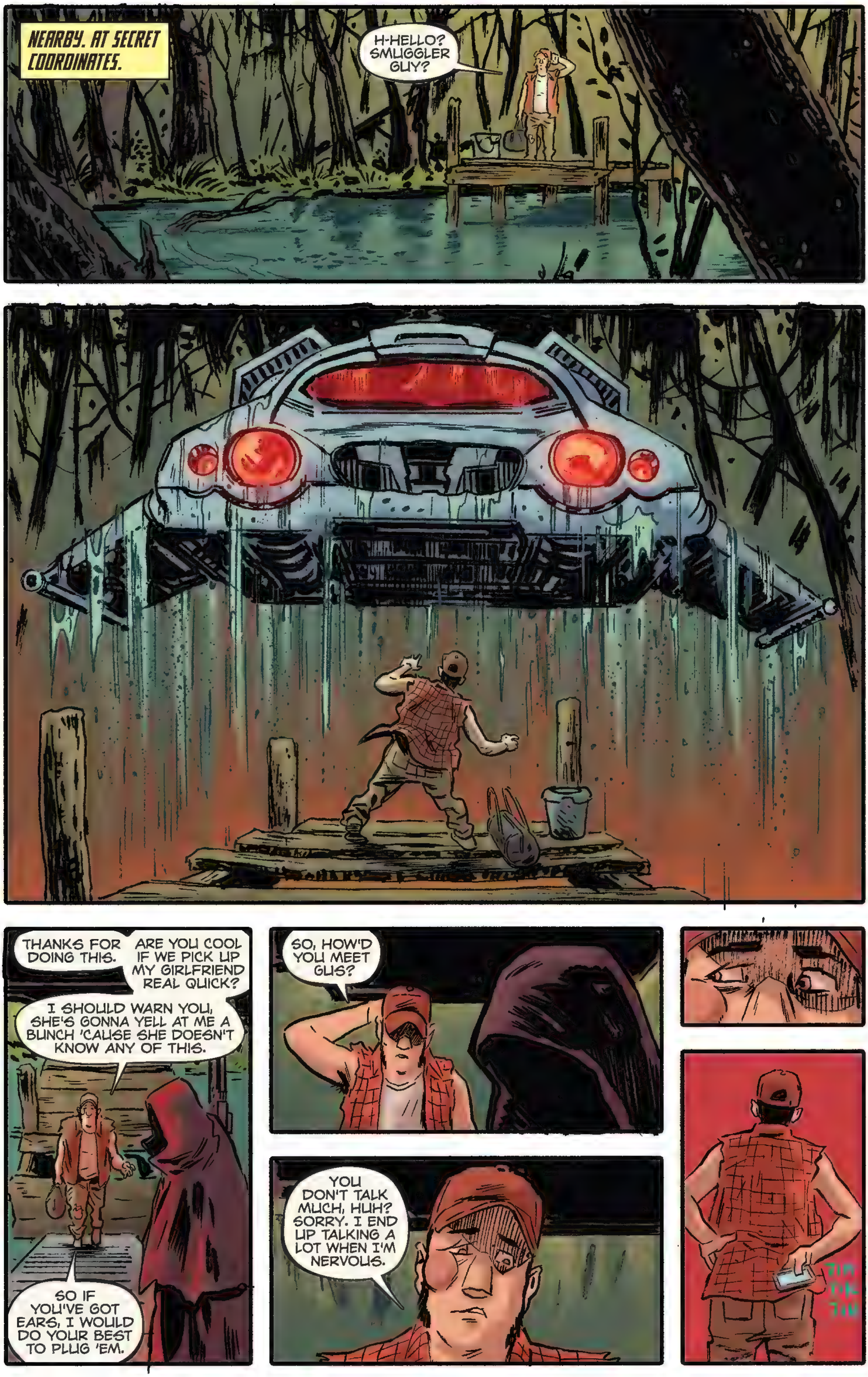

OH! SQUIRREL'S GOT SOME WEIRD HISTORY WITH THIS CHAMMY GUY. I DON'T. I JUST FOUND HIM ON A TYPE OF CRAIGSLIST THAT ASSASSINS USE. IT'S CALLED CRAIGSLIST.
HAHA! ZING, CRAIGSLIST!
WHO IS SHE TALKING TO?
BEEP BEEP
I AM GROOT?
<MUMBLY PHONE TALK BUT IT SOUNDS ANGRY>!!!
IS IT CAPTAIN MARVEL? TELL HER WE'RE DEALING WITH SOMETHING IMPORTANT. *SKRULLS!* NO, TOO OBVIOUS.
MOLE PEOPLE! TELL HER MOLE PEOPLE.
I AM GROOT.
<MORE MUMBLY PHONE TALK, IT SOUNDS CONFUSED>???
OH, RIGHT.
GIVE ME THE PHONE. I'LL TALK TO HER.
ALSO MY SWORD IS STILL STUCK IN THE TREE GUY. WHICH SUCKS 'CUZ IT'S A NICE SWORD. I THINK. ALL SWORDS SEEM PRETTY MUCH THE SAME.
ZING, SWORDS!
ROCKET! *WHERE THE* <CURSEWORD> ARE YOU GUYS?!
OH! HEY, CAROL!--*PSSKHH*--SAVING THE WORLD--*PSHKKK*--*MOLE PEOPLE!*--*SKRR*--*PHHHS*--PHONE BREAKING UP --*SKRRR*--

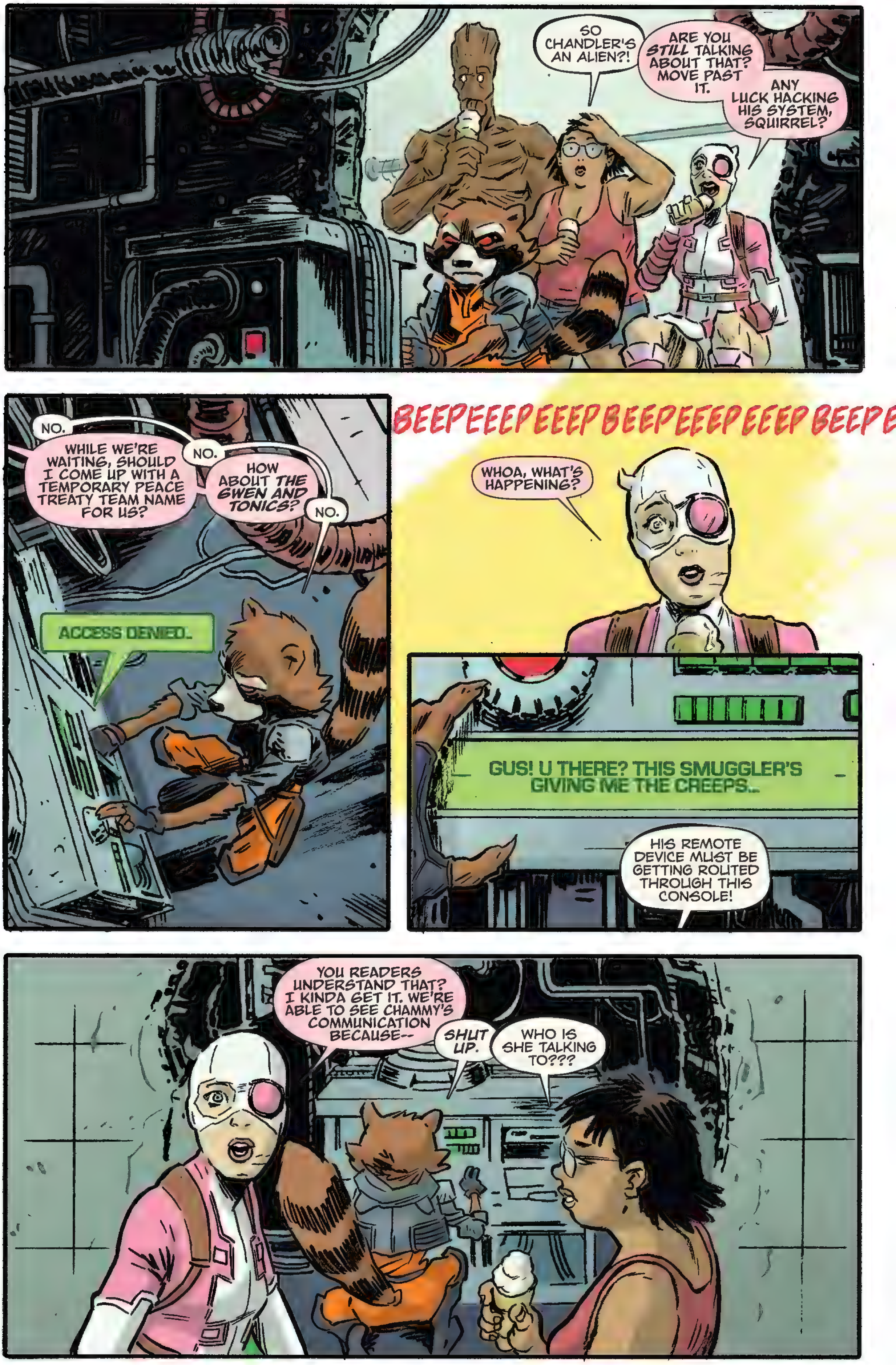

PSSSSKKH-- TALK LATER-- PSSHHHKK--
I KNOW YOU'RE DOING THAT WITH YOUR MOUTH, ROCKET! YOU <JUST-A-WHOLE-BUNCH-OF-CURSE-WORDS>!
OKAY. I THINK SHE BOUGHT IT.
I AM GROOT!
SHAZAT
OH, WHAT WERE YOU GONNA USE A PHONE FOR? YOU GOT A BUNCH OF PEOPLE YOU NEED TO TELL THAT YOU'RE GROOT?
I AM GROOT!
HEY! SQUIRREL!
I'M DONE WITH MY RECAP! WHAT'S OUR PLAN HERE?
WELL, MY PLAN IS TO HURT YOU REAL BAD UNTIL YOU GO AWAY.
SO IF YOUR PLAN IS TO GET HURT REAL BAD, THEN YOU SHOULD ABSOLUTELY STICK AROUND HERE!
OKAY! GOOD TO KNOW!
WHADDYA TRYING TO BUY WITH THE BOUNTY MONEY?
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY! IT'S ABOUT SETTLING AN OLD SCORE!
GREAT! SO HOW ABOUT WE CATCH HIM TOGETHER, I TAKE ALL THE MONEY, AND YOU TAKE ALL THE EMOTIONAL CLOSURE?
WELL, IT'S NOT NOT ABOUT THE MONEY.
HOW ABOUT THIS? WE CALL A TEMPORARY PEACE TREATY AND GO BUST CHAMMY TOGETHER.
THEN WE DO THE HURTING-EACH-OTHER PART.
A TEMPORARY PEACE TREATY, HUH?
IT WORKED FOR THE MIDDLE EAST!
DID IT???
MAYBE! HONESTLY, I HAVE VERY LITTLE IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE.

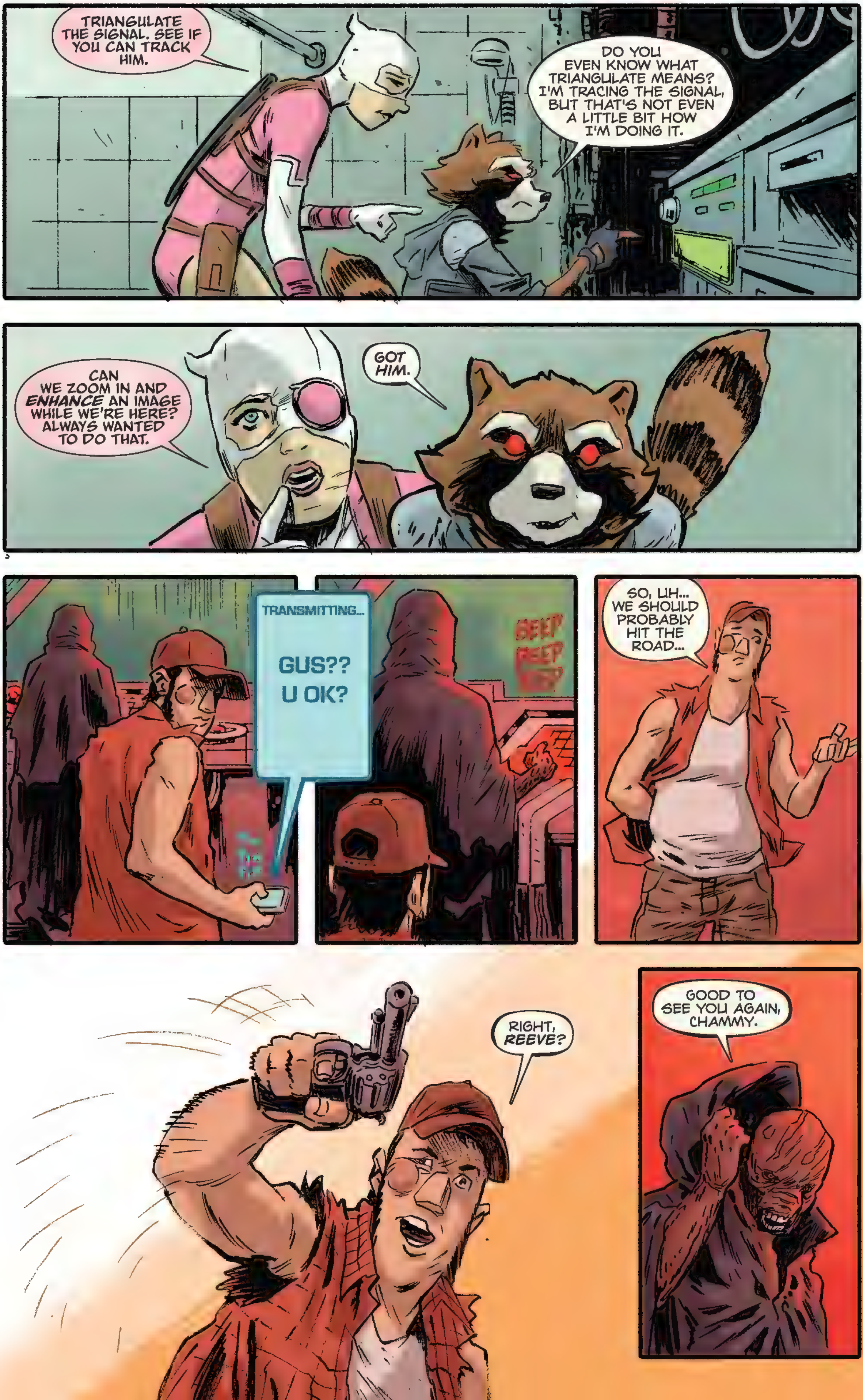

CHAMMY'S HOUSE. LATER.
DIBS ON KICKING DOWN THE DOOR!
SETTLE DOWN. THERE'S NO NEED.
WHERE'S CHAMMY?!
WHO?
CHAMMY!
WHAP
WHERE'S CHAMMY?!
I...I THINK YOU HAVE THE WRONG HOUSE. I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY NAMED CHAMMY.
MY BOYFRIEND'S NAME IS *CHANDLER* AND THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HIM.
CHANDLER! GET OUT OF THE BATHROOM AND MAKE THESE PEOPLE REPAIR OUR FRONT DOOR.
HE'S IN THE BATHROOM!

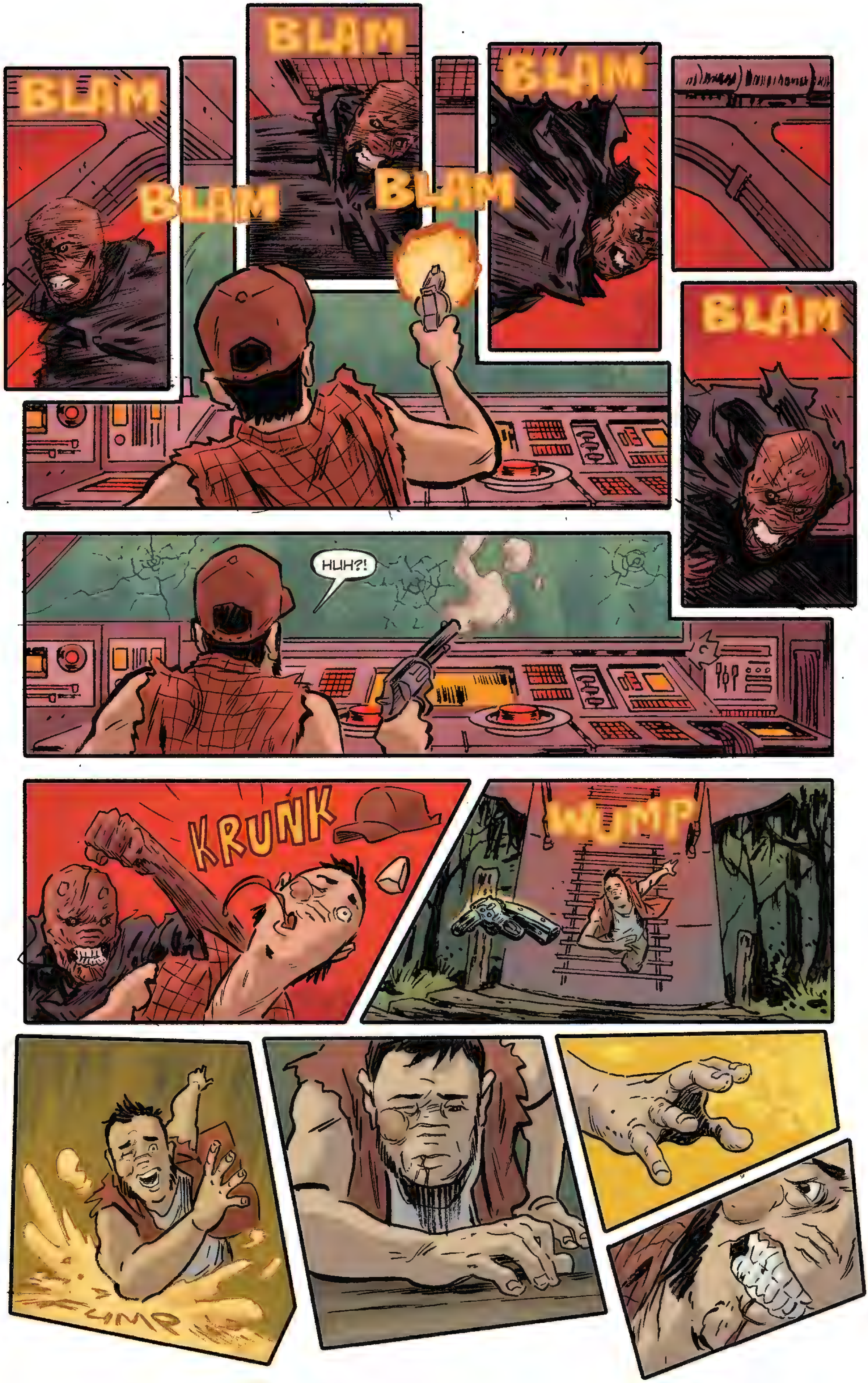

DOOR'S LOCKED. I'LL KICK IT DOWN!
NO! YOU DID THE LAST ONE. I'M DOING THIS ONE!
PONK
OW!
I KNEW YOU COULDN'T DO IT WITH THOSE TINY SQUIRREL LEGS.
IT'S OBVIOUSLY... REINFORCED OR SOMETHING. HANG ON.
VRRRRR
PHOOM
ZAPT
PLEASE STOP BREAKING OUR DOORS--
WHAT?!

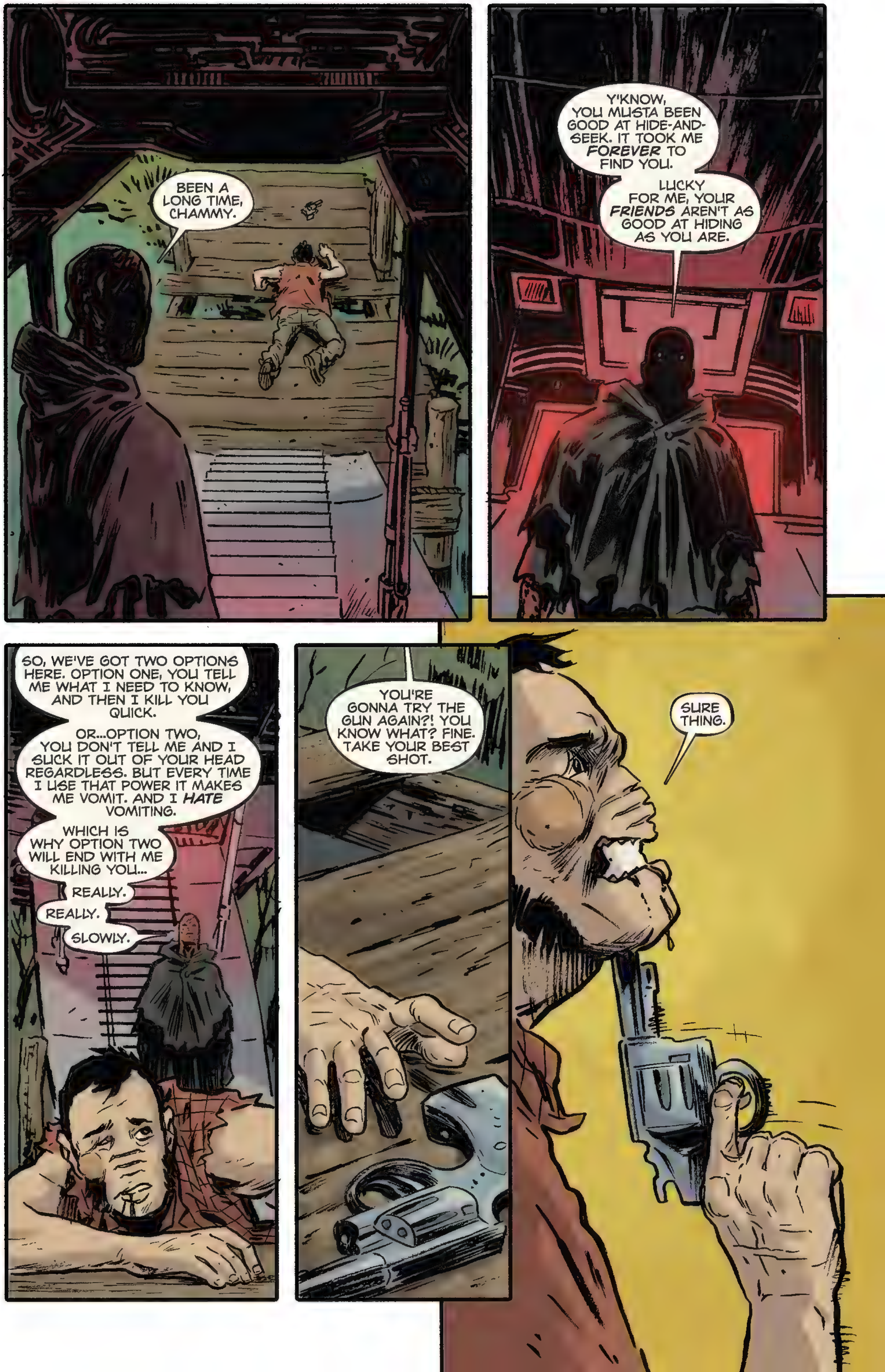

OH, CHAMMMMMMY! REMEMBER ME?
VRRRRM
SHOOT. HE'S NOT HERE.
NO. NO! NOT AGAIN! HE'S GOTTA BE HERE SOMEWHERE. SEARCH THE ROOM.
I CAN SEE THE WHOLE ROOM. HE'S NOT HERE.
-SIGH- AT LEAST NOBODY ELSE IS WITNESSING IT THIS TIME.
YEAH.
EXCEPT FOR ALL MY SNAPCHAT* FOLLOWERS, I GUESS.
YOU WANNA GET ICE CREAM? I'M NOT LACTOSE INTOLERANT IN THIS COMIC BOOK UNIVERSE.
*Or whatever social media platform is popular when this goes to print.

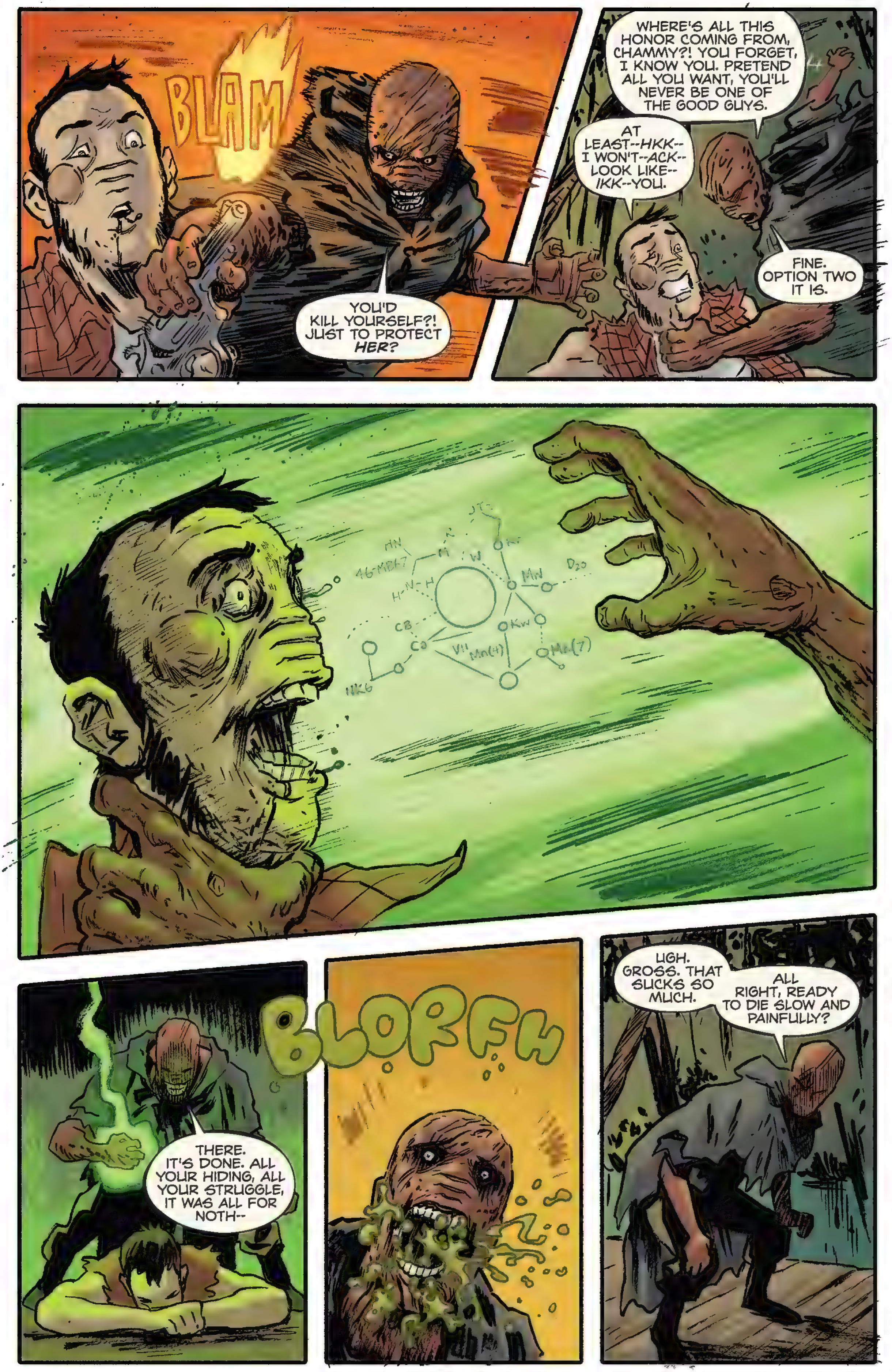

NEARBY. AT SECRET COORDINATES.
H-HELLO? SMUGGLER GUY?
THANKS FOR DOING THIS.
ARE YOU COOL IF WE PICK UP MY GIRLFRIEND REAL QUICK?
I SHOULD WARN YOU, SHE'S GONNA YELL AT ME A BUNCH 'CAUSE SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANY OF THIS.
SO IF YOU'VE GOT EARS, I WOULD DO YOUR BEST TO PLUG 'EM.
SO, HOW'D YOU MEET GUS?
YOU DON'T TALK MUCH, HUH? SORRY. I END UP TALKING A LOT WHEN I'M NERVOUS.
TIK TIK TIK

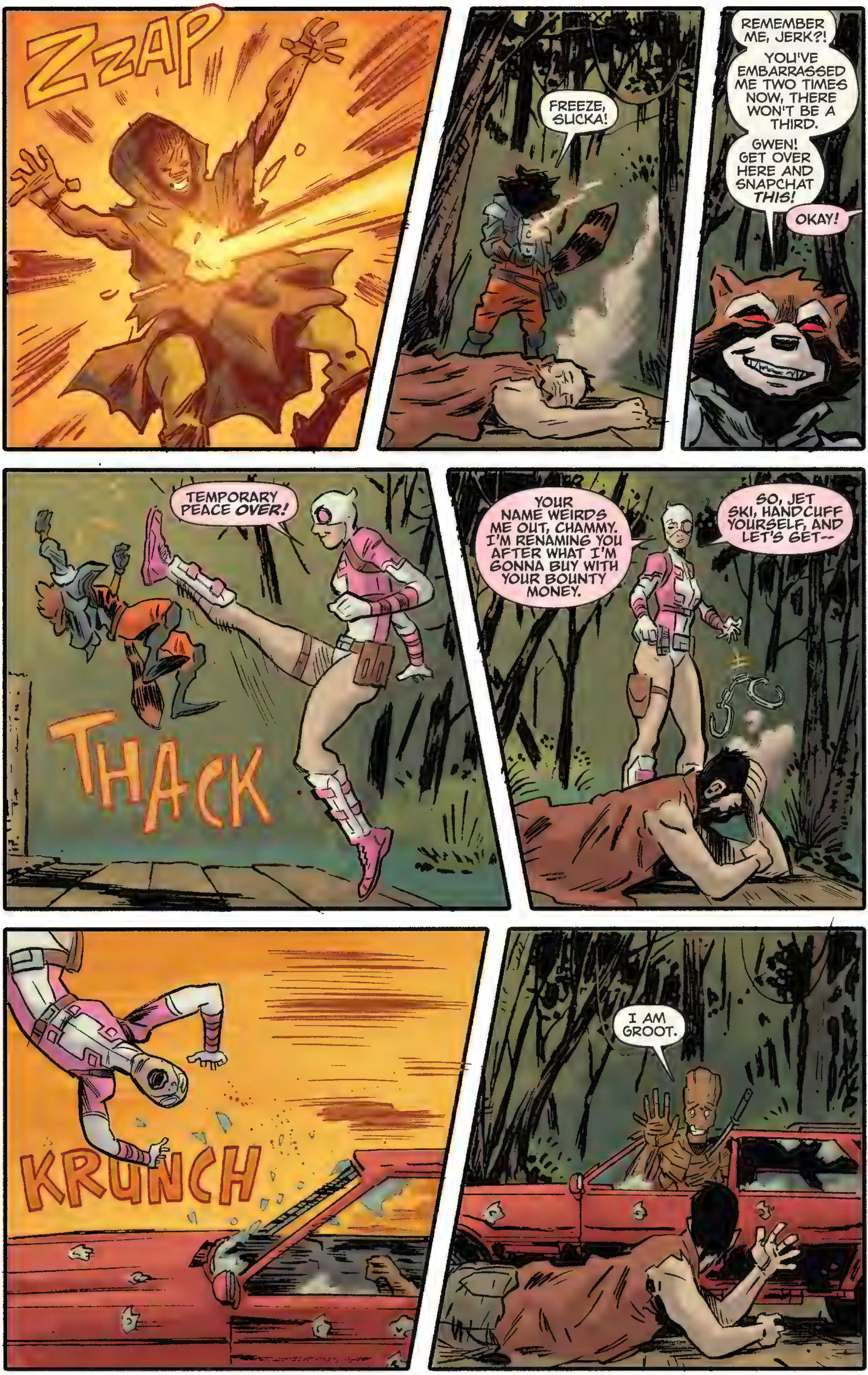

SO CHANDLER'S AN ALIEN?!
ARE YOU *STILL* TALKING ABOUT THAT? MOVE PAST IT.
ANY LUCK HACKING HIS SYSTEM, SQUIRREL?
WHILE WE'RE WAITING, SHOULD I COME UP WITH A TEMPORARY PEACE TREATY TEAM NAME FOR US?
NO.
HOW ABOUT *THE GWEN AND TONICS?*
NO.
NO.
ACCESS DENIED.
BEEPEEEPEEEPBEEPEEEPEEEPBEEPE
WHOA, WHAT'S HAPPENING?
GUS! U THERE? THIS SMUGGLER'S GIVING ME THE CREEPS...
HIS REMOTE DEVICE MUST BE GETTING ROUTED THROUGH THIS CONSOLE!
YOU READERS UNDERSTAND THAT? I KINDA GET IT. WE'RE ABLE TO SEE CHAMMY'S COMMUNICATION BECAUSE--
SHUT UP.
WHO IS SHE TALKING TO???

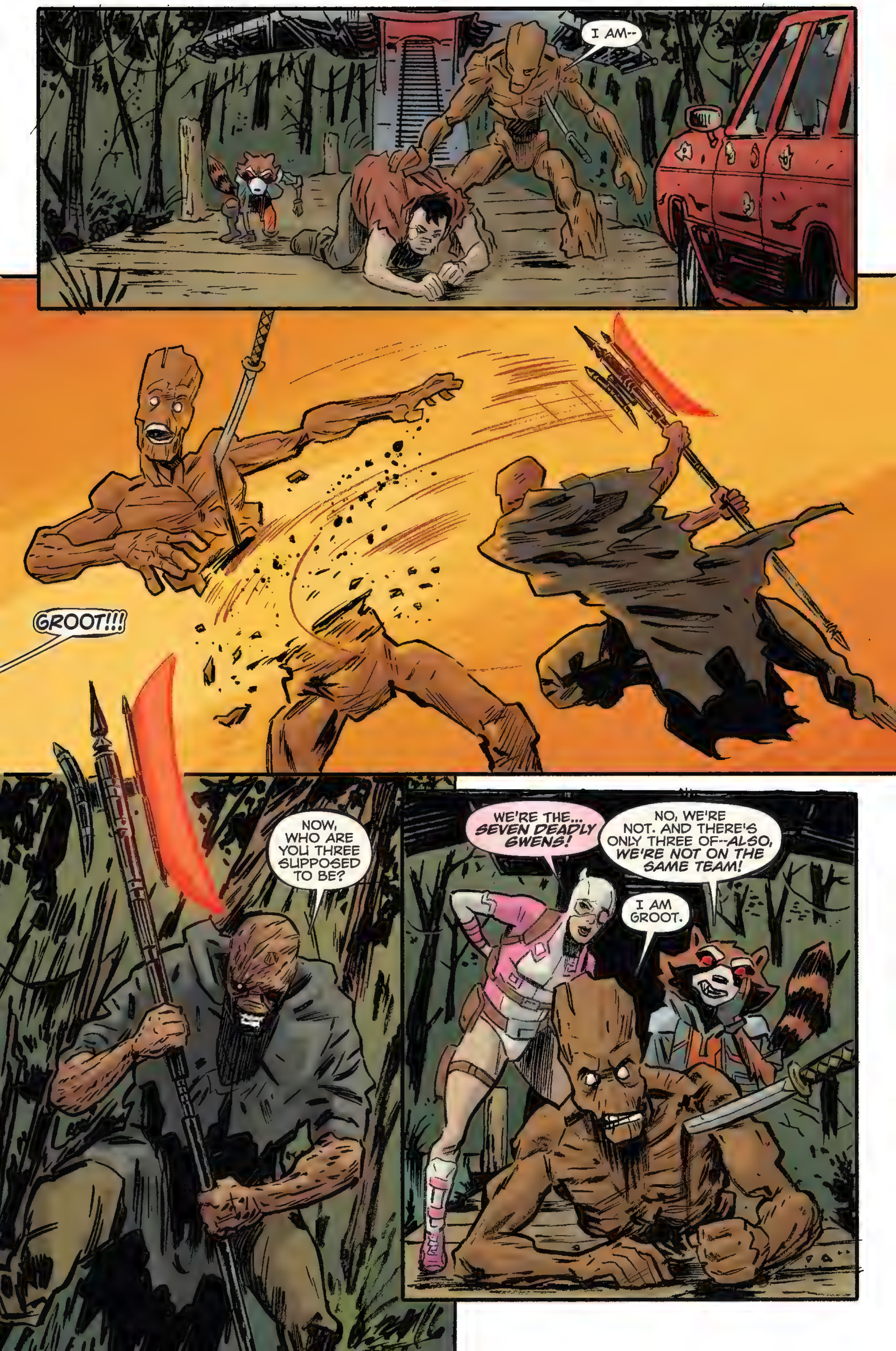

TRIANGULATE THE SIGNAL. SEE IF YOU CAN TRACK HIM.
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT TRIANGULATE MEANS? I'M TRACING THE SIGNAL, BUT THAT'S NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT HOW I'M DOING IT.
CAN WE ZOOM IN AND *ENHANCE* AN IMAGE WHILE WE'RE HERE? ALWAYS WANTED TO DO THAT.
GOT *HIM.*
TRANSMITTING...
GUS?? U OK?
BEEP BEEP BEEP
SO, UH... WE SHOULD PROBABLY HIT THE ROAD...
RIGHT, *REEVE?*
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, CHAMMY.

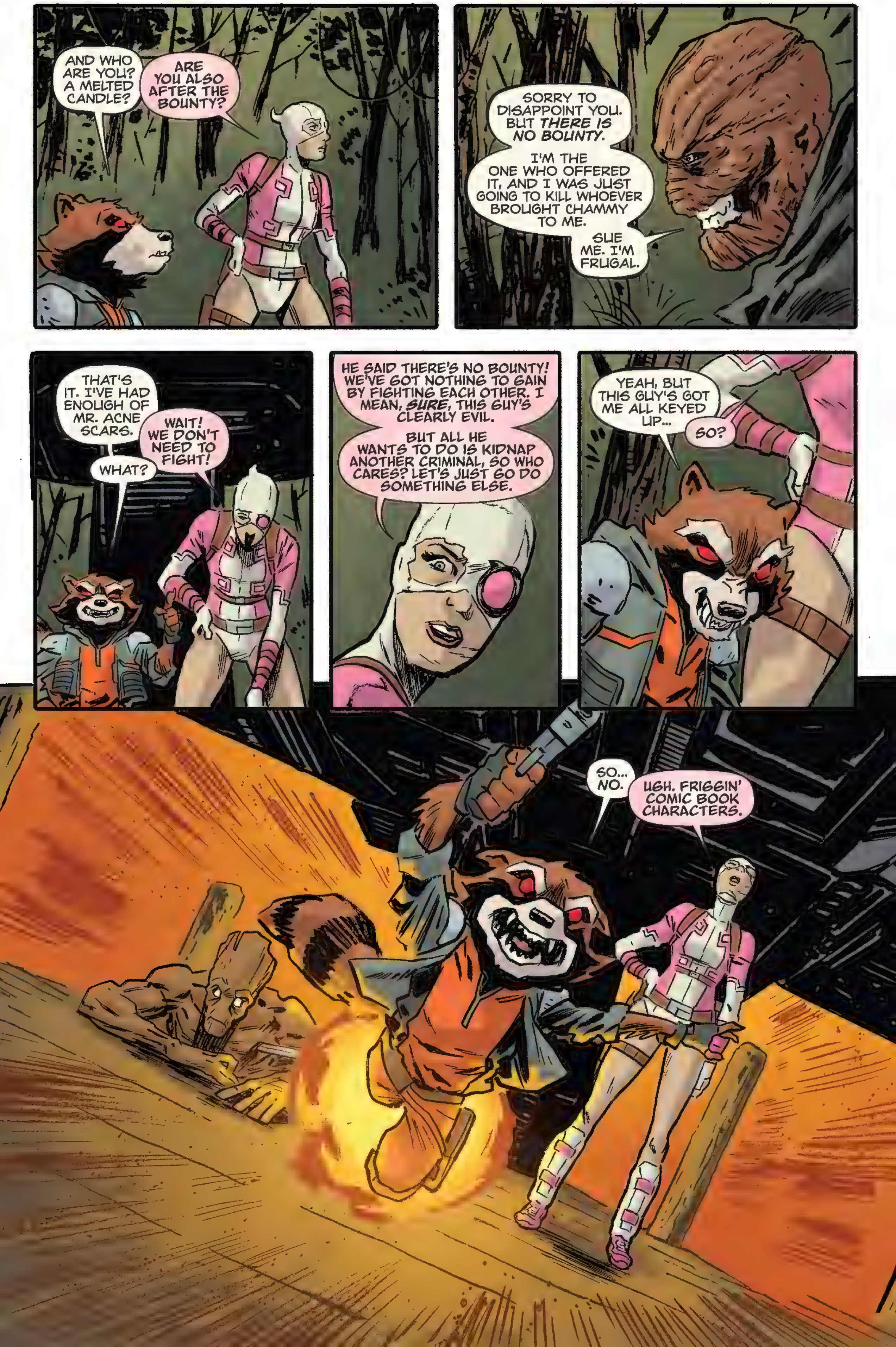

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
HUH?!
KRUNK
WUMP
FUMP

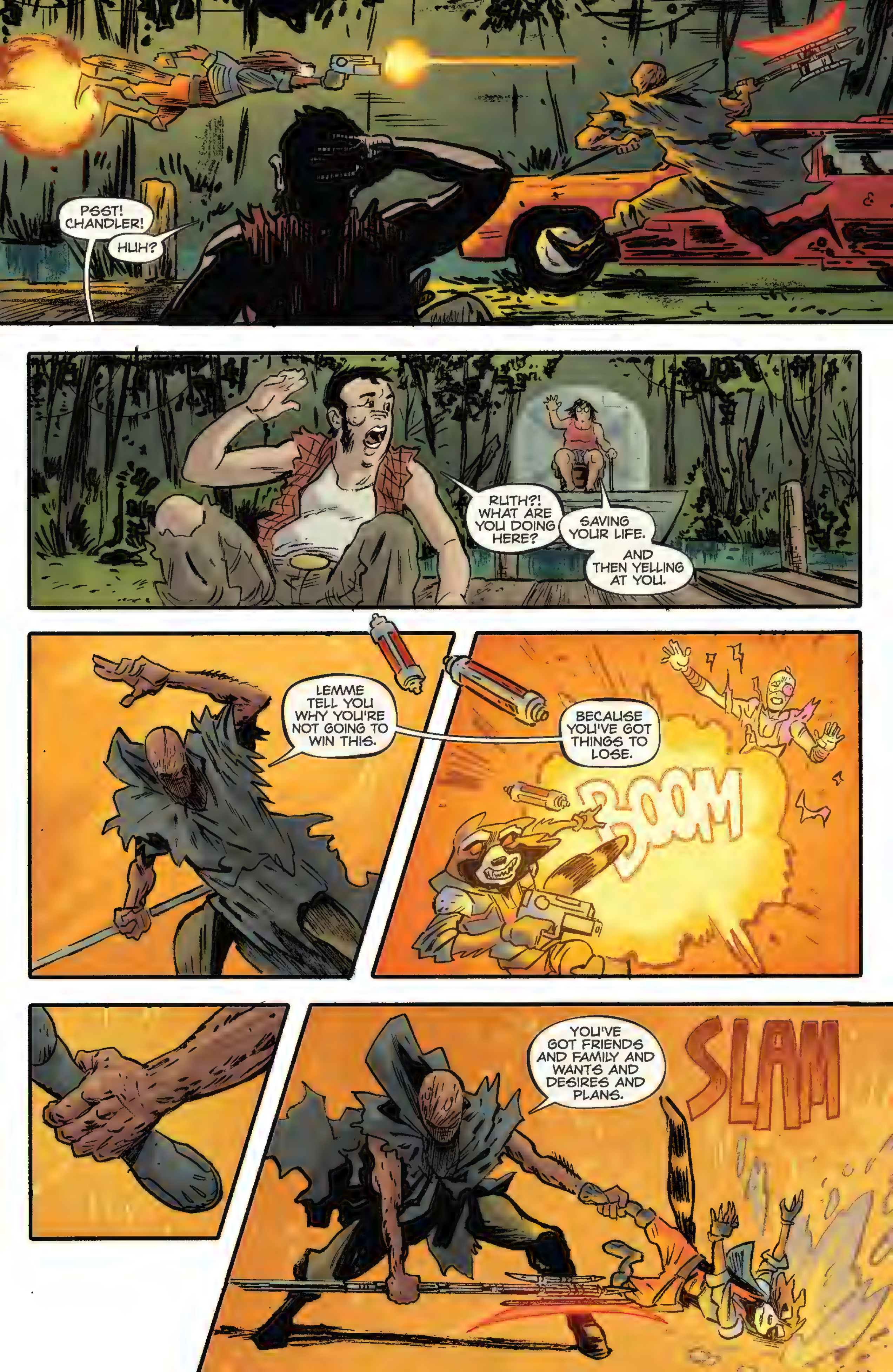

BEEN A LONG TIME, CHAMMY.
Y'KNOW, YOU MUSTA BEEN GOOD AT HIDE-AND-SEEK. IT TOOK ME *FOREVER* TO FIND YOU.
LUCKY FOR ME, YOUR *FRIENDS* AREN'T AS GOOD AT HIDING AS YOU ARE.
SO, WE'VE GOT TWO OPTIONS HERE. OPTION ONE, YOU TELL ME WHAT I NEED TO KNOW, AND THEN I KILL YOU QUICK.
OR...OPTION TWO, YOU DON'T TELL ME AND I SUCK IT OUT OF YOUR HEAD REGARDLESS. BUT EVERY TIME I USE THAT POWER IT MAKES ME VOMIT. AND I *HATE* VOMITING.
WHICH IS WHY OPTION TWO WILL END WITH ME KILLING YOU...
REALLY.
REALLY.
SLOWLY.
YOU'RE GONNA TRY THE GUN AGAIN?! YOU KNOW WHAT? FINE. TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT.
SURE THING.

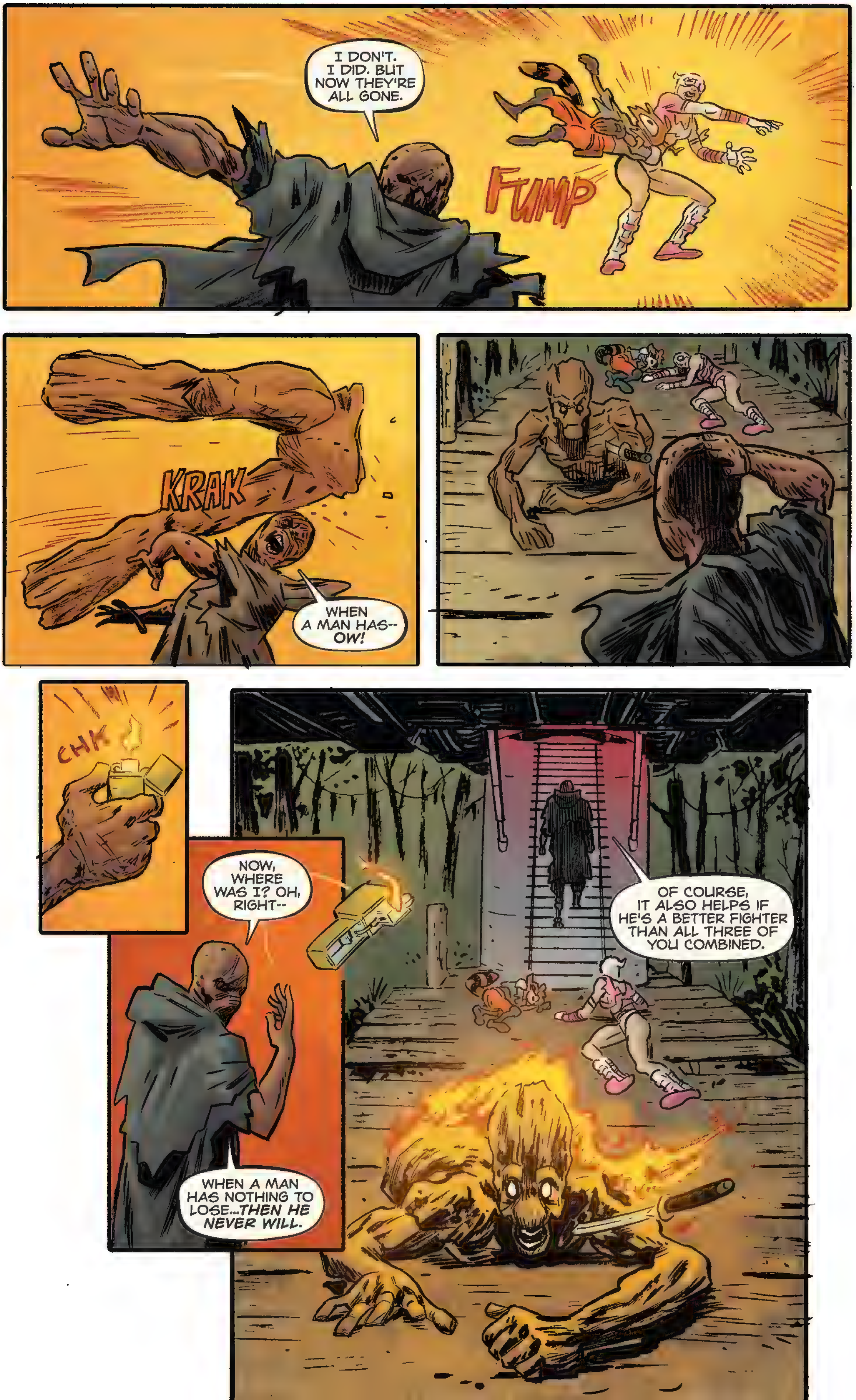

BLAM
YOU'D KILL YOURSELF?! JUST TO PROTECT *HER?*
WHERE'S ALL THIS HONOR COMING FROM, CHAMMY?! YOU FORGET, I KNOW YOU. PRETEND ALL YOU WANT, YOU'LL NEVER BE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.
AT LEAST--*HKK*--I WON'T--*ACK*--LOOK LIKE--*IKK*--YOU.
FINE. OPTION TWO IT IS.
THERE. IT'S DONE. ALL YOUR HIDING, ALL YOUR STRUGGLE, IT WAS ALL FOR NOTH--
BLORFH
UGH. GROSS. THAT SUCKS SO MUCH.
ALL RIGHT, READY TO DIE SLOW AND PAINFULLY?

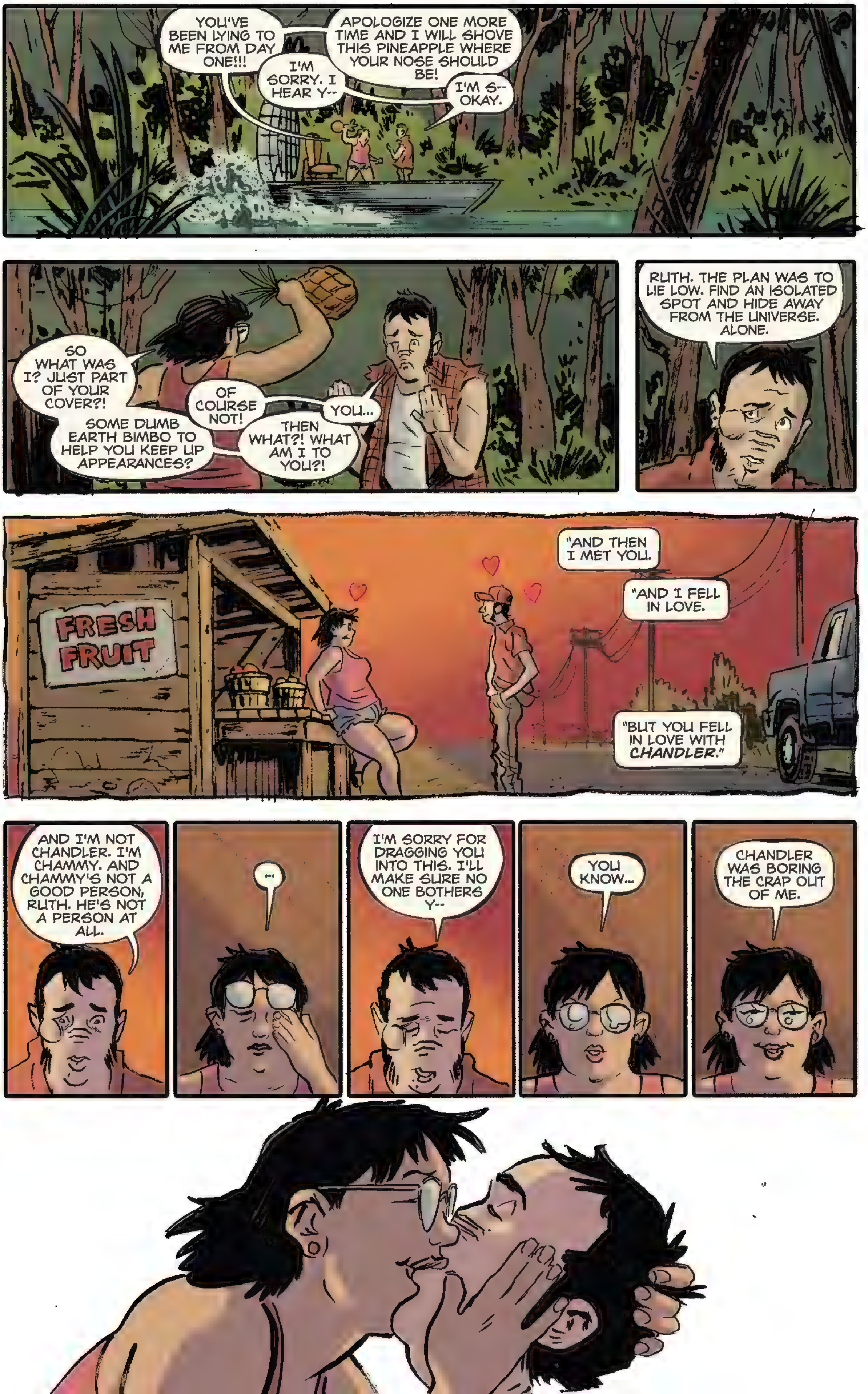

ZZAP
FREEZE, SUCKA!
REMEMBER ME, JERK?!
YOU'VE EMBARRASSED ME TWO TIMES NOW, THERE WON'T BE A THIRD.
GWEN! GET OVER HERE AND SNAPCHAT *THIS!*
OKAY!
TEMPORARY PEACE *OVER!*
THACK
YOUR NAME WEIRDS ME OUT, CHAMMY. I'M RENAMING YOU AFTER WHAT I'M GONNA BUY WITH YOUR BOUNTY MONEY.
SO, JET SKI, HANDCUFF YOURSELF, AND LET'S GET--
KRUNCH
I AM GROOT.

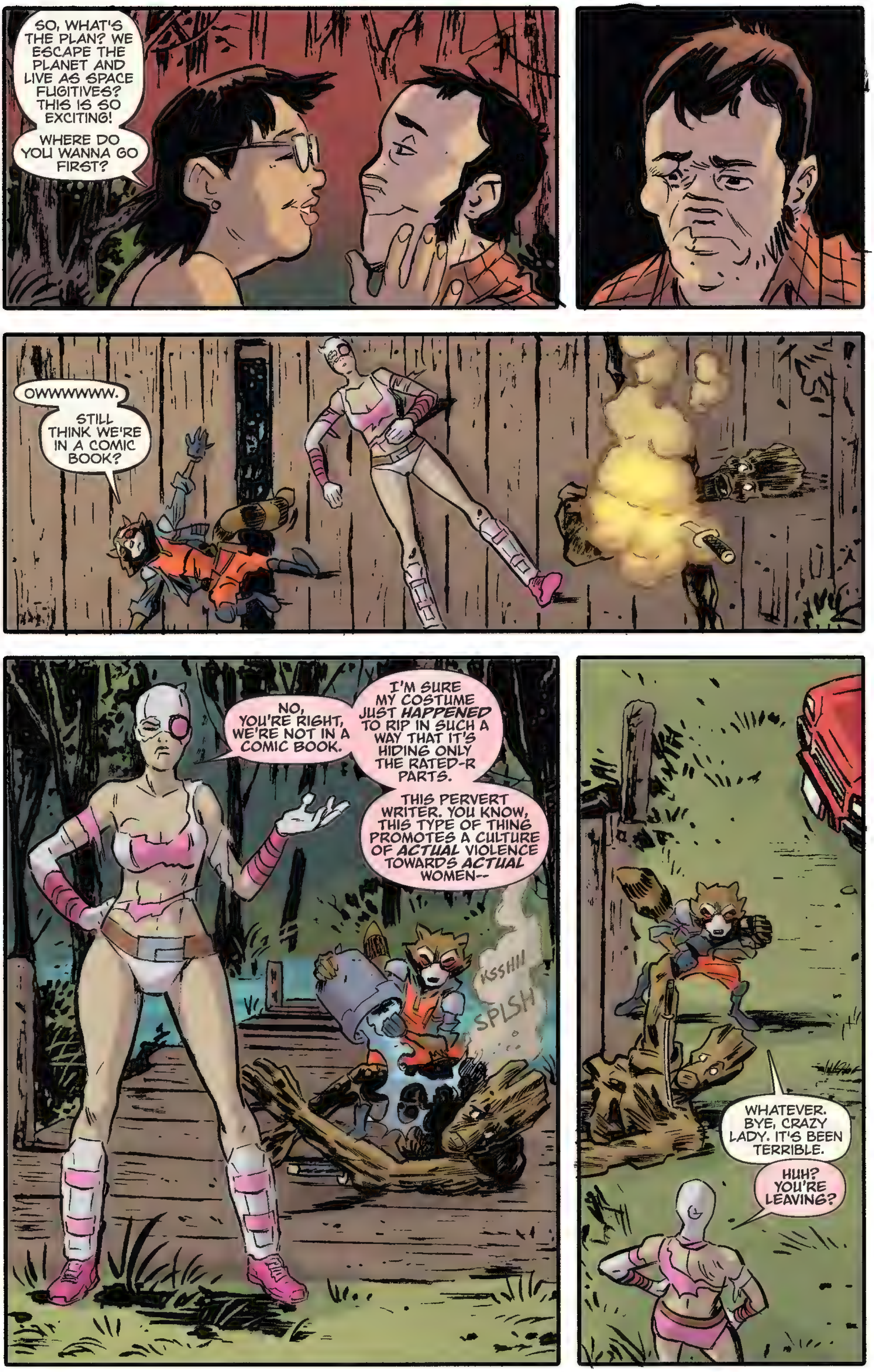

I AM--
GROOT!!!
NOW, WHO ARE YOU THREE SUPPOSED TO BE?
WE'RE THE... *SEVEN DEADLY GWENS!*
NO, WE'RE NOT. AND THERE'S ONLY THREE OF--*ALSO, WE'RE NOT ON THE SAME TEAM!*
I AM GROOT.

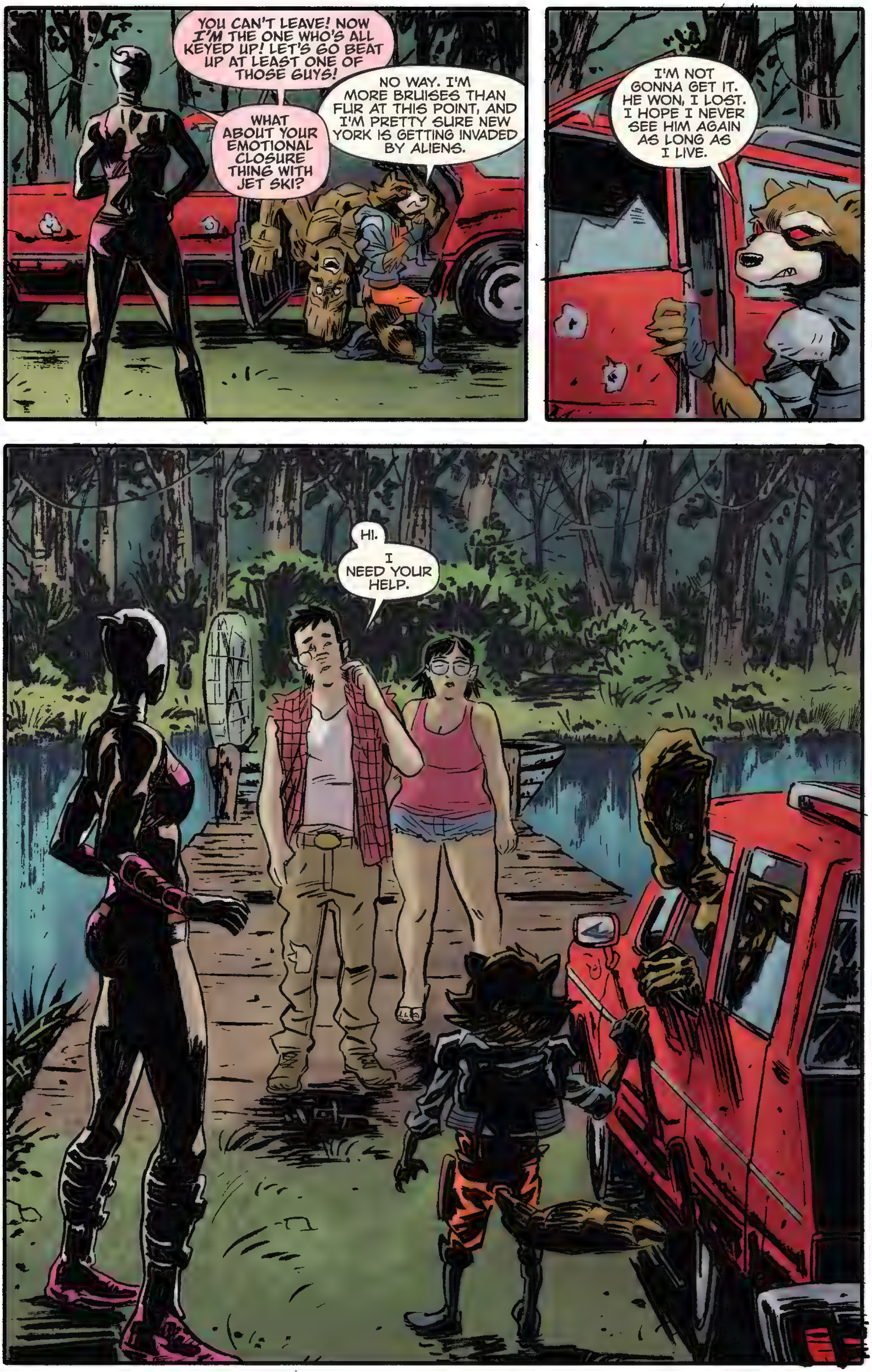

AND WHO ARE YOU? A MELTED CANDLE?
ARE YOU ALSO AFTER THE BOUNTY?
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU. BUT *THERE IS* NO BOUNTY.
I'M THE ONE WHO OFFERED IT, AND I WAS JUST GOING TO KILL WHOEVER BROUGHT CHAMMY TO ME.
SUE ME. I'M FRUGAL.
THAT'S IT. I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF MR. ACNE SCARS.
WAIT! WE DON'T NEED TO FIGHT!
WHAT?
HE SAID THERE'S NO BOUNTY! WE'VE GOT NOTHING TO GAIN BY FIGHTING EACH OTHER. I MEAN, *SURE*, THIS GUY'S CLEARLY EVIL.
BUT ALL HE WANTS TO DO IS KIDNAP ANOTHER CRIMINAL, SO WHO CARES? LET'S JUST GO DO SOMETHING ELSE.
YEAH, BUT THIS GUY'S GOT ME ALL KEYED UP...
SO?
SO... NO.
UGH. FRIGGIN' COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS.

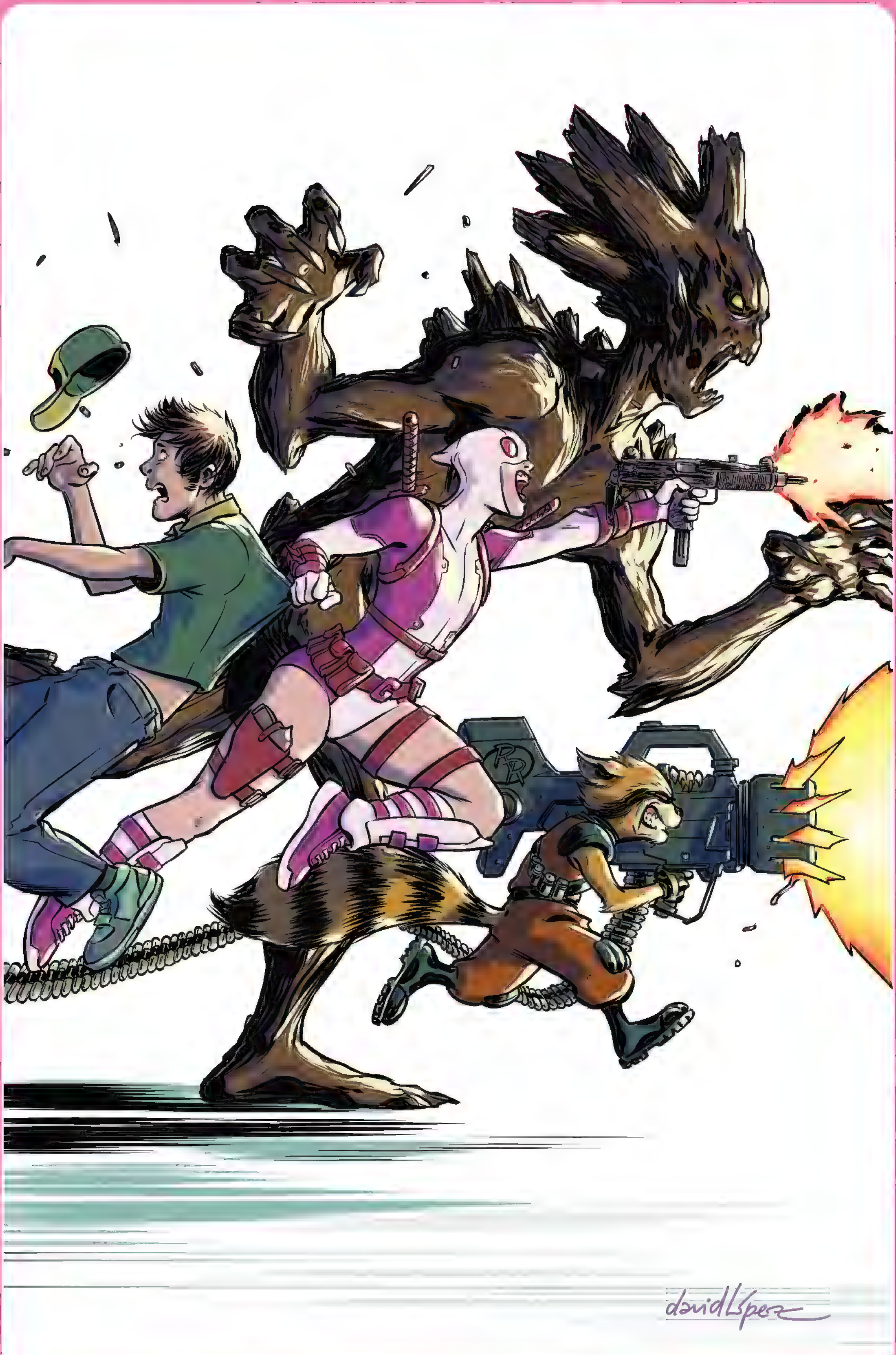

PSST! CHANDLER!
HUH?
RUTH?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
SAVING YOUR LIFE.
AND THEN YELLING AT YOU.
LEMME TELL YOU WHY YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WIN THIS.
BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT THINGS TO LOSE.
BOOM
YOU'VE GOT FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND WANTS AND DESIRES AND PLANS.
SLAM


I DON'T. I DID. BUT NOW THEY'RE ALL GONE.
FUMP
KRAK
WHEN A MAN HAS-- OW!
CHK
NOW, WHERE WAS I? OH, RIGHT--
WHEN A MAN HAS NOTHING TO LOSE...THEN HE NEVER WILL.
OF COURSE, IT ALSO HELPS IF HE'S A BETTER FIGHTER THAN ALL THREE OF YOU COMBINED.


YOU'VE BEEN LYING TO ME FROM DAY ONE!!!
I'M SORRY. I HEAR Y--
APOLOGIZE ONE MORE TIME AND I WILL SHOVE THIS PINEAPPLE WHERE YOUR NOSE SHOULD BE!
I'M S-- OKAY.
SO WHAT WAS I? JUST PART OF YOUR COVER?!
SOME DUMB EARTH BIMBO TO HELP YOU KEEP UP APPEARANCES?
OF COURSE NOT!
YOU...
THEN WHAT?! WHAT AM I TO YOU?!
RUTH. THE PLAN WAS TO LIE LOW. FIND AN ISOLATED SPOT AND HIDE AWAY FROM THE UNIVERSE. ALONE.
FRESH FRUIT
"AND THEN I MET YOU.
"AND I FELL IN LOVE.
"BUT YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH CHANDLER."
AND I'M NOT CHANDLER. I'M CHAMMY. AND CHAMMY'S NOT A GOOD PERSON, RUTH. HE'S NOT A PERSON AT ALL.
...
I'M SORRY FOR DRAGGING YOU INTO THIS. I'LL MAKE SURE NO ONE BOTHERS Y--
YOU KNOW...
CHANDLER WAS BORING THE CRAP OUT OF ME.

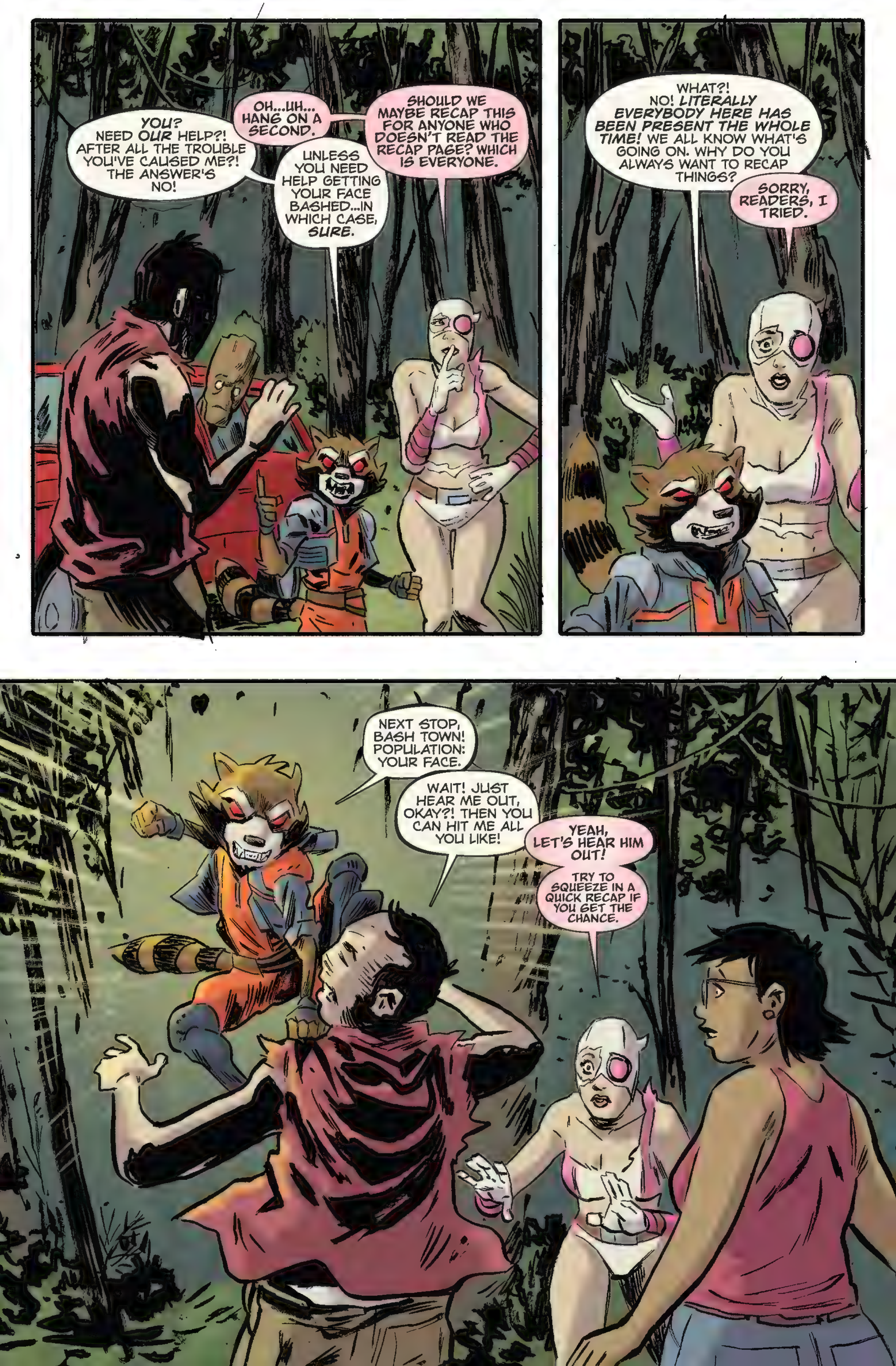

SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN? WE ESCAPE THE PLANET AND LIVE AS SPACE FUGITIVES? THIS IS SO EXCITING!
WHERE DO YOU WANNA GO FIRST?
OWWWWWW.
STILL THINK WE'RE IN A COMIC BOOK?
NO, YOU'RE RIGHT, WE'RE NOT IN A COMIC BOOK.
I'M SURE MY COSTUME JUST *HAPPENED* TO RIP IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT'S HIDING ONLY THE RATED-R PARTS.
THIS PERVERT WRITER. YOU KNOW, THIS TYPE OF THING PROMOTES A CULTURE OF *ACTUAL* VIOLENCE TOWARDS *ACTUAL* WOMEN--
KSSHH
SPLSH
WHATEVER. BYE, CRAZY LADY. IT'S BEEN TERRIBLE.
HUH? YOU'RE LEAVING?

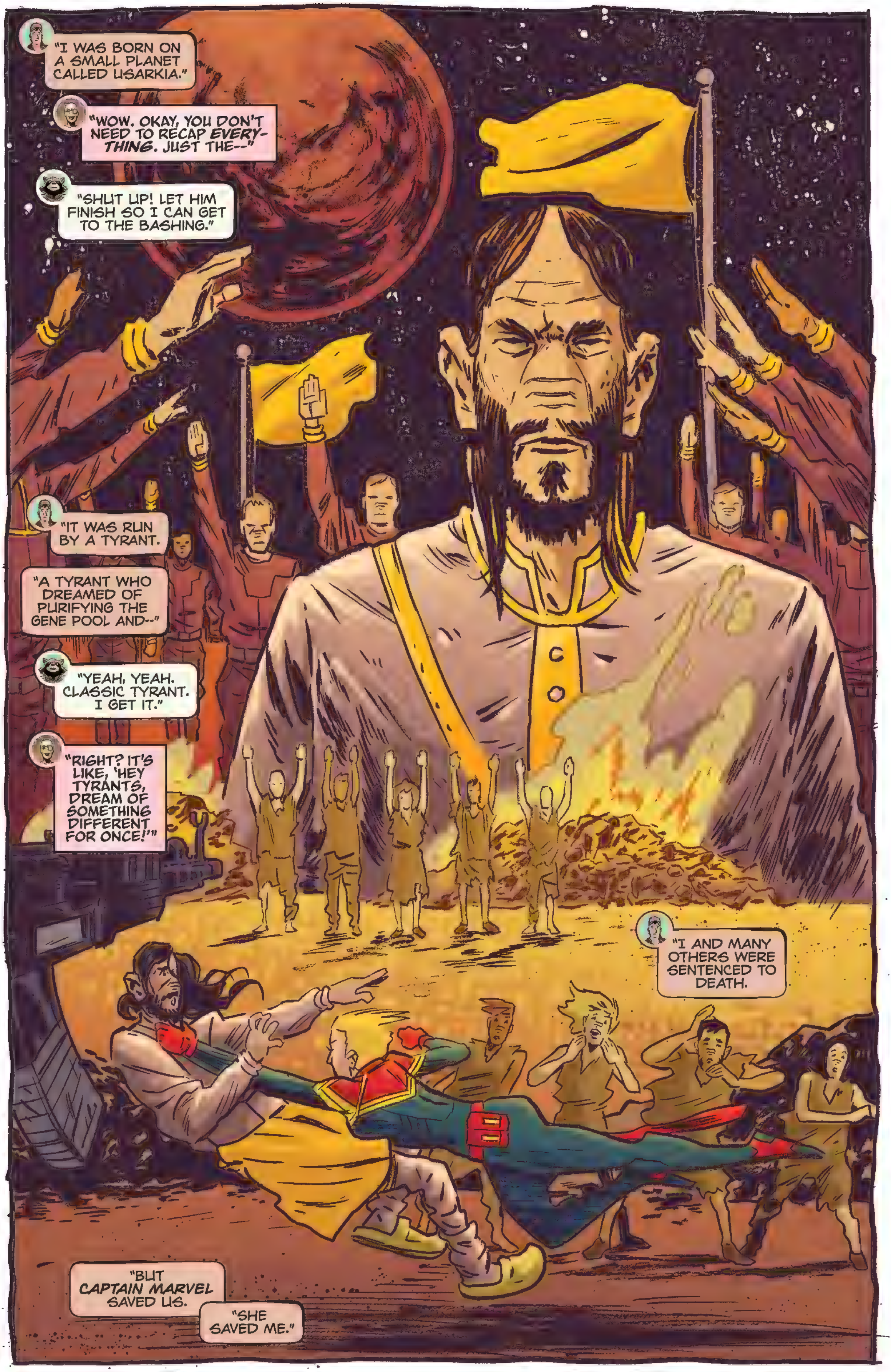

YOU CAN'T LEAVE! NOW *I'M* THE ONE WHO'S ALL KEYED UP! LET'S GO BEAT UP AT LEAST ONE OF THOSE GUYS!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR EMOTIONAL CLOSURE THING WITH JET SKI?
NO WAY. I'M MORE BRUISES THAN FUR AT THIS POINT, AND I'M PRETTY SURE NEW YORK IS GETTING INVADED BY ALIENS.
I'M NOT GONNA GET IT. HE WON, I LOST. I HOPE I NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN AS LONG AS I LIVE.
HI.
I NEED YOUR HELP.

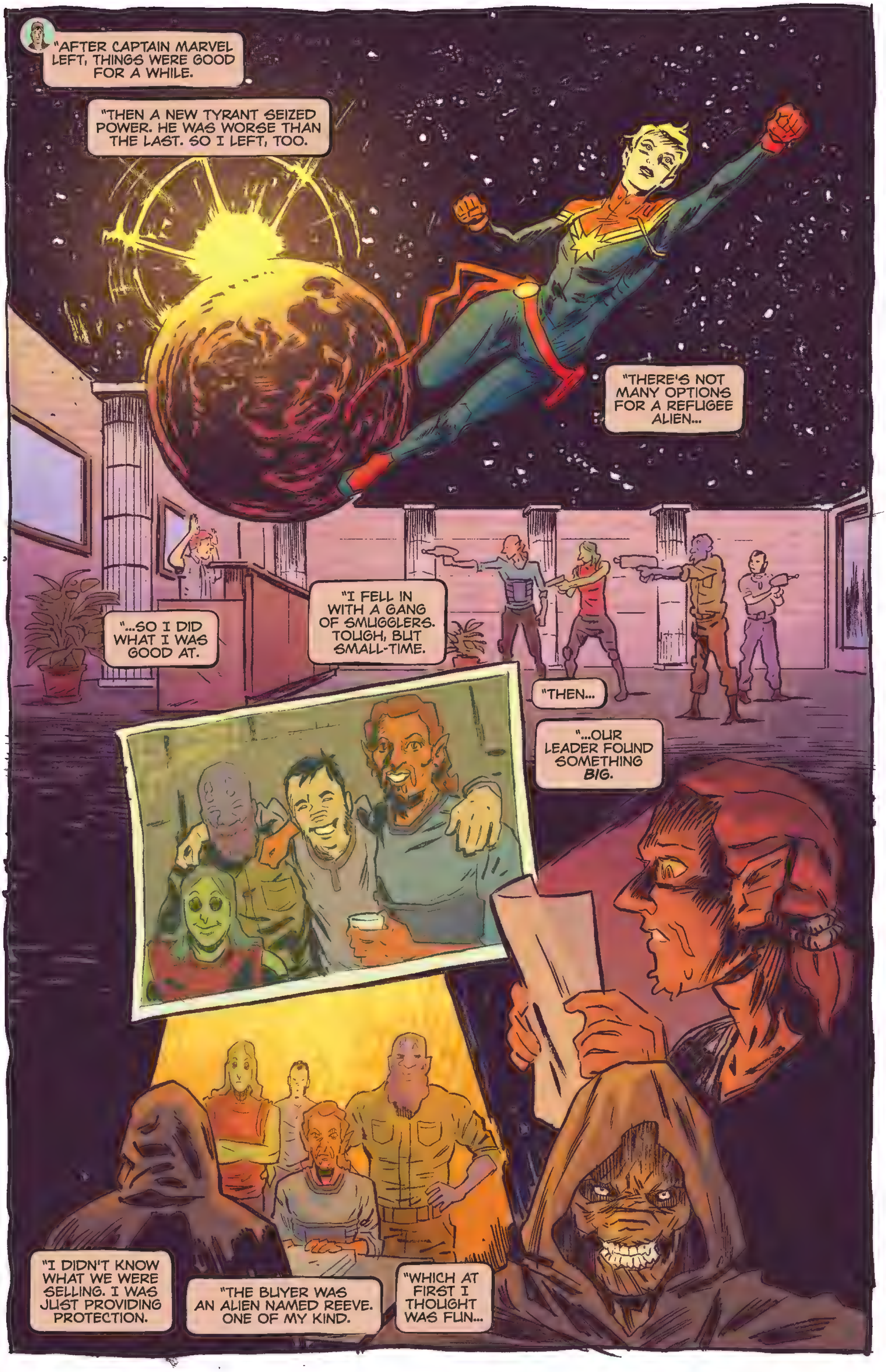

davidLópez

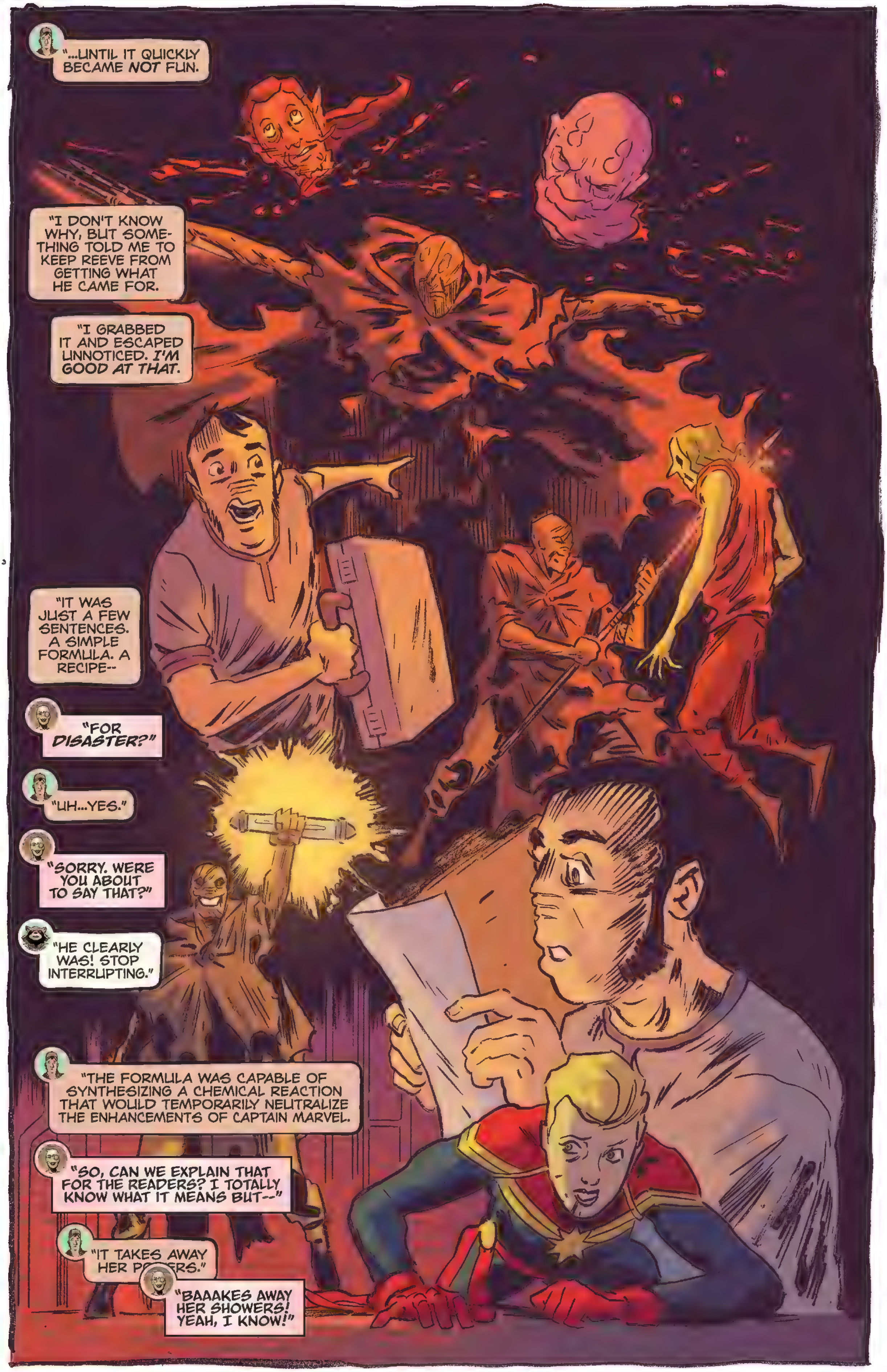
ROCKET RACCOON AND GROOT #10

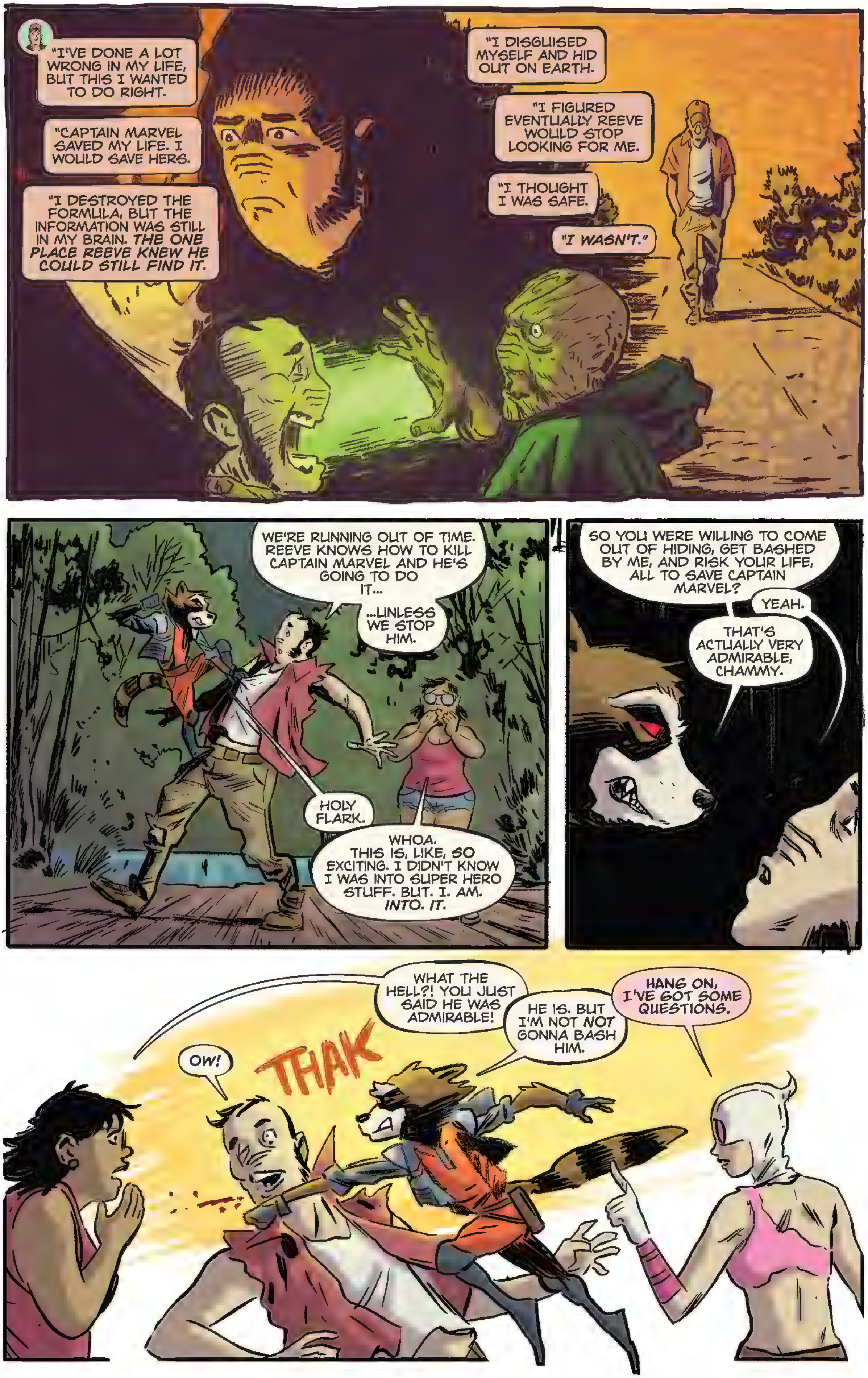
(PART THREE OF THE BAD SOUTHERN FUN TRILOGY: "ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL")

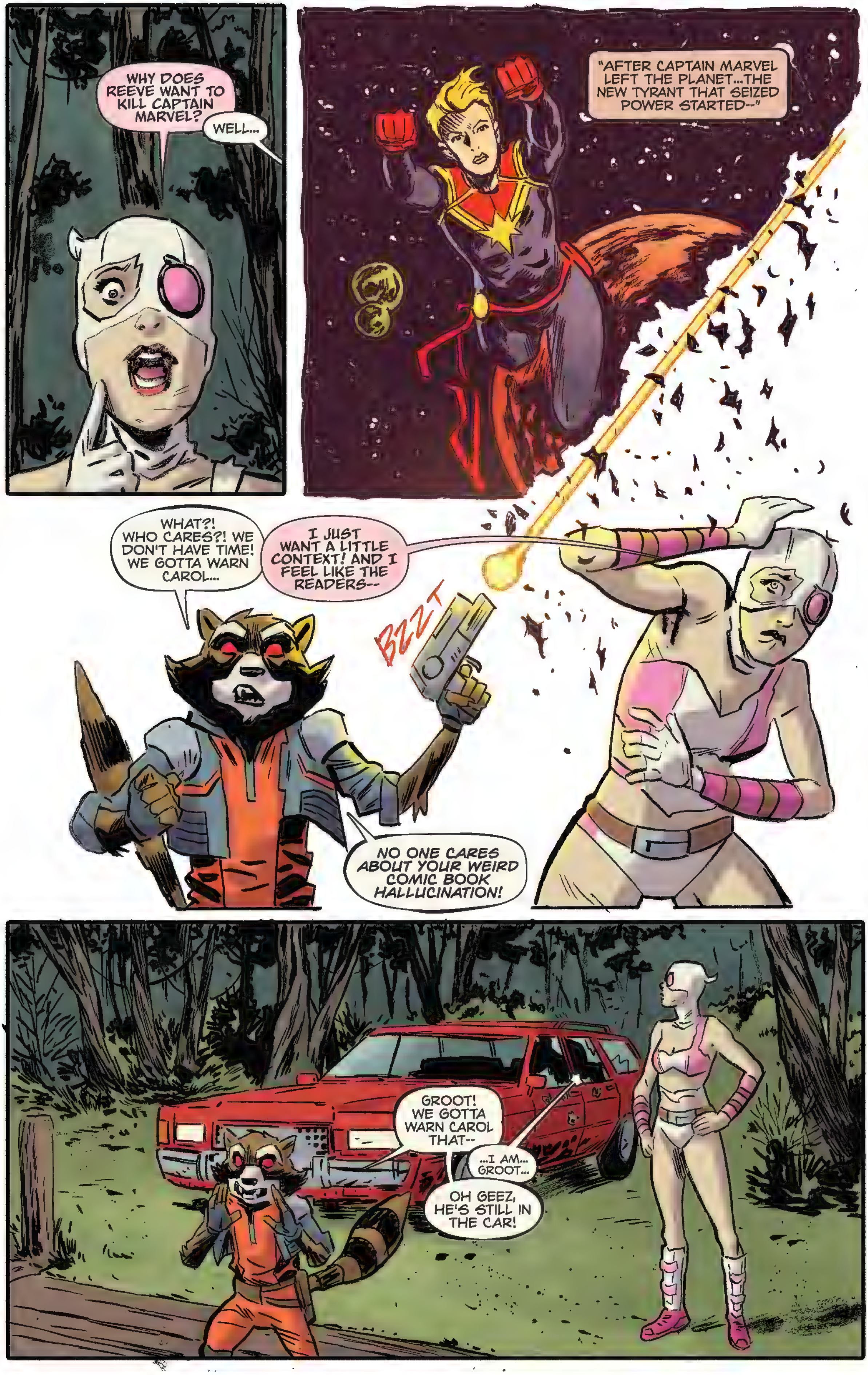

YOU? NEED **OUR** HELP?! AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE YOU'VE CAUSED ME?! THE ANSWER'S NO!
OH...UH... HANG ON A SECOND.
SHOULD WE MAYBE RECAP THIS FOR ANYONE WHO DOESN'T READ THE RECAP PAGE? WHICH IS EVERYONE.
UNLESS YOU NEED HELP GETTING YOUR FACE BASHED...IN WHICH CASE, *SURE.*
WHAT?! NO! *LITERALLY EVERYBODY HERE HAS BEEN PRESENT THE WHOLE TIME!* WE ALL KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. WHY DO YOU ALWAYS WANT TO RECAP THINGS?
SORRY, READERS, I TRIED.
NEXT STOP, BASH TOWN! POPULATION: YOUR FACE.
WAIT! JUST HEAR ME OUT, OKAY?! THEN YOU CAN HIT ME ALL YOU LIKE!
YEAH, LET'S HEAR HIM OUT!
TRY TO SQUEEZE IN A QUICK RECAP IF YOU GET THE CHANCE.

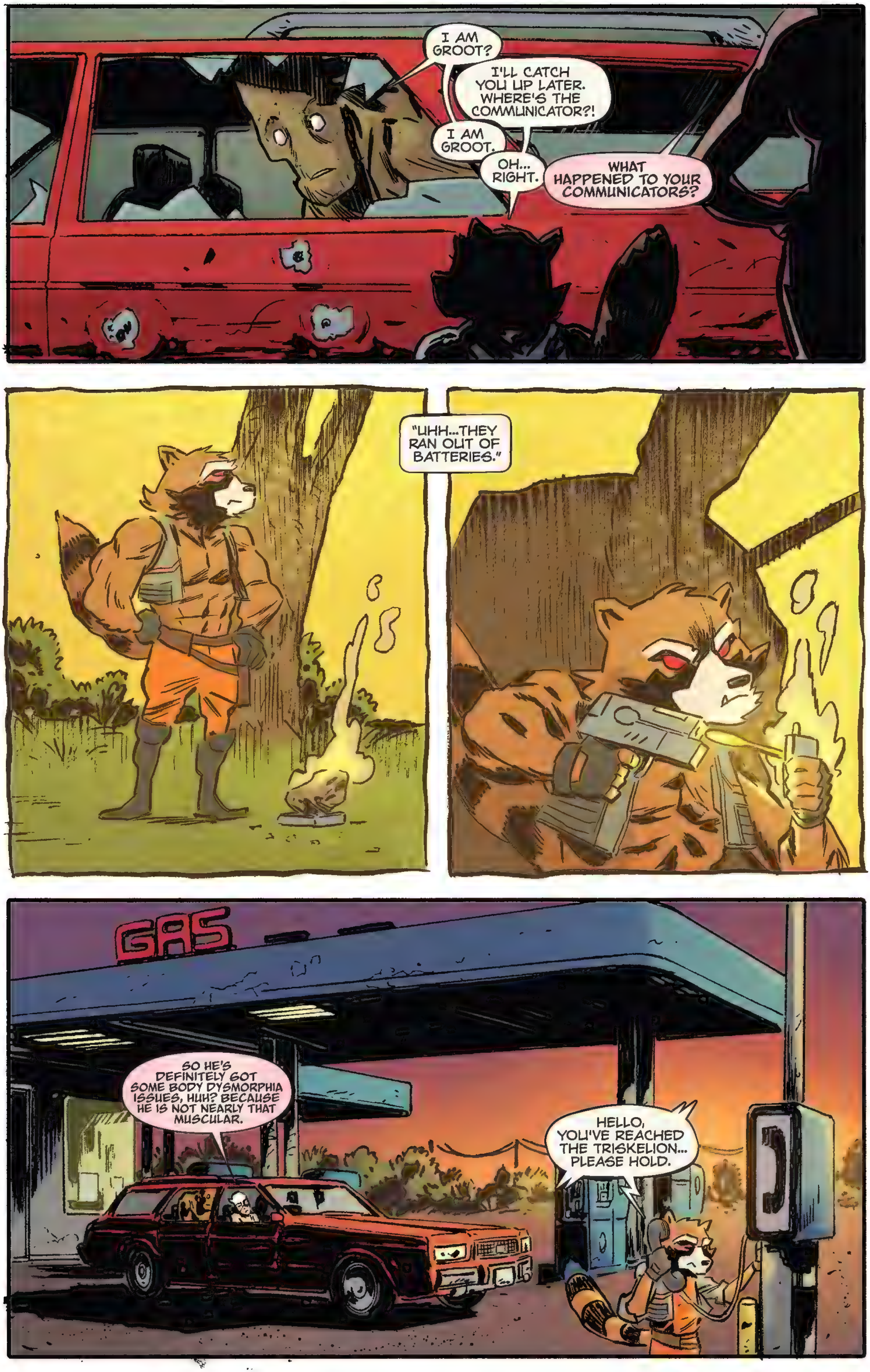

"I WAS BORN ON A SMALL PLANET CALLED USARKIA."
"WOW. OKAY, YOU DON'T NEED TO RECAP *EVERYTHING*. JUST THE--"
"SHUT UP! LET HIM FINISH SO I CAN GET TO THE BASHING."
"IT WAS RUN BY A TYRANT.
"A TYRANT WHO DREAMED OF PURIFYING THE GENE POOL AND--"
"YEAH, YEAH. CLASSIC TYRANT. I GET IT."
"RIGHT? IT'S LIKE, 'HEY TYRANTS, DREAM OF SOMETHING DIFFERENT FOR ONCE!'"
"I AND MANY OTHERS WERE SENTENCED TO DEATH.
"BUT *CAPTAIN MARVEL* SAVED US.
"SHE SAVED ME."

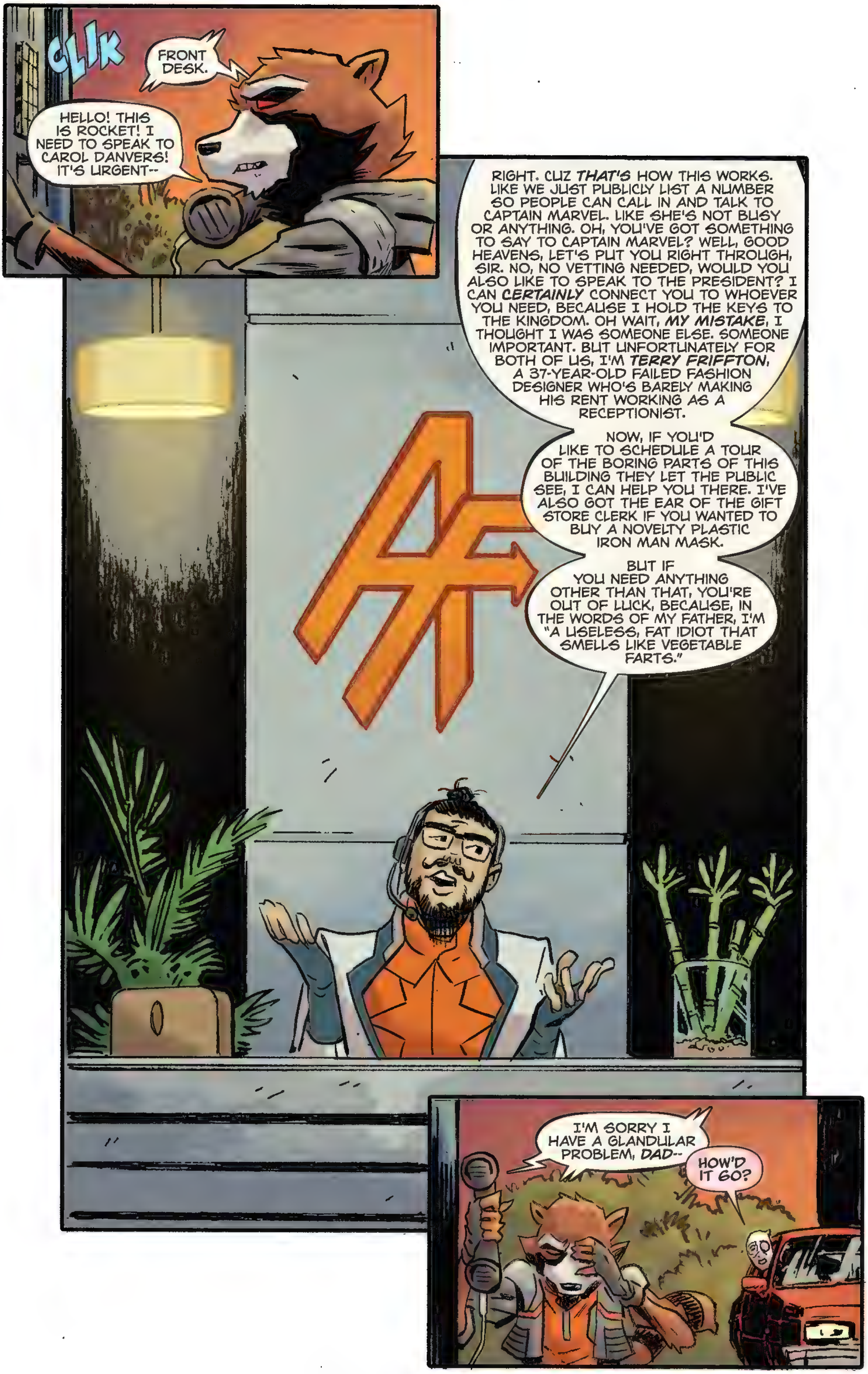

"AFTER CAPTAIN MARVEL LEFT, THINGS WERE GOOD FOR A WHILE.
"THEN A NEW TYRANT SEIZED POWER. HE WAS WORSE THAN THE LAST. SO I LEFT, TOO.
"THERE'S NOT MANY OPTIONS FOR A REFUGEE ALIEN...
"...SO I DID WHAT I WAS GOOD AT.
"I FELL IN WITH A GANG OF SMUGGLERS. TOUGH, BUT SMALL-TIME.
"THEN...
"...OUR LEADER FOUND SOMETHING *BIG*.
"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WE WERE SELLING. I WAS JUST PROVIDING PROTECTION.
"THE BUYER WAS AN ALIEN NAMED REEVE. ONE OF MY KIND.
"WHICH AT FIRST I THOUGHT WAS FUN...

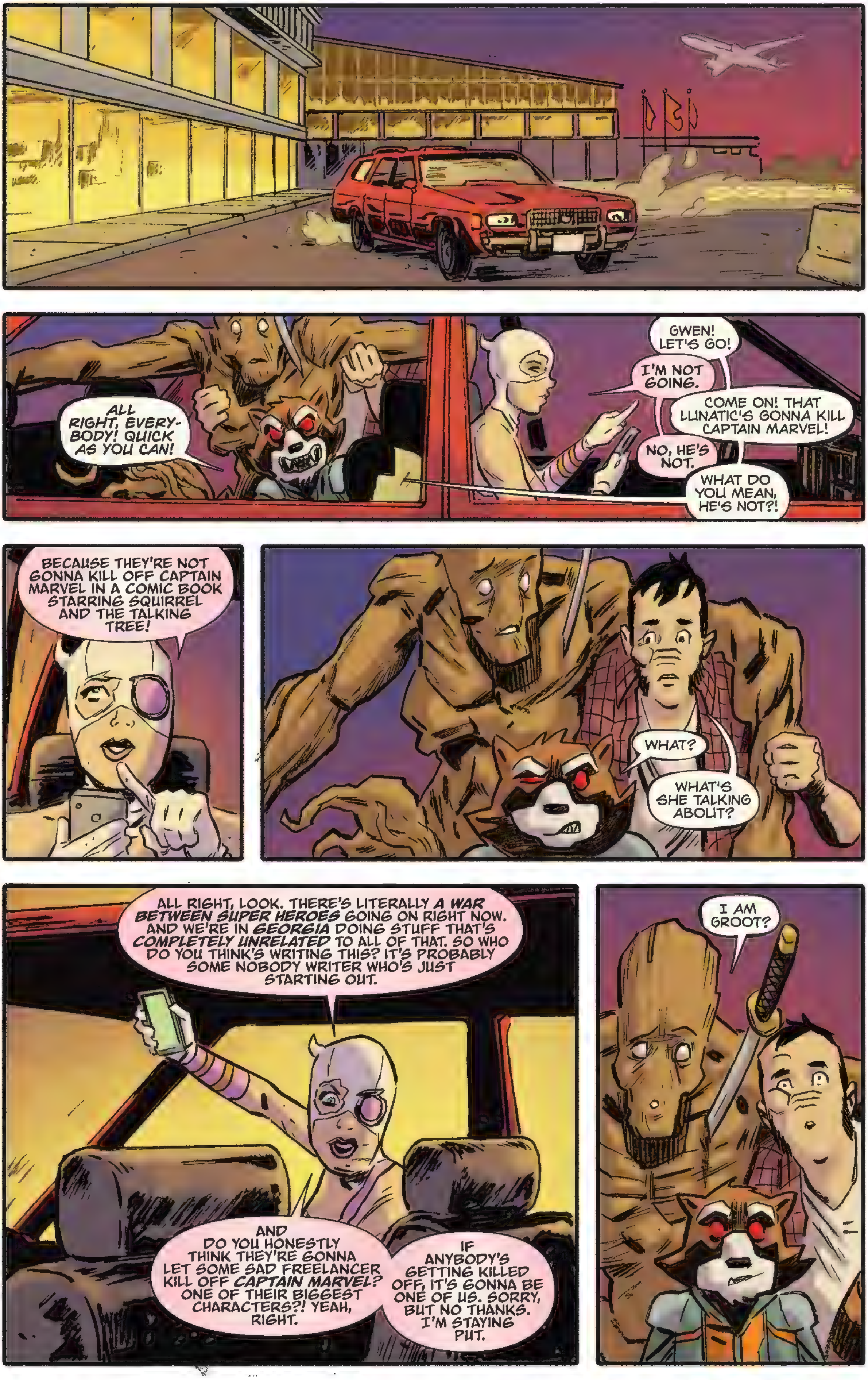

"...UNTIL IT QUICKLY BECAME *NOT* FUN.
"I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT SOMETHING TOLD ME TO KEEP REEVE FROM GETTING WHAT HE CAME FOR.
"I GRABBED IT AND ESCAPED UNNOTICED. *I'M GOOD AT THAT.*
"IT WAS JUST A FEW SENTENCES. A SIMPLE FORMULA. A RECIPE--
"FOR *DISASTER?"*
"UH...YES."
"SORRY. WERE YOU ABOUT TO SAY THAT?"
"HE CLEARLY WAS! STOP INTERRUPTING."
"THE FORMULA WAS CAPABLE OF SYNTHESIZING A CHEMICAL REACTION THAT WOULD TEMPORARILY NEUTRALIZE THE ENHANCEMENTS OF CAPTAIN MARVEL.
"SO, CAN WE EXPLAIN THAT FOR THE READERS? I TOTALLY KNOW WHAT IT MEANS BUT--"
"IT TAKES AWAY HER P ERS."
"BAAAKES AWAY HER SHOWERS! YEAH, I KNOW!"

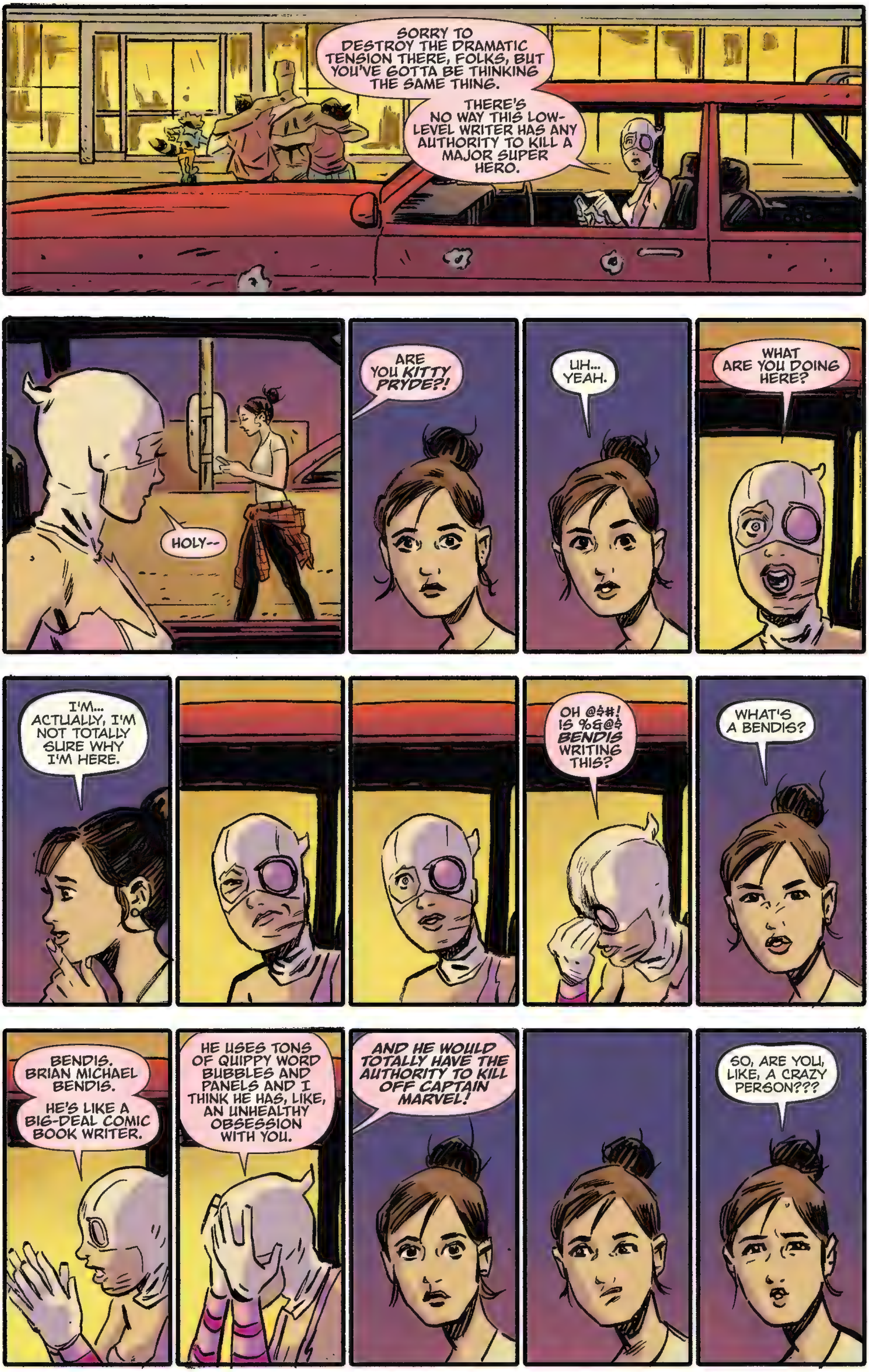

"I'VE DONE A LOT WRONG IN MY LIFE, BUT THIS I WANTED TO DO RIGHT.
"CAPTAIN MARVEL SAVED MY LIFE. I WOULD SAVE HERS.
"I DESTROYED THE FORMULA, BUT THE INFORMATION WAS STILL IN MY BRAIN. *THE ONE PLACE REEVE KNEW HE COULD STILL FIND IT.*
"I DISGUISED MYSELF AND HID OUT ON EARTH.
"I FIGURED EVENTUALLY REEVE WOULD STOP LOOKING FOR ME.
"I THOUGHT I WAS SAFE.
"I WASN'T."
WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME. REEVE KNOWS HOW TO KILL CAPTAIN MARVEL AND HE'S GOING TO DO IT...
...UNLESS WE STOP HIM.
HOLY FLARK.
WHOA. THIS IS, LIKE, SO EXCITING. I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS INTO SUPER HERO STUFF. BUT. I. AM. *INTO. IT.*
SO YOU WERE WILLING TO COME OUT OF HIDING, GET BASHED BY ME, AND RISK YOUR LIFE, ALL TO SAVE CAPTAIN MARVEL?
YEAH.
THAT'S ACTUALLY VERY ADMIRABLE, CHAMMY.
OW!
THAK
WHAT THE HELL?! YOU JUST SAID HE WAS ADMIRABLE!
HE IS. BUT I'M NOT *NOT* GONNA BASH HIM.
HANG ON, I'VE GOT SOME QUESTIONS.

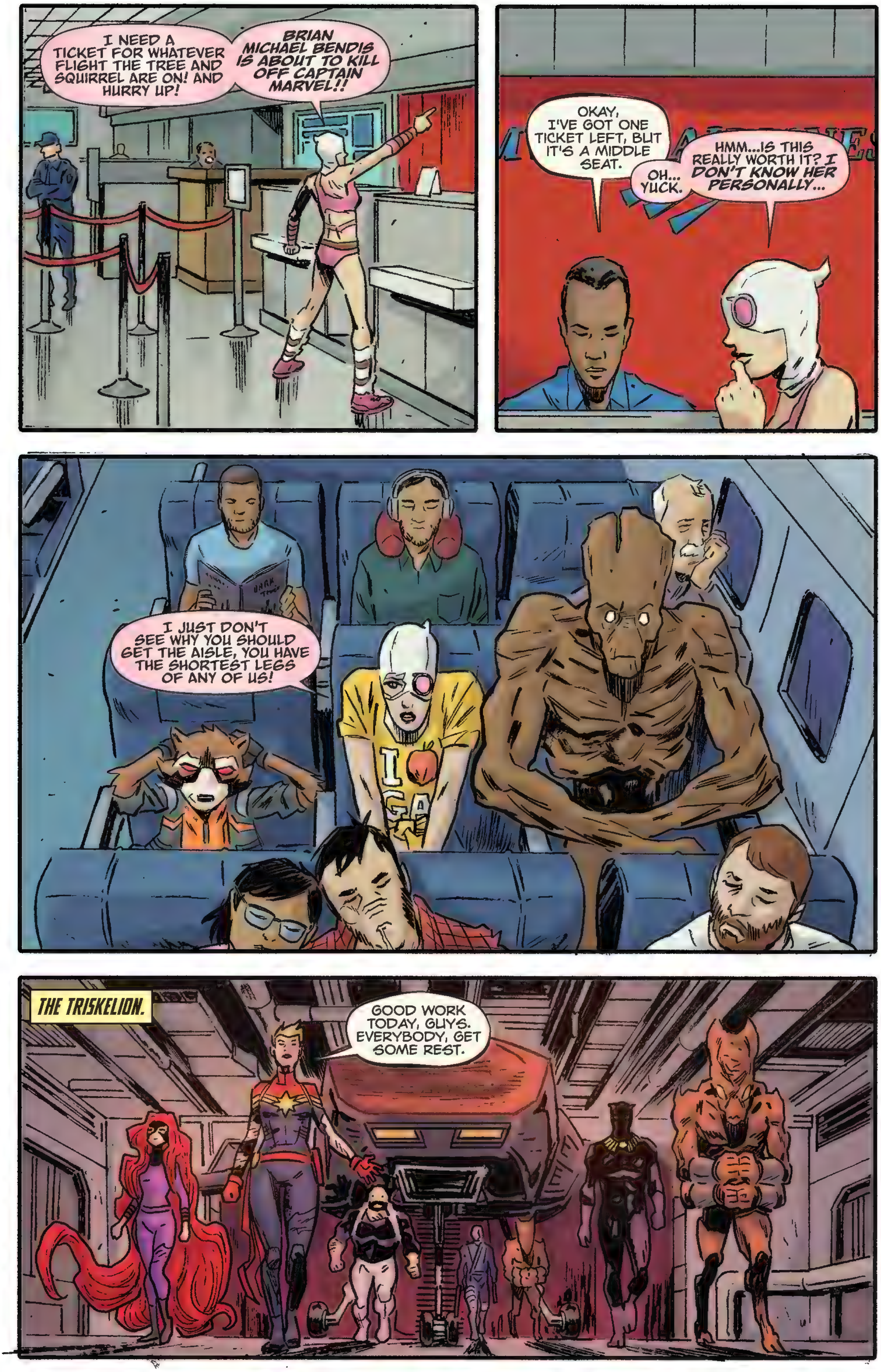

WHY DOES REEVE WANT TO KILL CAPTAIN MARVEL?
WELL...
"AFTER CAPTAIN MARVEL LEFT THE PLANET...THE NEW TYRANT THAT SEIZED POWER STARTED--"
WHAT?! WHO CARES?! WE DON'T HAVE TIME! WE GOTTA WARN CAROL...
I JUST WANT A LITTLE CONTEXT! AND I FEEL LIKE THE READERS--
BZZT
NO ONE CARES ABOUT YOUR WEIRD COMIC BOOK HALLUCINATION!
GROOT! WE GOTTA WARN CAROL THAT--
...I AM... GROOT...
OH GEEZ, HE'S STILL IN THE CAR!

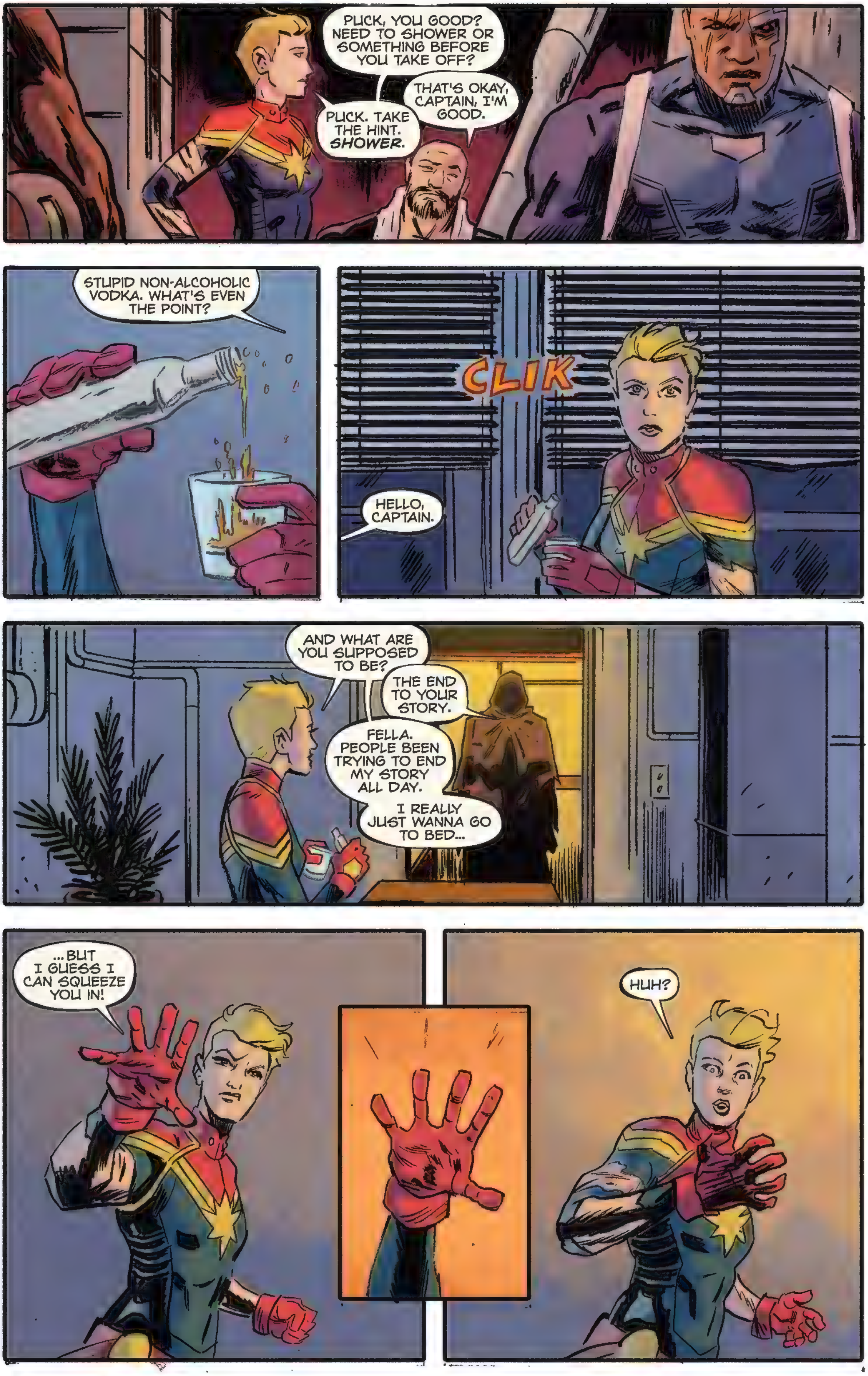

I AM GROOT?
I'LL CATCH YOU UP LATER. WHERE'S THE COMMUNICATOR?!
I AM GROOT.
OH... RIGHT.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR COMMUNICATORS?
"UHH...THEY RAN OUT OF BATTERIES."
GAS
SO HE'S DEFINITELY GOT SOME BODY DYSMORPHIA ISSUES, HUH? BECAUSE HE IS NOT NEARLY THAT MUSCULAR.
HELLO, YOU'VE REACHED THE TRISKELION... PLEASE HOLD.

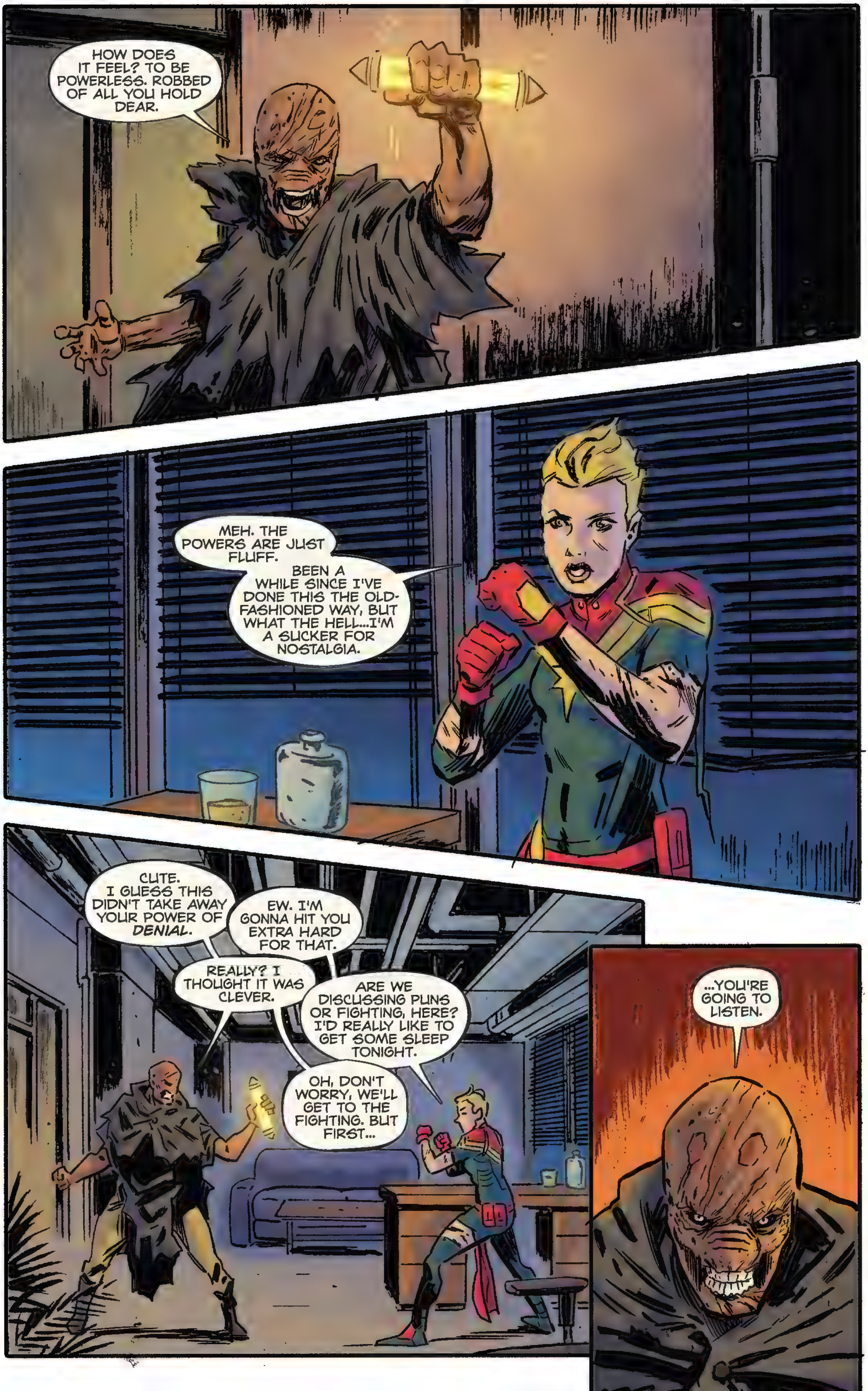

CLIK
FRONT DESK.
HELLO! THIS IS ROCKET! I NEED TO SPEAK TO CAROL DANVERS! IT'S URGENT--
RIGHT. CUZ *THAT'S* HOW THIS WORKS. LIKE WE JUST PUBLICLY LIST A NUMBER SO PEOPLE CAN CALL IN AND TALK TO CAPTAIN MARVEL. LIKE SHE'S NOT BUSY OR ANYTHING. OH, YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY TO CAPTAIN MARVEL? WELL, GOOD HEAVENS, LET'S PUT YOU RIGHT THROUGH, SIR. NO, NO VETTING NEEDED, WOULD YOU ALSO LIKE TO SPEAK TO THE PRESIDENT? I CAN *CERTAINLY* CONNECT YOU TO WHOEVER YOU NEED, BECAUSE I HOLD THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM. OH WAIT, *MY MISTAKE*, I THOUGHT I WAS SOMEONE ELSE. SOMEONE IMPORTANT. BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR BOTH OF US, I'M *TERRY FRIFFTON*, A 37-YEAR-OLD FAILED FASHION DESIGNER WHO'S BARELY MAKING HIS RENT WORKING AS A RECEPTIONIST.
NOW, IF YOU'D LIKE TO SCHEDULE A TOUR OF THE BORING PARTS OF THIS BUILDING THEY LET THE PUBLIC SEE, I CAN HELP YOU THERE. I'VE ALSO GOT THE EAR OF THE GIFT STORE CLERK IF YOU WANTED TO BUY A NOVELTY PLASTIC IRON MAN MASK.
BUT IF YOU NEED ANYTHING OTHER THAN THAT, YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK, BECAUSE, IN THE WORDS OF MY FATHER, I'M "A USELESS, FAT IDIOT THAT SMELLS LIKE VEGETABLE FARTS."
I'M SORRY I HAVE A GLANDULAR PROBLEM, *DAD*--
HOW'D IT GO?

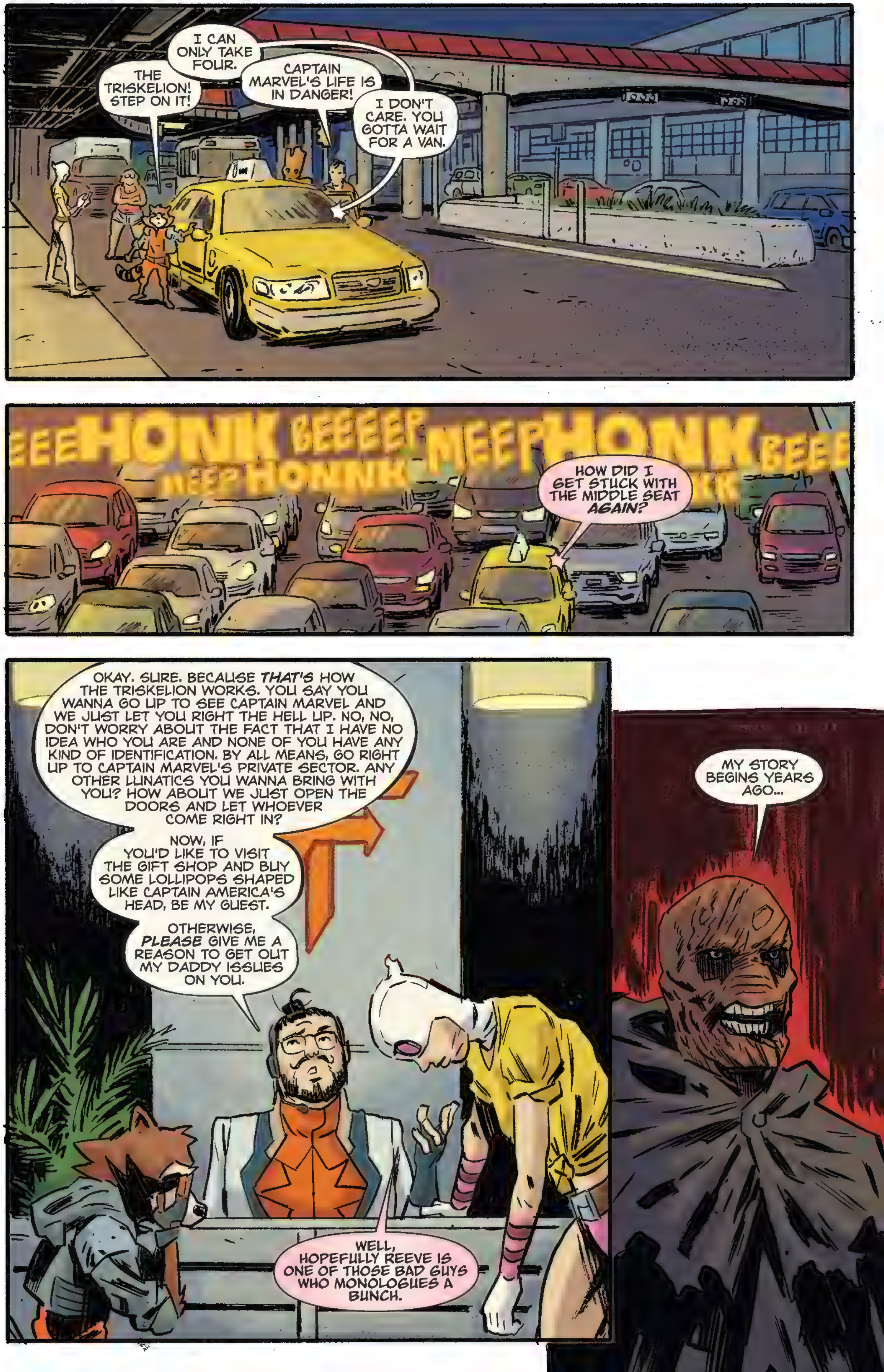

ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY! QUICK AS YOU CAN!
GWEN! LET'S GO!
I'M NOT GOING.
COME ON! THAT LUNATIC'S GONNA KILL CAPTAIN MARVEL!
NO, HE'S NOT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HE'S NOT?!
BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT GONNA KILL OFF CAPTAIN MARVEL IN A COMIC BOOK STARRING SQUIRREL AND THE TALKING TREE!
WHAT?
WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT?
ALL RIGHT, LOOK. THERE'S LITERALLY *A WAR BETWEEN SUPER HEROES* GOING ON RIGHT NOW. AND WE'RE IN *GEORGIA* DOING STUFF THAT'S *COMPLETELY UNRELATED* TO ALL OF THAT. SO WHO DO YOU THINK'S WRITING THIS? IT'S PROBABLY SOME NOBODY WRITER WHO'S JUST STARTING OUT.
AND DO YOU HONESTLY THINK THEY'RE GONNA LET SOME SAD FREELANCER KILL OFF *CAPTAIN MARVEL?* ONE OF THEIR BIGGEST CHARACTERS?! YEAH, RIGHT.
IF ANYBODY'S GETTING KILLED OFF, IT'S GONNA BE ONE OF US. SORRY, BUT NO THANKS. I'M STAYING PUT.
I AM GROOT?

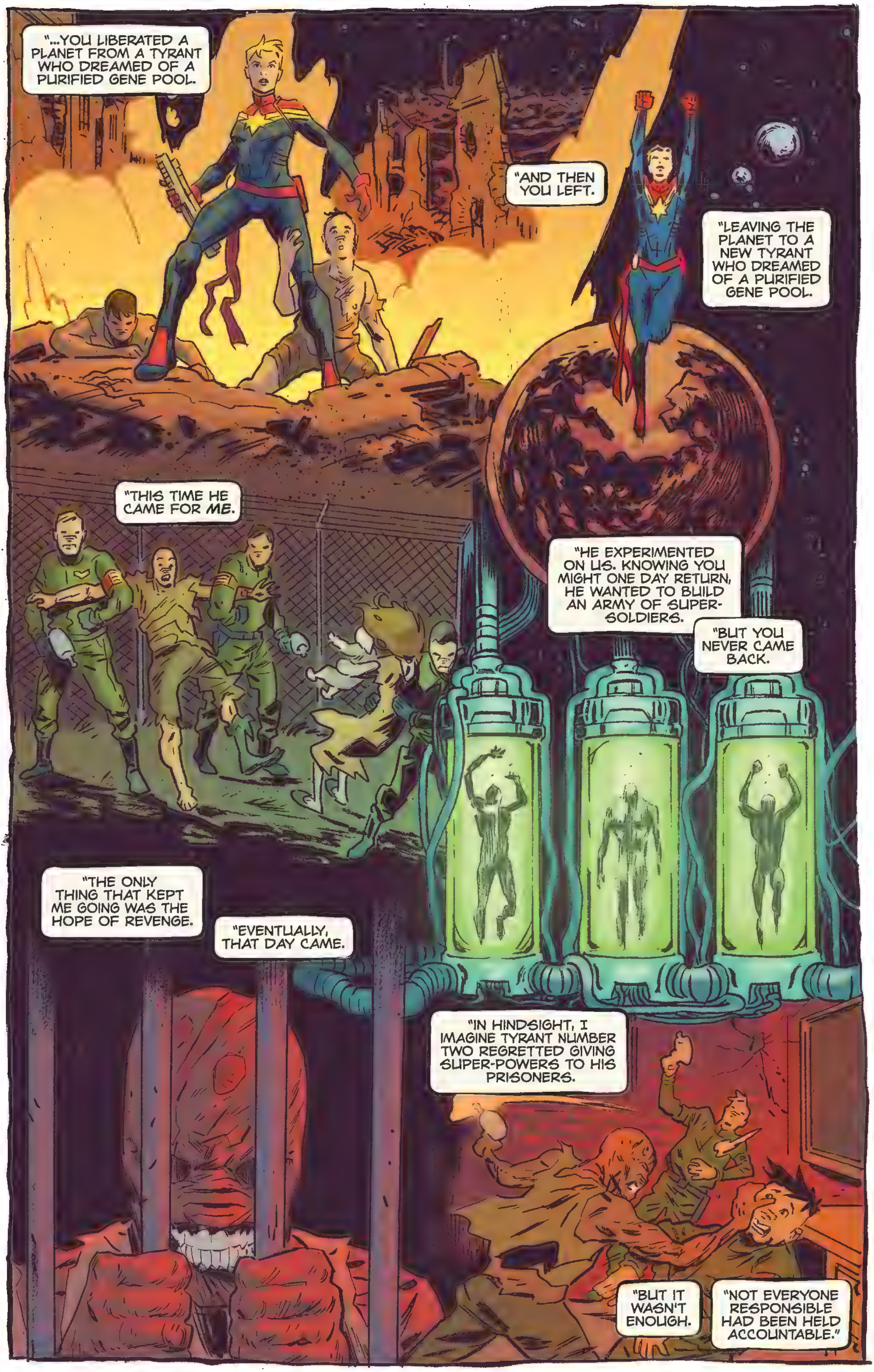

SORRY TO DESTROY THE DRAMATIC TENSION THERE, FOLKS, BUT YOU'VE GOTTA BE THINKING THE SAME THING.
THERE'S NO WAY THIS LOW-LEVEL WRITER HAS ANY AUTHORITY TO KILL A MAJOR SUPER HERO.
HOLY--
ARE YOU *KITTY PRYDE?!*
UH... YEAH.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'M... ACTUALLY, I'M NOT TOTALLY SURE WHY I'M HERE.
OH @$#! IS %&@$ *BENDIS* WRITING THIS?
WHAT'S A BENDIS?
BENDIS. BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS.
HE'S LIKE A BIG-DEAL COMIC BOOK WRITER.
HE USES TONS OF QUIPPY WORD BUBBLES AND PANELS AND I THINK HE HAS, LIKE, AN UNHEALTHY OBSESSION WITH YOU.
AND HE WOULD TOTALLY HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO KILL OFF CAPTAIN MARVEL!
SO, ARE YOU, LIKE, A CRAZY PERSON???

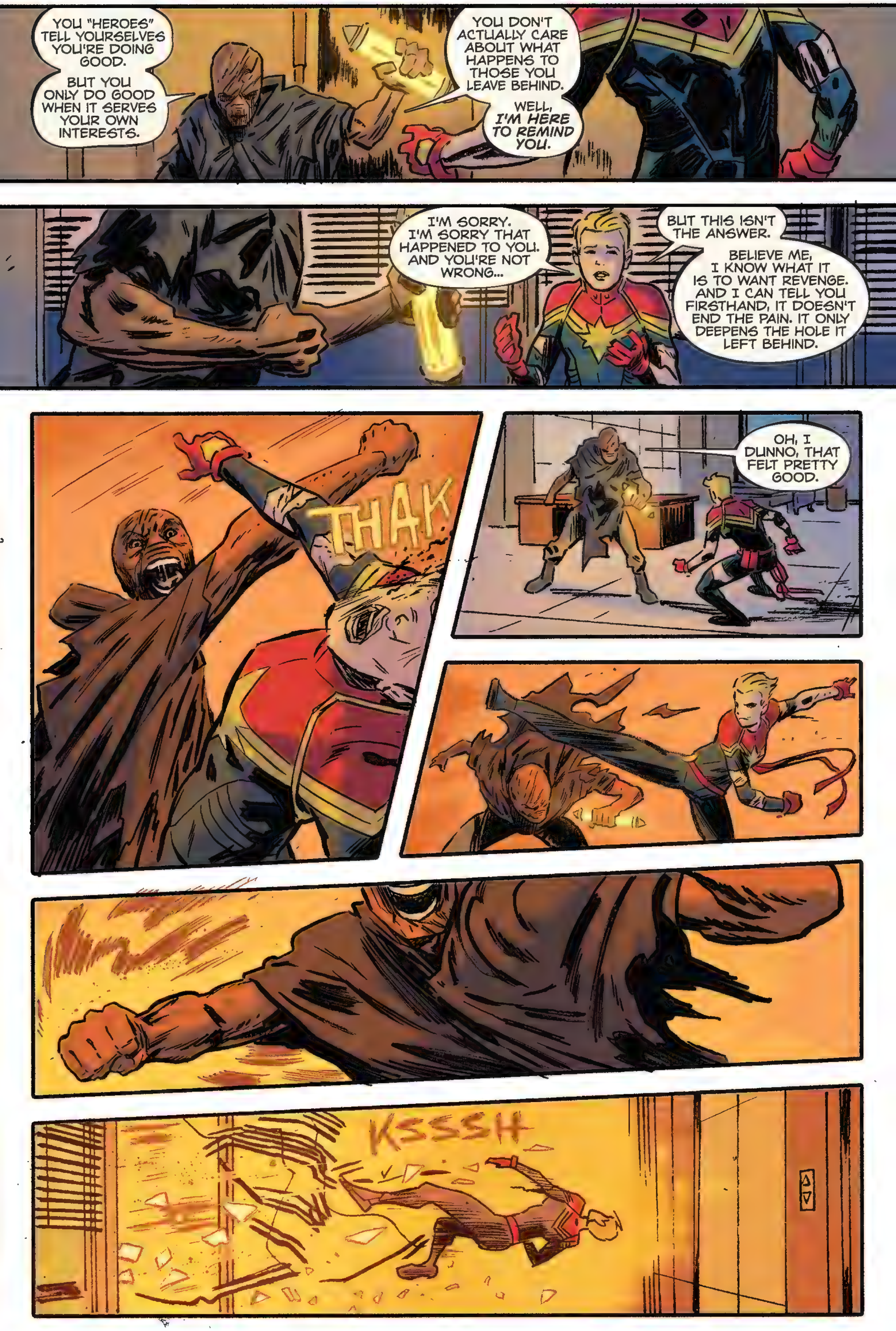

I NEED A TICKET FOR WHATEVER FLIGHT THE TREE AND SQUIRREL ARE ON! AND HURRY UP!
BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS IS ABOUT TO KILL OFF CAPTAIN MARVEL!!
OKAY, I'VE GOT ONE TICKET LEFT, BUT IT'S A MIDDLE SEAT.
OH... YUCK.
HMM...IS THIS REALLY WORTH IT? I DON'T KNOW HER PERSONALLY...
I JUST DON'T SEE WHY YOU SHOULD GET THE AISLE, YOU HAVE THE SHORTEST LEGS OF ANY OF US!
I ♥ GA
THE TRISKELION.
GOOD WORK TODAY, GUYS. EVERYBODY, GET SOME REST.

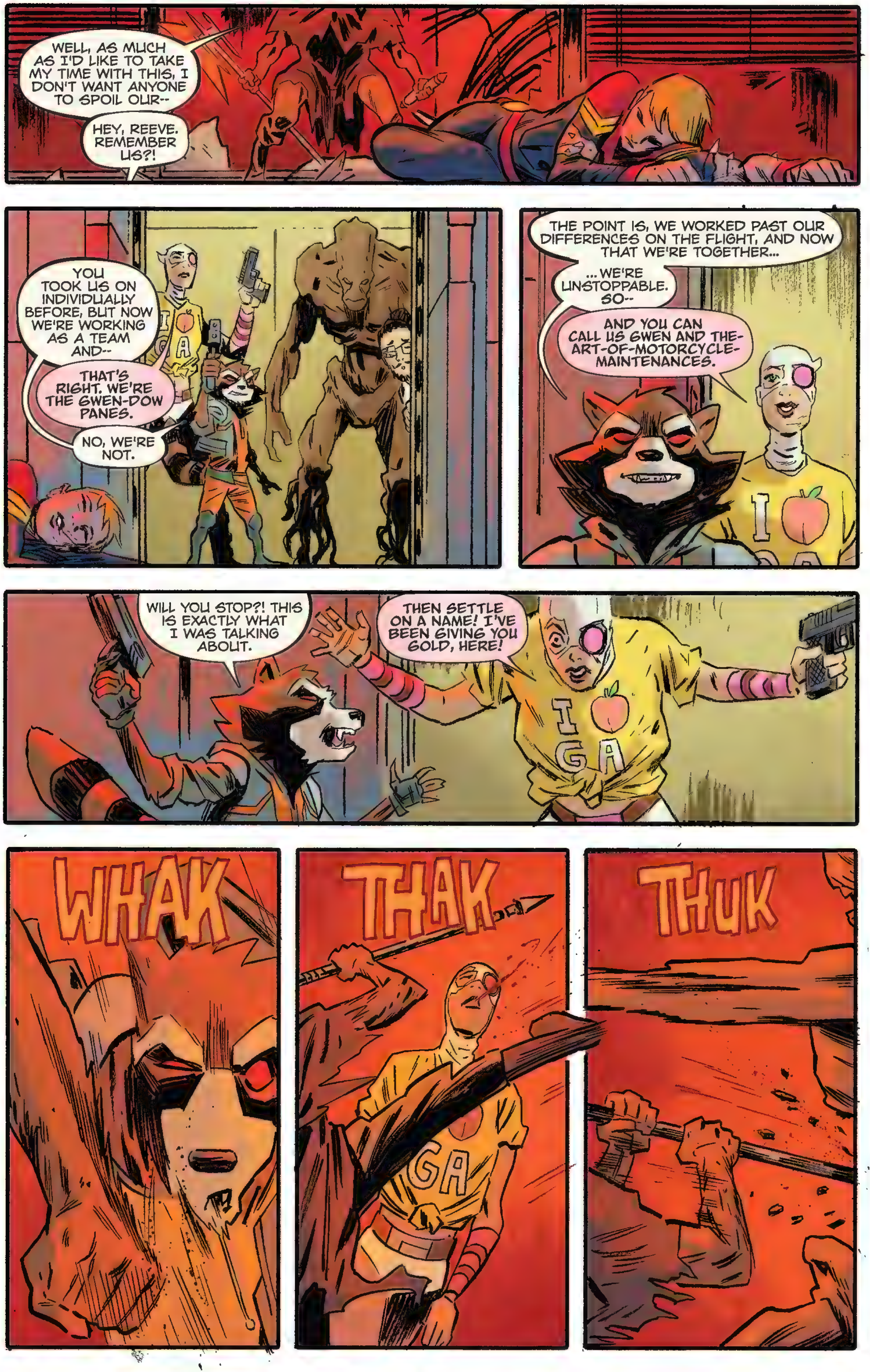

PUCK, YOU GOOD? NEED TO SHOWER OR SOMETHING BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF?
THAT'S OKAY, CAPTAIN, I'M GOOD.
PUCK. TAKE THE HINT. *SHOWER.*
STUPID NON-ALCOHOLIC VODKA. WHAT'S EVEN THE POINT?
CLIK
HELLO, CAPTAIN.
AND WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?
THE END TO YOUR STORY.
FELLA. PEOPLE BEEN TRYING TO END MY STORY ALL DAY.
I REALLY JUST WANNA GO TO BED...
...BUT I GUESS I CAN SQUEEZE YOU IN!
HUH?

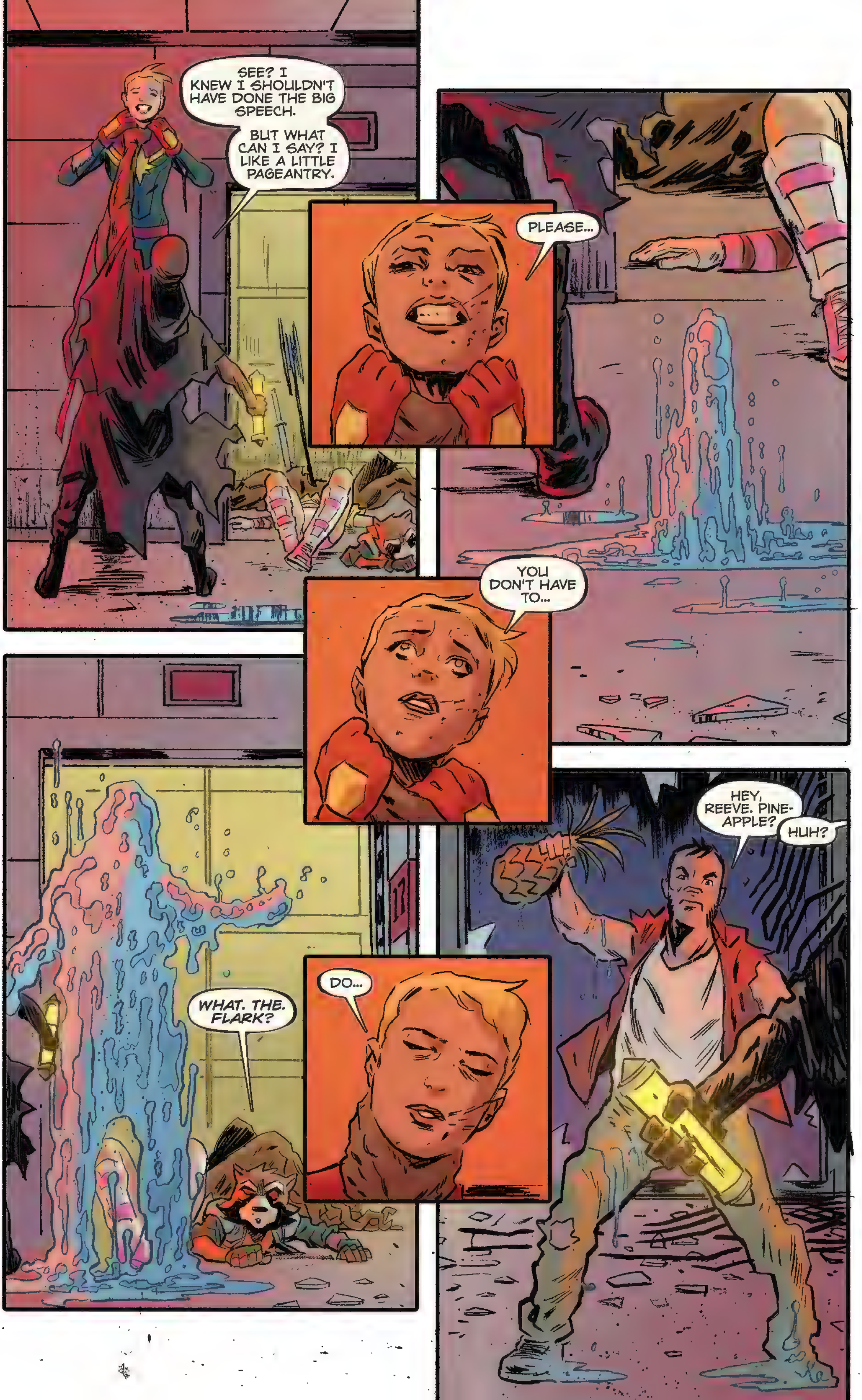

HOW DOES IT FEEL? TO BE POWERLESS. ROBBED OF ALL YOU HOLD DEAR.
MEH. THE POWERS ARE JUST FLUFF.
BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE DONE THIS THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY, BUT WHAT THE HELL...I'M A SUCKER FOR NOSTALGIA.
CUTE. I GUESS THIS DIDN'T TAKE AWAY YOUR POWER OF *DENIAL*.
EW. I'M GONNA HIT YOU EXTRA HARD FOR THAT.
REALLY? I THOUGHT IT WAS CLEVER.
ARE WE DISCUSSING PUNS OR FIGHTING, HERE? I'D REALLY LIKE TO GET SOME SLEEP TONIGHT.
OH, DON'T WORRY, WE'LL GET TO THE FIGHTING. BUT FIRST...
...YOU'RE GOING TO LISTEN.

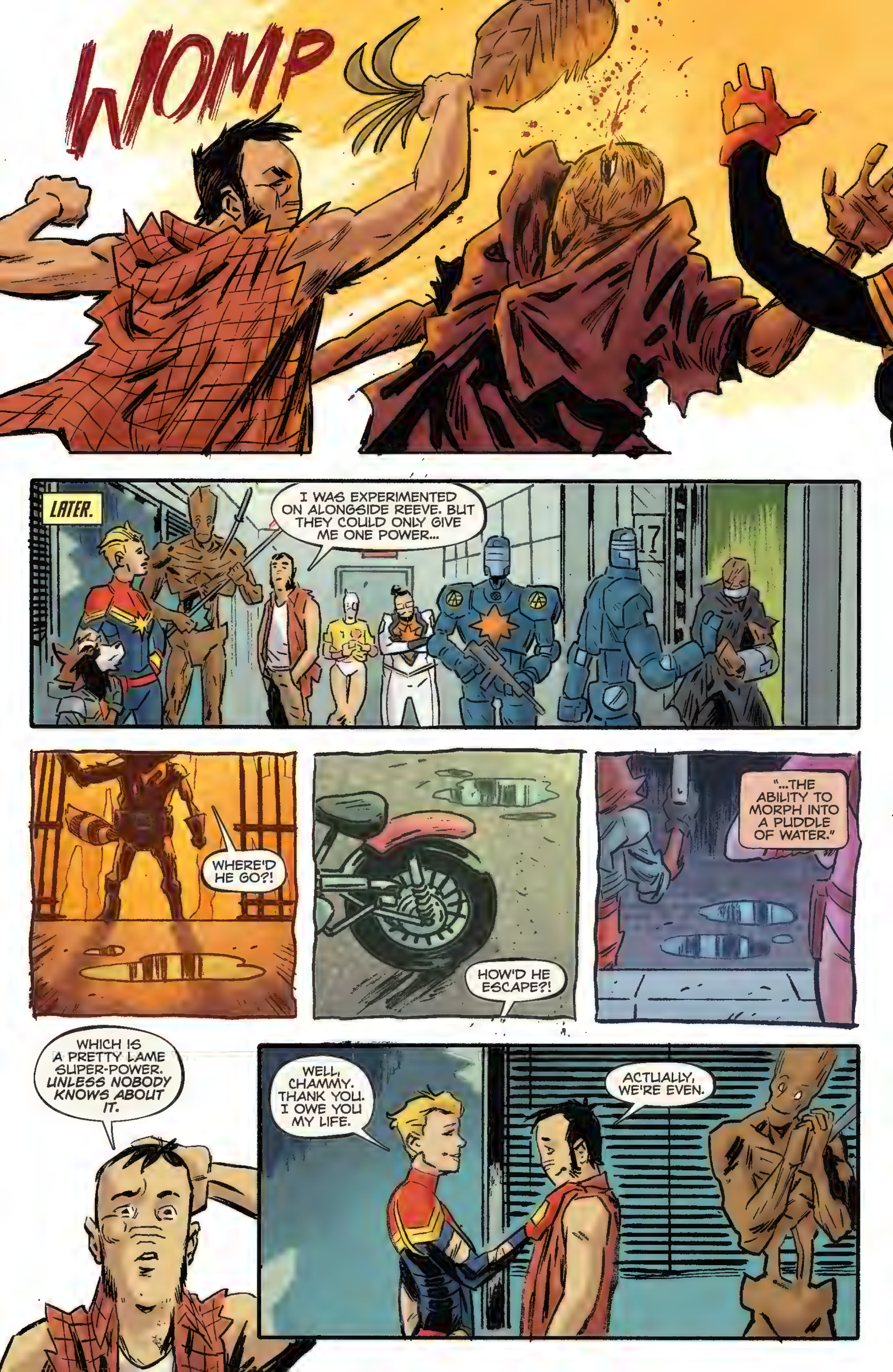

THE TRISKELION! STEP ON IT!
I CAN ONLY TAKE FOUR.
CAPTAIN MARVEL'S LIFE IS IN DANGER!
I DON'T CARE. YOU GOTTA WAIT FOR A VAN.
EEEHONK BEEEEP MEEP HONNK MEEP HONK BEEE
HOW DID I GET STUCK WITH THE MIDDLE SEAT *AGAIN?*
OKAY. SURE. BECAUSE *THAT'S* HOW THE TRISKELION WORKS. YOU SAY YOU WANNA GO UP TO SEE CAPTAIN MARVEL AND WE JUST LET YOU RIGHT THE HELL UP. NO, NO, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE FACT THAT I HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU ARE AND NONE OF YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF IDENTIFICATION. BY ALL MEANS, GO RIGHT UP TO CAPTAIN MARVEL'S PRIVATE SECTOR. ANY OTHER LUNATICS YOU WANNA BRING WITH YOU? HOW ABOUT WE JUST OPEN THE DOORS AND LET WHOEVER COME RIGHT IN?
NOW, IF YOU'D LIKE TO VISIT THE GIFT SHOP AND BUY SOME LOLLIPOPS SHAPED LIKE CAPTAIN AMERICA'S HEAD, BE MY GUEST.
OTHERWISE, *PLEASE* GIVE ME A REASON TO GET OUT MY DADDY ISSUES ON YOU.
WELL, HOPEFULLY REEVE IS ONE OF THOSE BAD GUYS WHO MONOLOGUES A BUNCH.
MY STORY BEGINS YEARS AGO...

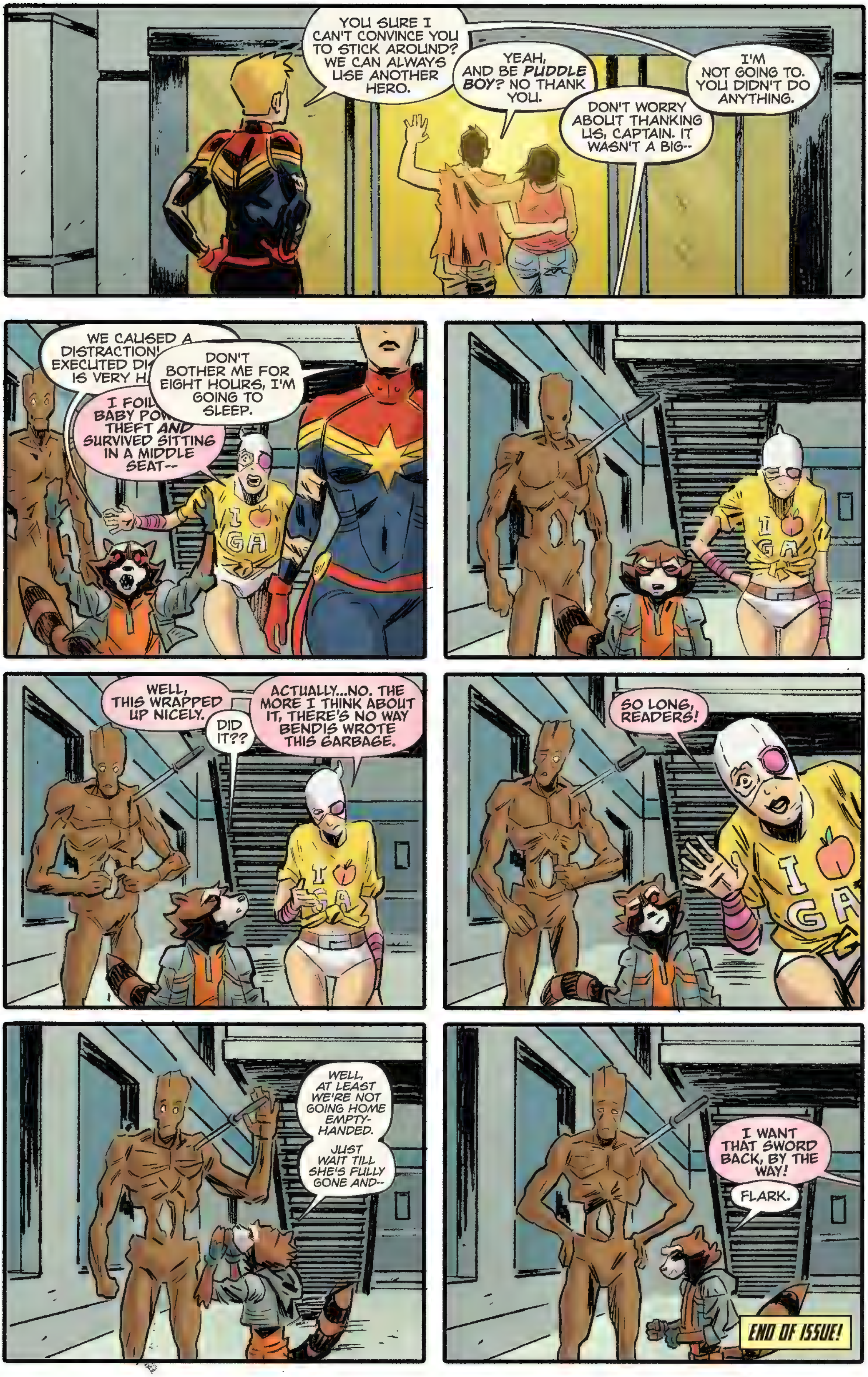

"...YOU LIBERATED A PLANET FROM A TYRANT WHO DREAMED OF A PURIFIED GENE POOL.
"AND THEN YOU LEFT.
"LEAVING THE PLANET TO A NEW TYRANT WHO DREAMED OF A PURIFIED GENE POOL.
"THIS TIME HE CAME FOR *ME*.
"HE EXPERIMENTED ON US. KNOWING YOU MIGHT ONE DAY RETURN, HE WANTED TO BUILD AN ARMY OF SUPER-SOLDIERS.
"BUT YOU NEVER CAME BACK.
"THE ONLY THING THAT KEPT ME GOING WAS THE HOPE OF REVENGE.
"EVENTUALLY, THAT DAY CAME.
"IN HINDSIGHT, I IMAGINE TYRANT NUMBER TWO REGRETTED GIVING SUPER-POWERS TO HIS PRISONERS.
"BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH.
"NOT EVERYONE RESPONSIBLE HAD BEEN HELD ACCOUNTABLE."


YOU "HEROES" TELL YOURSELVES YOU'RE DOING GOOD.
BUT YOU ONLY DO GOOD WHEN IT SERVES YOUR OWN INTERESTS.
YOU DON'T ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE YOU LEAVE BEHIND.
WELL, *I'M HERE TO REMIND YOU.*
I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY THAT HAPPENED TO YOU. AND YOU'RE NOT WRONG...
BUT THIS ISN'T THE ANSWER.
BELIEVE ME, I KNOW WHAT IT IS TO WANT REVENGE. AND I CAN TELL YOU FIRSTHAND, IT DOESN'T END THE PAIN. IT ONLY DEEPENS THE HOLE IT LEFT BEHIND.
THAK
OH, I DUNNO, THAT FELT PRETTY GOOD.
KSSSH


WELL, AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO TAKE MY TIME WITH THIS, I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO SPOIL OUR--
HEY, REEVE. REMEMBER US?!
YOU TOOK US ON INDIVIDUALLY BEFORE, BUT NOW WE'RE WORKING AS A TEAM AND--
THAT'S RIGHT. WE'RE THE GWEN-DOW PANES.
NO, WE'RE NOT.
THE POINT IS, WE WORKED PAST OUR DIFFERENCES ON THE FLIGHT, AND NOW THAT WE'RE TOGETHER...
...WE'RE UNSTOPPABLE. SO--
AND YOU CAN CALL US GWEN AND THE-ART-OF-MOTORCYCLE-MAINTENANCES.
I ♥ GA
WILL YOU STOP?! THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT.
THEN SETTLE ON A NAME! I'VE BEEN GIVING YOU GOLD, HERE!
WHAK
THAK
THUK

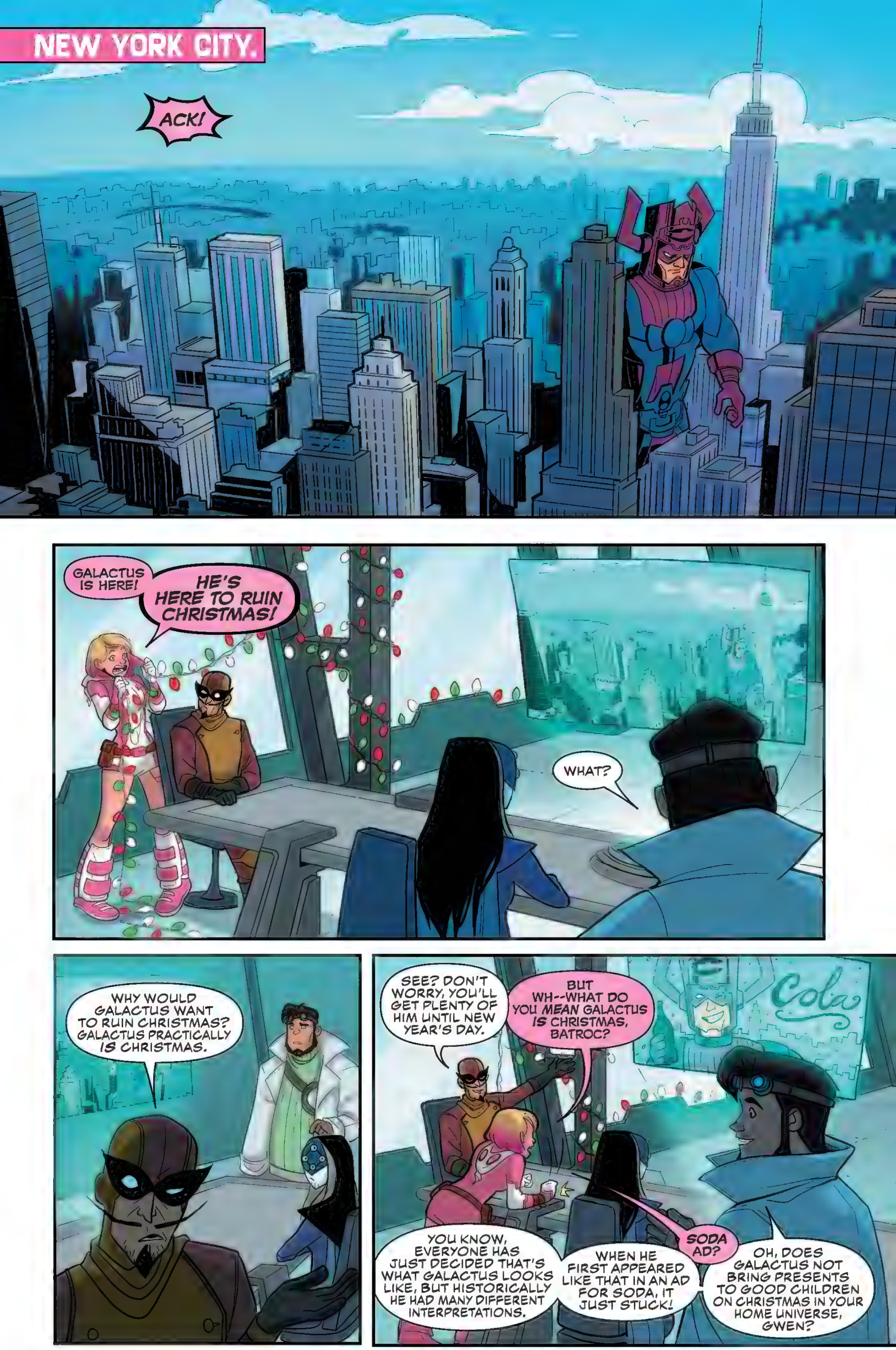

SEE? I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THE BIG SPEECH.
BUT WHAT CAN I SAY? I LIKE A LITTLE PAGEANTRY.
PLEASE...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO...
WHAT. THE. FLARK?
DO...
HEY, REEVE. PINEAPPLE?
HUH?

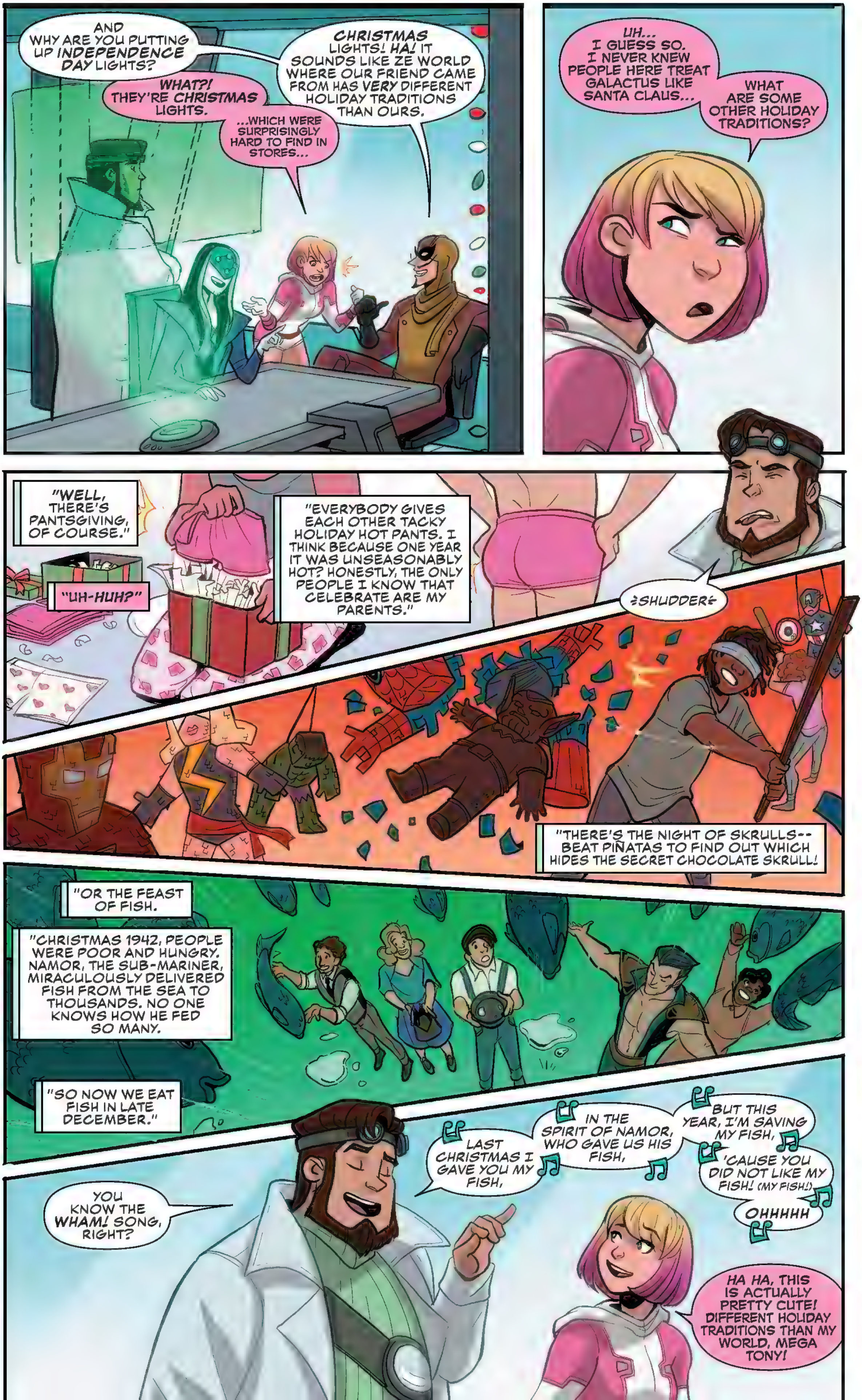

WOMP
LATER.
I WAS EXPERIMENTED ON ALONGSIDE REEVE. BUT THEY COULD ONLY GIVE ME ONE POWER...
17
WHERE'D HE GO?!
HOW'D HE ESCAPE?!
"...THE ABILITY TO MORPH INTO A PUDDLE OF WATER."
WHICH IS A PRETTY LAME SUPER-POWER. UNLESS NOBODY KNOWS ABOUT IT.
WELL, CHAMMY. THANK YOU. I OWE YOU MY LIFE.
ACTUALLY, WE'RE EVEN.

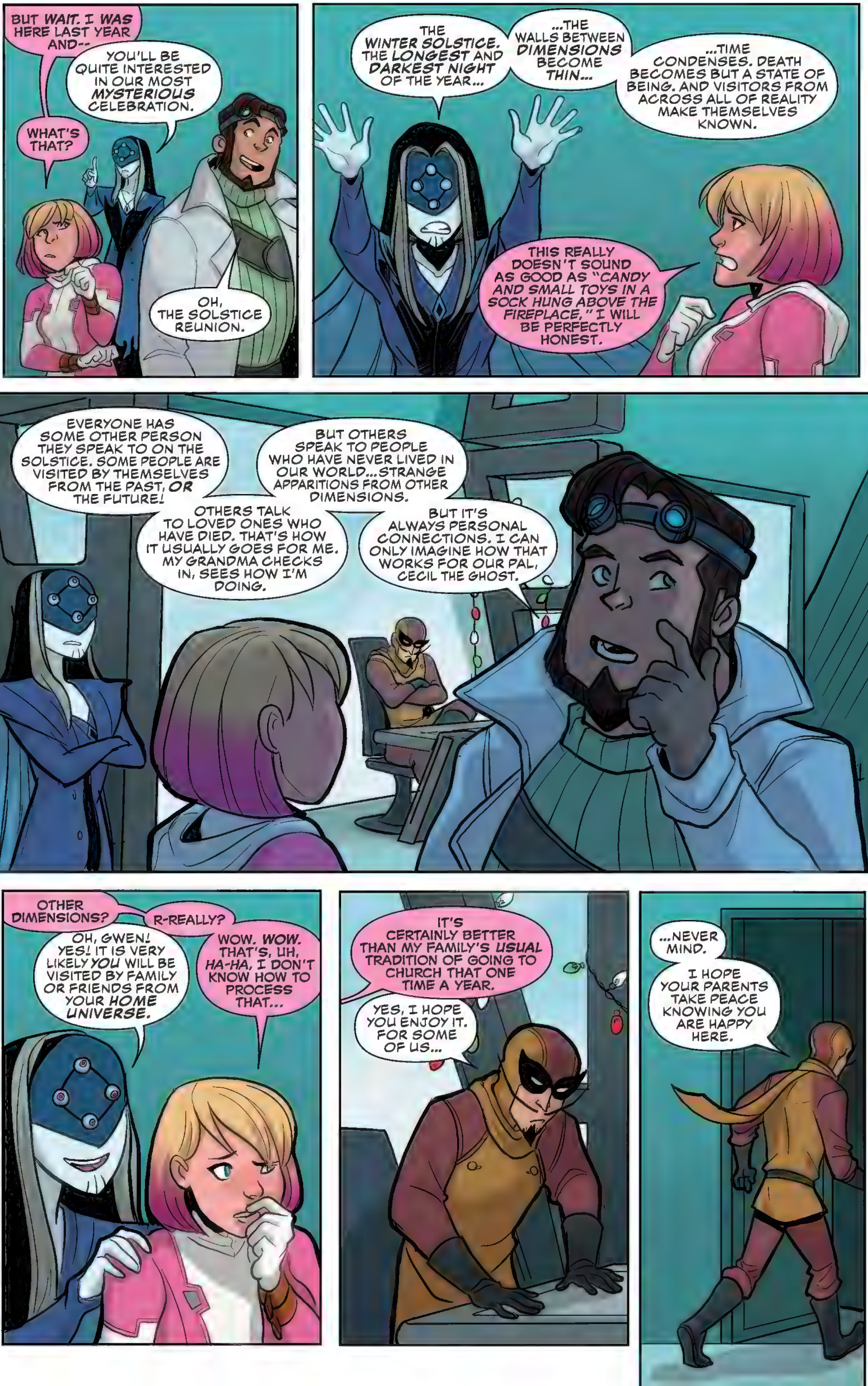

YOU SURE I CAN'T CONVINCE YOU TO STICK AROUND? WE CAN ALWAYS USE ANOTHER HERO.
YEAH, AND BE *PUDDLE BOY*? NO THANK YOU.
I'M NOT GOING TO. YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THANKING US, CAPTAIN. IT WASN'T A BIG--
WE CAUSED A DISTRACTION! EXECUTED DI IS VERY H
DON'T BOTHER ME FOR EIGHT HOURS, I'M GOING TO SLEEP.
I FOIL BABY POW THEFT *AND* SURVIVED SITTING IN A MIDDLE SEAT--
WELL, THIS WRAPPED UP NICELY.
DID IT??
ACTUALLY...NO. THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT, THERE'S NO WAY BENDIS WROTE THIS GARBAGE.
SO LONG, READERS!
WELL, AT LEAST WE'RE NOT GOING HOME EMPTY-HANDED.
JUST WAIT TILL SHE'S FULLY GONE AND--
I WANT THAT SWORD BACK, BY THE WAY!
FLARK.
END OF ISSUE!

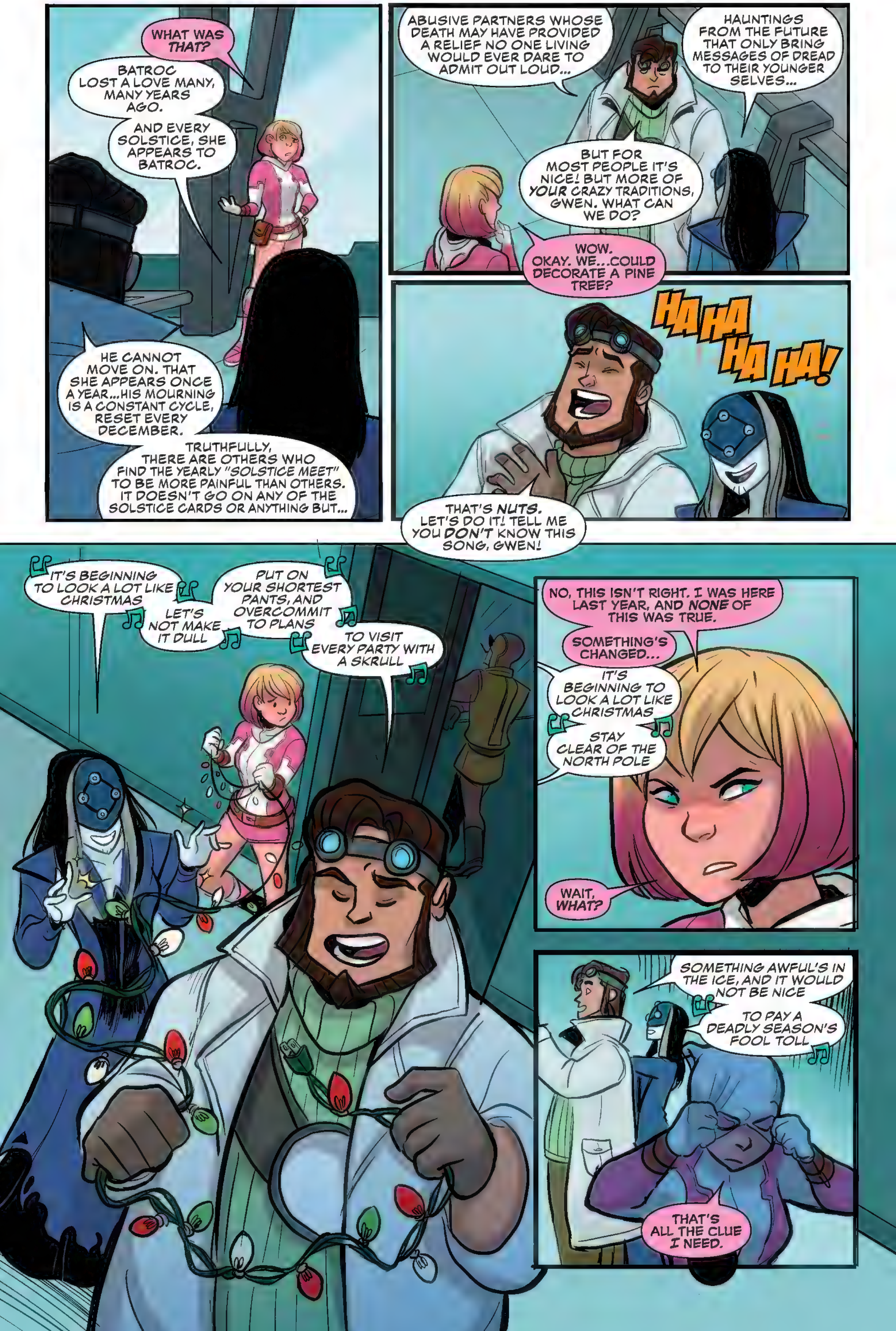
GWENPOOL HOLIDAY SPECIAL: MERRY MIX-UP

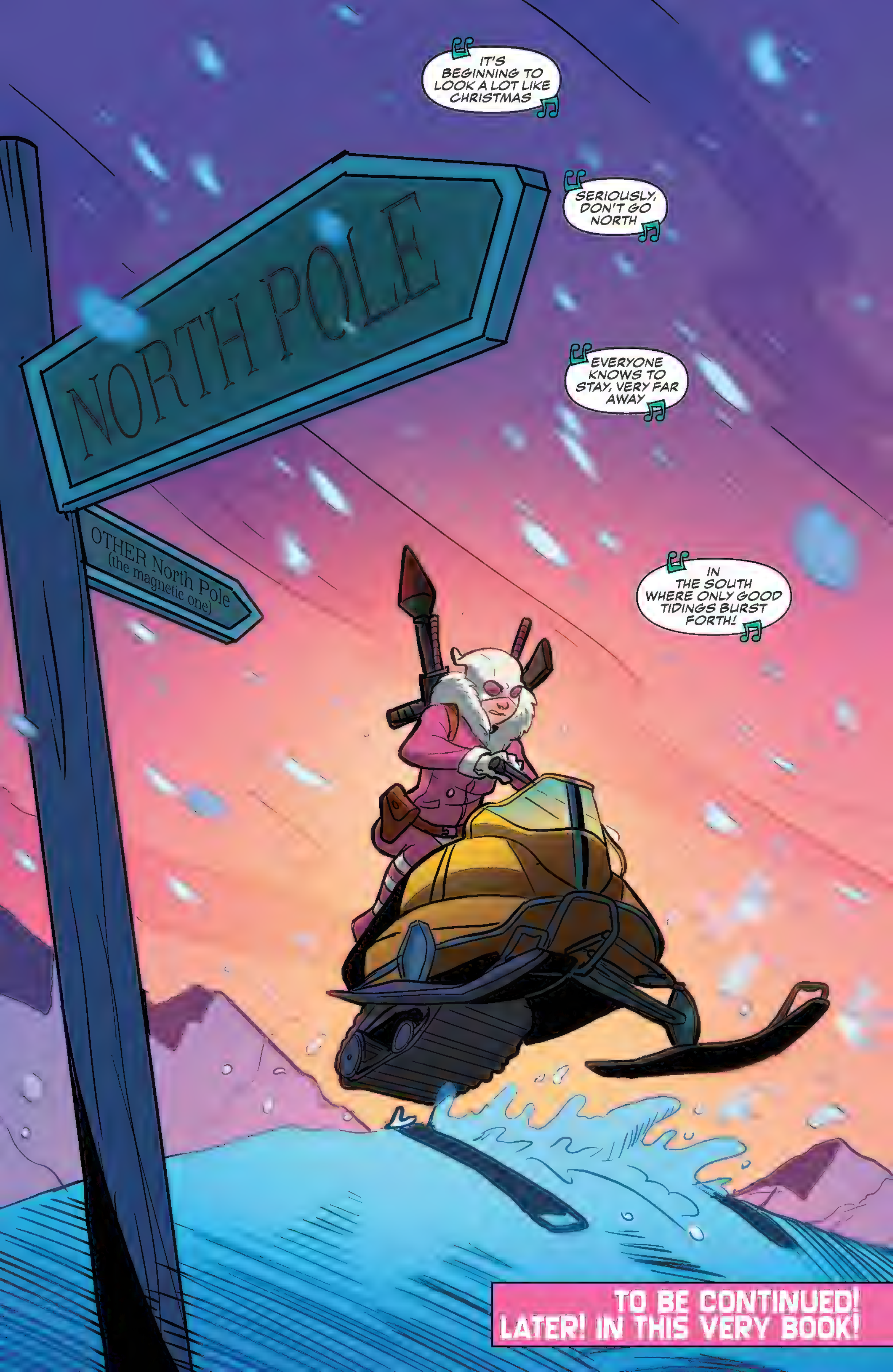
GWENPOOL'S UNBELIEVABLE CHRISTMAS (A.K.A. THE GWENPOOL HOLIDAY SPECIAL FOR REAL THIS TIME) / I SAW SPIDEY KISSING GALACTUS / THE SHADOW OF [illegible] / THE WAY OF [illegible] / MERRY [illegible] HOLIDAYS


NEW YORK CITY.
ACK!
GALACTUS IS HERE!
HE'S HERE TO RUIN CHRISTMAS!
WHAT?
WHY WOULD GALACTUS WANT TO RUIN CHRISTMAS? GALACTUS PRACTICALLY *IS* CHRISTMAS.
SEE? DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL GET PLENTY OF HIM UNTIL NEW YEAR'S DAY.
BUT WH--WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* GALACTUS *IS* CHRISTMAS, BATROC?
Cola
YOU KNOW, EVERYONE HAS JUST DECIDED THAT'S WHAT GALACTUS LOOKS LIKE, BUT HISTORICALLY HE HAD MANY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS.
WHEN HE FIRST APPEARED LIKE THAT IN AN AD FOR SODA, IT JUST STUCK!
SODA AD?
OH, DOES GALACTUS NOT BRING PRESENTS TO GOOD CHILDREN ON CHRISTMAS IN YOUR HOME UNIVERSE, GWEN?

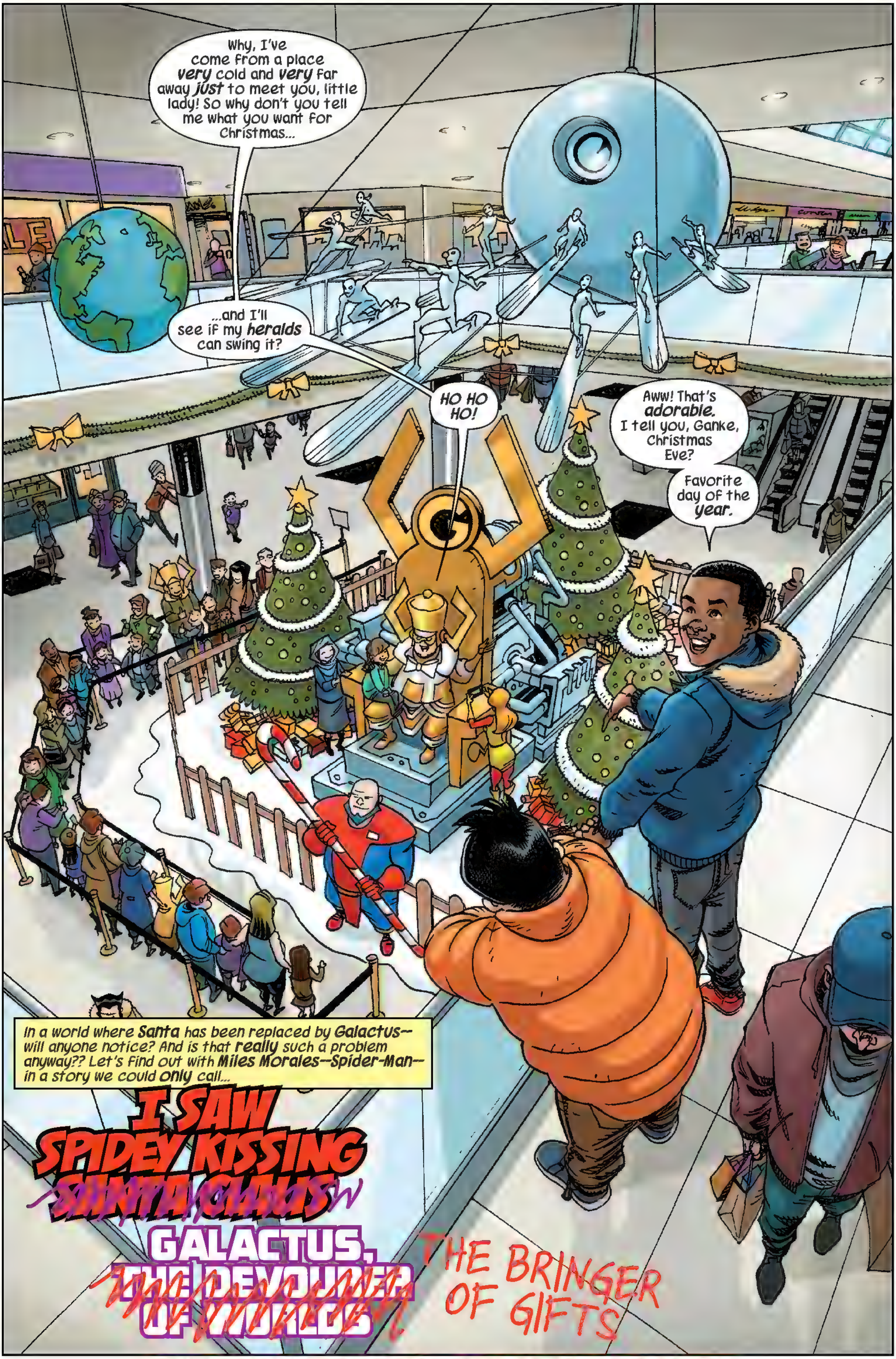

AND WHY ARE YOU PUTTING UP *INDEPENDENCE DAY* LIGHTS?
WHAT?! THEY'RE *CHRISTMAS* LIGHTS.
...WHICH WERE SURPRISINGLY HARD TO FIND IN STORES...
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS! *HA!* IT SOUNDS LIKE ZE WORLD WHERE OUR FRIEND CAME FROM HAS *VERY* DIFFERENT HOLIDAY TRADITIONS THAN OURS.
UH... I GUESS SO. I NEVER KNEW PEOPLE HERE TREAT GALACTUS LIKE SANTA CLAUS...
WHAT ARE SOME OTHER HOLIDAY TRADITIONS?
"WELL, THERE'S PANTSGIVING, OF COURSE."
"UH-*HUH*?"
"EVERYBODY GIVES EACH OTHER TACKY HOLIDAY HOT PANTS. I THINK BECAUSE ONE YEAR IT WAS UNSEASONABLY HOT? HONESTLY, THE ONLY PEOPLE I KNOW THAT CELEBRATE ARE MY PARENTS."
≈SHUDDER≈
"THERE'S THE NIGHT OF SKRULLS-- BEAT PIÑATAS TO FIND OUT WHICH HIDES THE SECRET CHOCOLATE SKRULL!
"OR THE FEAST OF FISH.
"CHRISTMAS 1942, PEOPLE WERE POOR AND HUNGRY. NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER, MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERED FISH FROM THE SEA TO THOUSANDS. NO ONE KNOWS HOW HE FED SO MANY.
"SO NOW WE EAT FISH IN LATE DECEMBER."
YOU KNOW THE *WHAM!* SONG, RIGHT?
♫ LAST CHRISTMAS I GAVE YOU MY FISH, ♫
♫ IN THE SPIRIT OF NAMOR, WHO GAVE US HIS FISH, ♫
♫ BUT THIS YEAR, I'M SAVING MY FISH, ♫
♫ 'CAUSE YOU DID NOT LIKE MY FISH! (MY FISH!) ♫
♫ OHHHHH ♫
HA HA, THIS IS ACTUALLY PRETTY CUTE! DIFFERENT HOLIDAY TRADITIONS THAN MY WORLD, MEGA TONY!


BUT *WAIT.* I *WAS* HERE LAST YEAR AND--
YOU'LL BE QUITE INTERESTED IN OUR MOST *MYSTERIOUS* CELEBRATION.
WHAT'S THAT?
OH, THE SOLSTICE REUNION.
THE *WINTER SOLSTICE.* THE *LONGEST* AND *DARKEST NIGHT* OF THE YEAR...
...THE WALLS BETWEEN *DIMENSIONS* BECOME *THIN...*
...TIME CONDENSES. DEATH BECOMES BUT A STATE OF BEING. AND VISITORS FROM ACROSS ALL OF REALITY MAKE THEMSELVES KNOWN.
THIS REALLY DOESN'T SOUND AS GOOD AS *"CANDY AND SMALL TOYS IN A SOCK HUNG ABOVE THE FIREPLACE,"* I WILL BE PERFECTLY HONEST.
EVERYONE HAS SOME OTHER PERSON THEY SPEAK TO ON THE SOLSTICE. SOME PEOPLE ARE VISITED BY THEMSELVES FROM THE PAST, *OR* THE FUTURE!
OTHERS TALK TO LOVED ONES WHO HAVE DIED. THAT'S HOW IT USUALLY GOES FOR ME. MY GRANDMA CHECKS IN, SEES HOW I'M DOING.
BUT OTHERS SPEAK TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER LIVED IN OUR WORLD...STRANGE APPARITIONS FROM OTHER DIMENSIONS.
BUT IT'S ALWAYS PERSONAL CONNECTIONS. I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW THAT WORKS FOR OUR PAL, CECIL THE GHOST.
OTHER DIMENSIONS?
R-REALLY?
OH, GWEN! YES! IT IS VERY LIKELY *YOU* WILL BE VISITED BY FAMILY OR FRIENDS FROM YOUR *HOME UNIVERSE.*
WOW. *WOW.* THAT'S, UH, *HA-HA,* I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROCESS THAT...
IT'S CERTAINLY BETTER THAN MY FAMILY'S *USUAL* TRADITION OF GOING TO CHURCH THAT ONE TIME A YEAR.
YES, I HOPE YOU ENJOY IT. FOR SOME OF US...
...NEVER MIND.
I HOPE YOUR PARENTS TAKE PEACE KNOWING YOU ARE HAPPY HERE.


WHAT WAS *THAT?*
BATROC LOST A LOVE MANY, MANY YEARS AGO.
AND EVERY SOLSTICE, SHE APPEARS TO BATROC.
HE CANNOT MOVE ON. THAT SHE APPEARS ONCE A YEAR...HIS MOURNING IS A CONSTANT CYCLE, RESET EVERY DECEMBER.
TRUTHFULLY, THERE ARE OTHERS WHO FIND THE YEARLY "SOLSTICE MEET" TO BE MORE PAINFUL THAN OTHERS. IT DOESN'T GO ON ANY OF THE SOLSTICE CARDS OR ANYTHING BUT...
ABUSIVE PARTNERS WHOSE DEATH MAY HAVE PROVIDED A RELIEF NO ONE LIVING WOULD EVER DARE TO ADMIT OUT LOUD...
HAUNTINGS FROM THE FUTURE THAT ONLY BRING MESSAGES OF DREAD TO THEIR YOUNGER SELVES...
BUT FOR MOST PEOPLE IT'S NICE! BUT MORE OF *YOUR* CRAZY TRADITIONS, GWEN. WHAT CAN WE DO?
WOW. OKAY. WE...COULD DECORATE A PINE TREE?
HA HA HA HA!
THAT'S *NUTS.* LET'S DO IT! TELL ME YOU *DON'T* KNOW THIS SONG, GWEN!
IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS
LET'S NOT MAKE IT DULL
PUT ON YOUR SHORTEST PANTS, AND OVERCOMMIT TO PLANS
TO VISIT EVERY PARTY WITH A SKRULL
NO, THIS ISN'T RIGHT. I WAS HERE LAST YEAR, AND *NONE* OF THIS WAS TRUE.
SOMETHING'S CHANGED...
IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS
STAY CLEAR OF THE NORTH POLE
WAIT, WHAT?
SOMETHING AWFUL'S IN THE ICE, AND IT WOULD NOT BE NICE
TO PAY A DEADLY SEASON'S FOOL TOLL
THAT'S ALL THE CLUE I NEED.



IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS
SERIOUSLY, DON'T GO NORTH
NORTH POLE
EVERYONE KNOWS TO STAY, VERY FAR AWAY
OTHER North Pole (the magnetic one)
IN THE SOUTH WHERE ONLY GOOD TIDINGS BURST FORTH!
TO BE CONTINUED! LATER! IN THIS VERY BOOK!


Why, I've come from a place *very* cold and *very* far away *just* to meet you, little lady! So why don't you tell me what you want for Christmas...
...and I'll see if my *heralds* can swing it?
HO HO HO!
Aww! That's *adorable.* I tell you, Ganke, Christmas Eve?
Favorite day of the *year.*
In a world where **Santa** has been replaced by **Galactus**--will anyone notice? And is that **really** such a problem anyway?? Let's find out with **Miles Morales--Spider-Man**--in a story we could **only** call...
I SAW SPIDEY KISSING
~~SANTA CLAUS~~
GALACTUS,
~~THE DEVOURER OF WORLDS~~
THE BRINGER OF GIFTS

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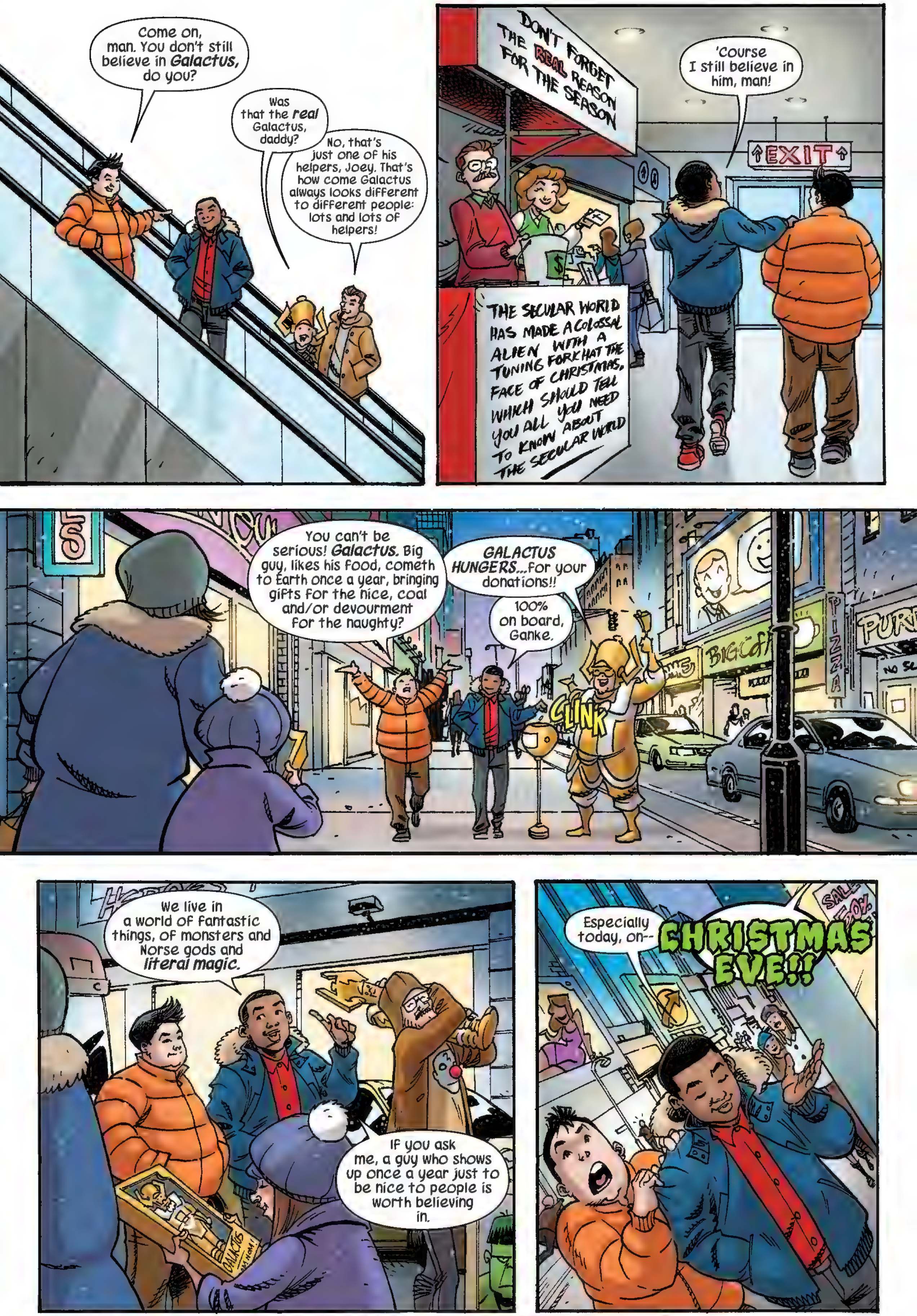
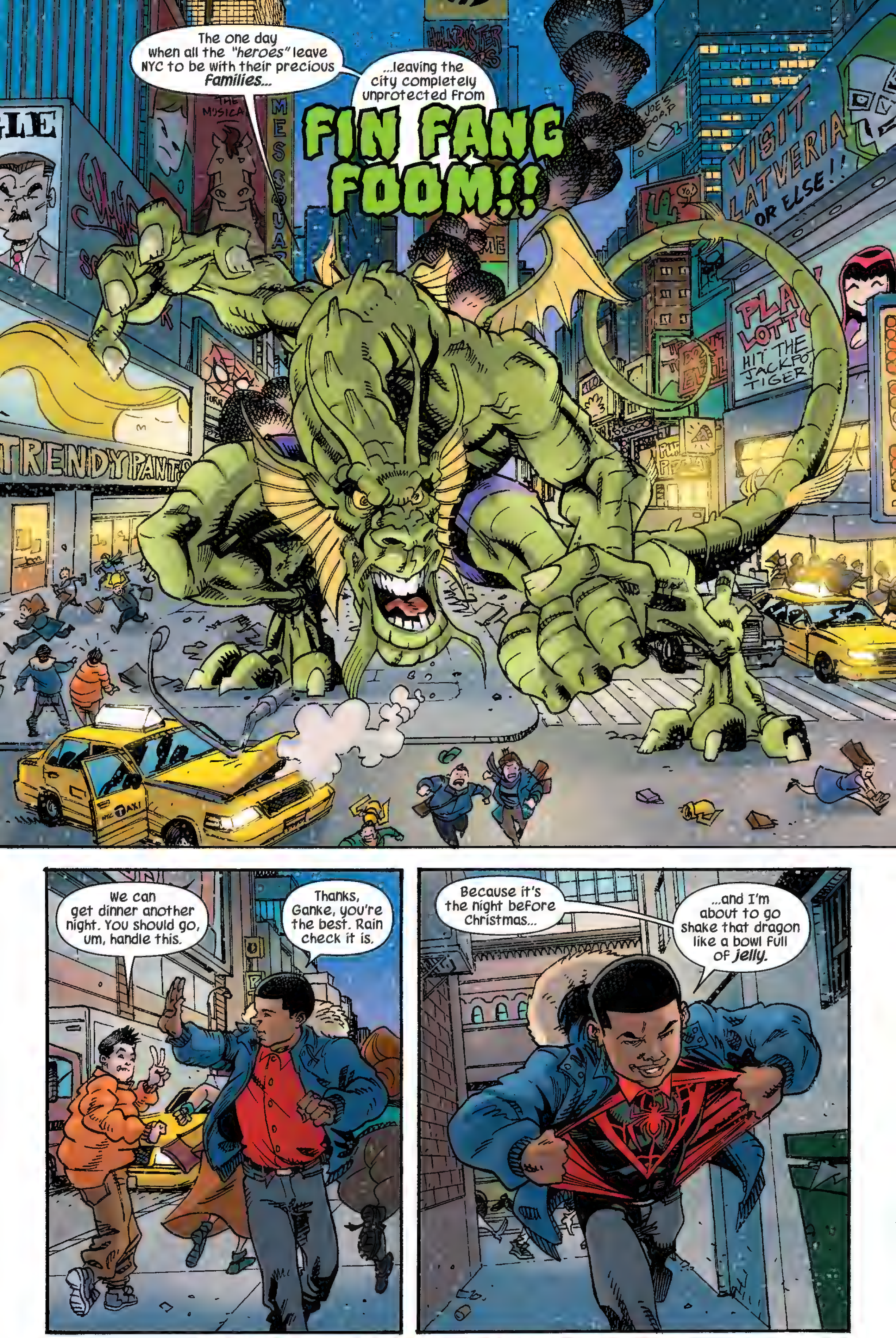
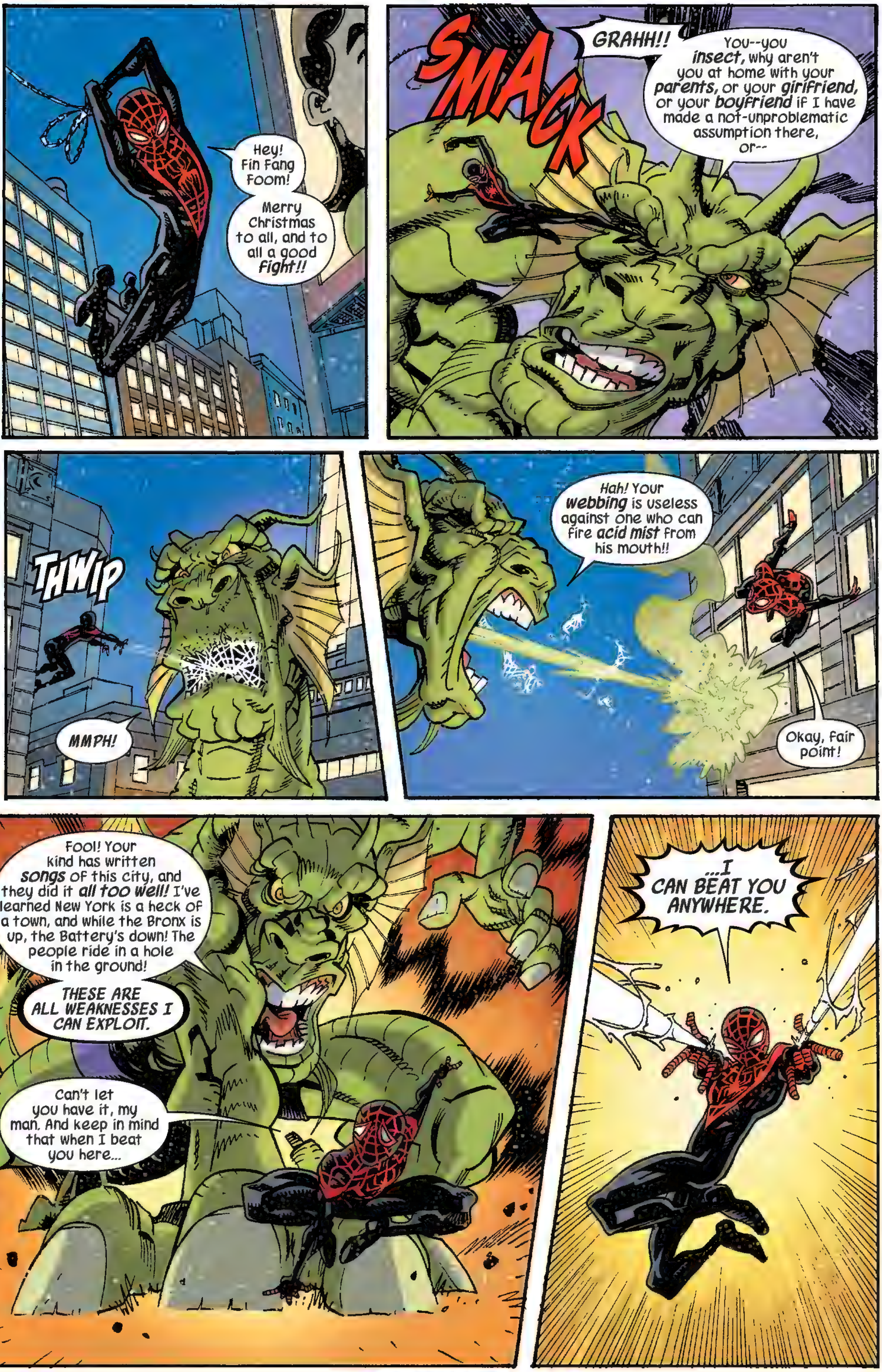
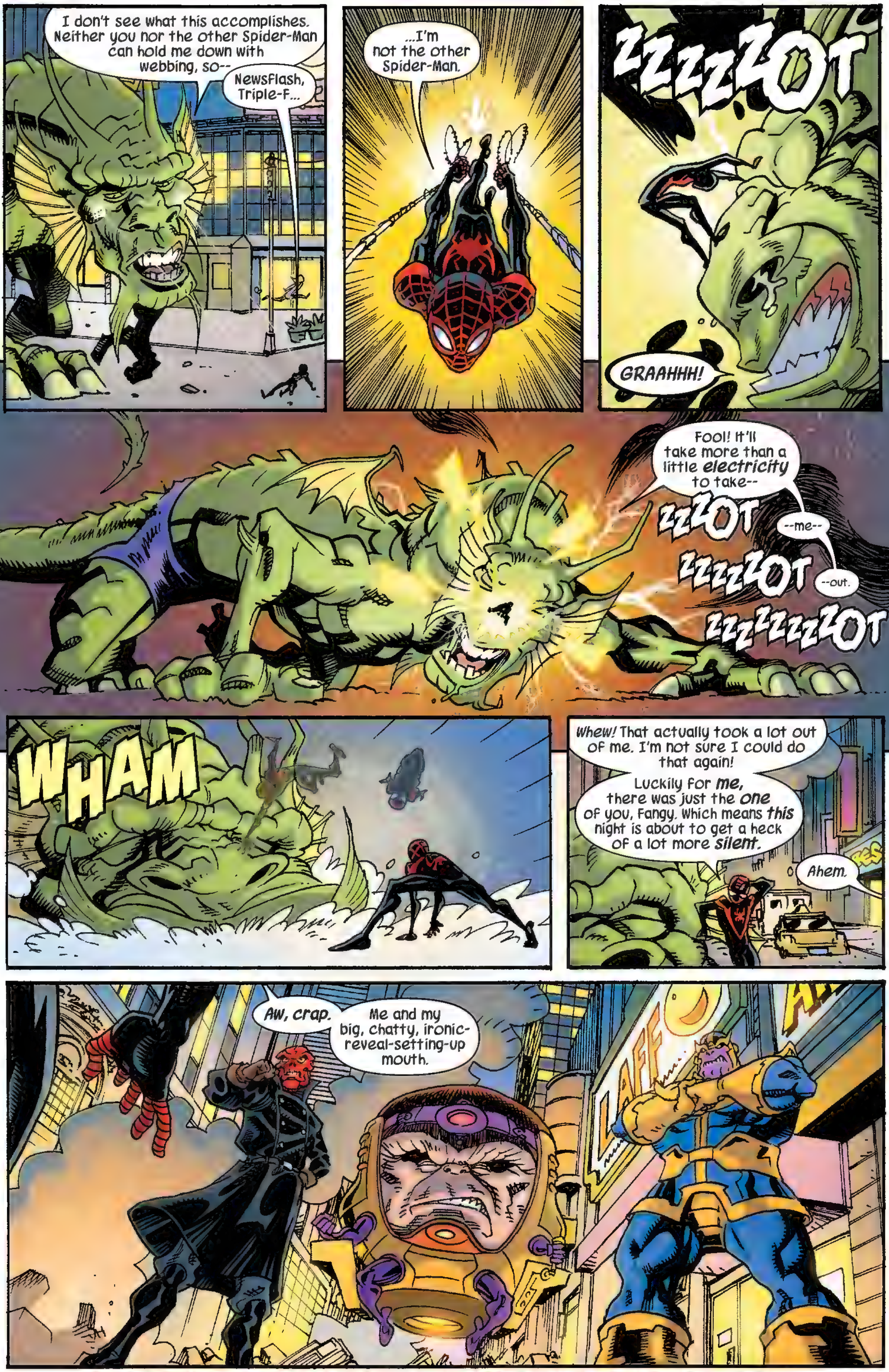

Come on, man. You don't still believe in *Galactus,* do you?
Was that the *real* Galactus, daddy?
No, that's just one of his helpers, Joey. That's how come Galactus always looks different to different people: lots and lots of helpers!
DON'T FORGET THE REAL REASON FOR THE SEASON
EXIT
'Course I still believe in him, man!
THE SECULAR WORLD HAS MADE A COLOSSAL ALIEN WITH A TUNING FORK HAT THE FACE OF CHRISTMAS, WHICH SHOULD TELL YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SECULAR WORLD
You can't be serious! *Galactus.* Big guy, likes his food, cometh to Earth once a year, bringing gifts for the nice, coal and/or devourment for the naughty?
*GALACTUS HUNGERS...*for your donations!!
100% on board, Ganke.
CLINK
PIZZA
We live in a world of fantastic things, of monsters and Norse gods and *literal magic.*
If you ask me, a guy who shows up once a year just to be nice to people is worth believing in.
GALACTUS
Especially today, on--
CHRISTMAS EVE!!
SALE 50%


The one day when all the "heroes" leave NYC to be with their precious *families*...
...leaving the city completely unprotected from
FIN FANG FOOM!!
VISIT LATVERIA OR ELSE!!
JOE'S SOAP
HULKBUSTER
THE MUSICAL
PLAY LOTTO HIT THE JACKPOT TIGER
TRENDY PANTS
TAXI
We can get dinner another night. You should go, um, handle this.
Thanks, Ganke, you're the best. Rain check it is.
Because it's the night before Christmas...
...and I'm about to go shake that dragon like a bowl full of *jelly*.


Hey! Fin Fang Foom!
Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good *fight!!*
SMACK
GRAHH!!
You--you *insect,* why aren't you at home with your *parents,* or your *girlfriend,* or your *boyfriend* if I have made a not-unproblematic assumption there, or--
THWIP
MMPH!
Hah! Your *webbing* is useless against one who can fire *acid mist* from his mouth!!
Okay, fair point!
Fool! Your kind has written *songs* of this city, and they did it *all too well!* I've learned New York is a heck of a town, and while the Bronx is up, the Battery's down! The people ride in a hole in the ground!
THESE ARE ALL WEAKNESSES I CAN EXPLOIT.
Can't let you have it, my man. And keep in mind that when I beat you here...
...I CAN BEAT YOU ANYWHERE.


I don't see what this accomplishes. Neither you nor the other Spider-Man can hold me down with webbing, so--
NewsFlash, Triple-F...
...I'm not the other Spider-Man.
ZZZZZOT
GRAAHHH!
Fool! It'll take more than a little *electricity* to take--
ZZZOT
--me--
ZZZZZOT
--out.
ZZZZZZZZOT
WHAM
Whew! That actually took a lot out of me. I'm not sure I could do that again!
Luckily for *me*, there was just the *one* of you, Fangy. Which means *this* night is about to get a heck of a lot more *silent*.
Ahem.
Aw, crap.
Me and my big, chatty, ironic-reveal-setting-up mouth.
LAFF

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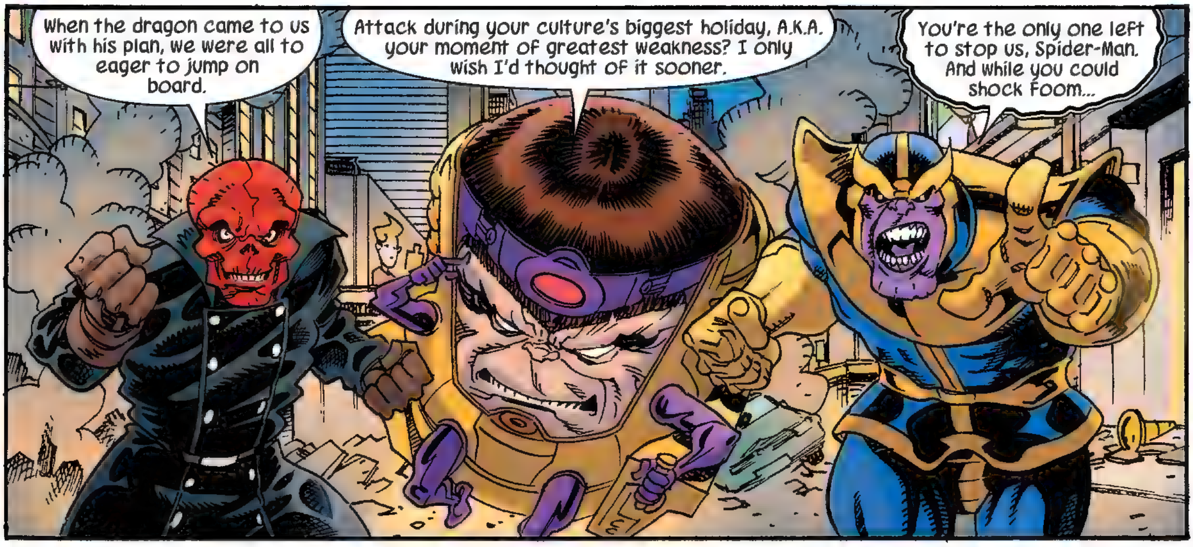
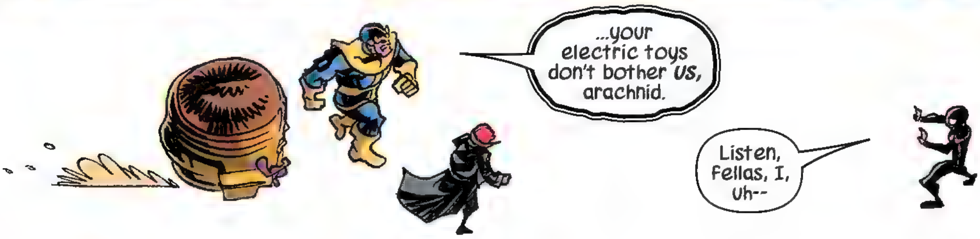
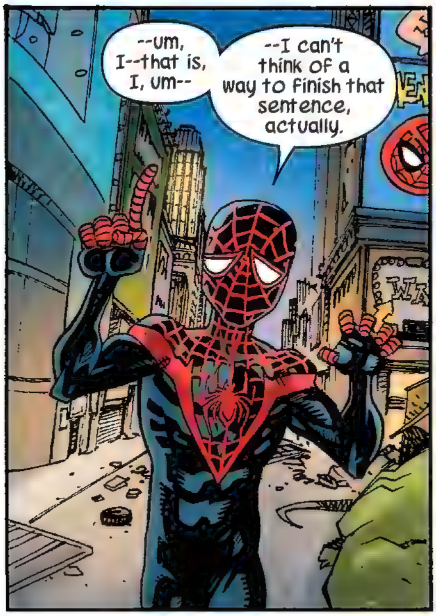
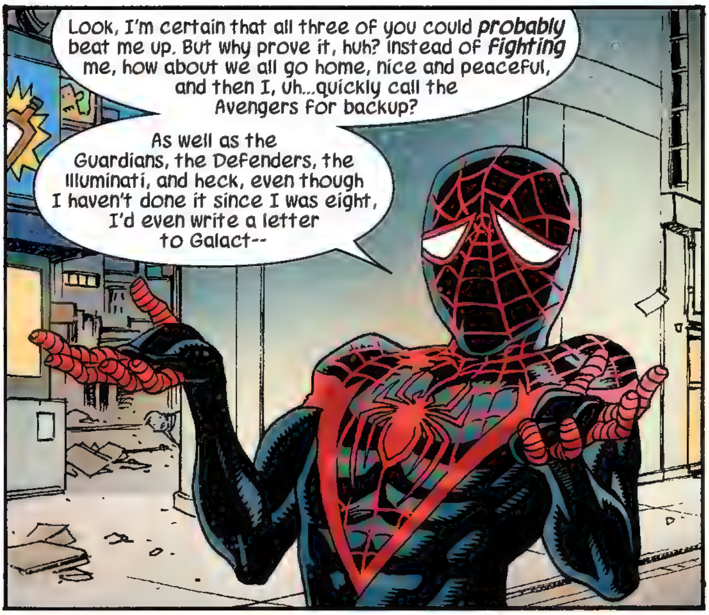
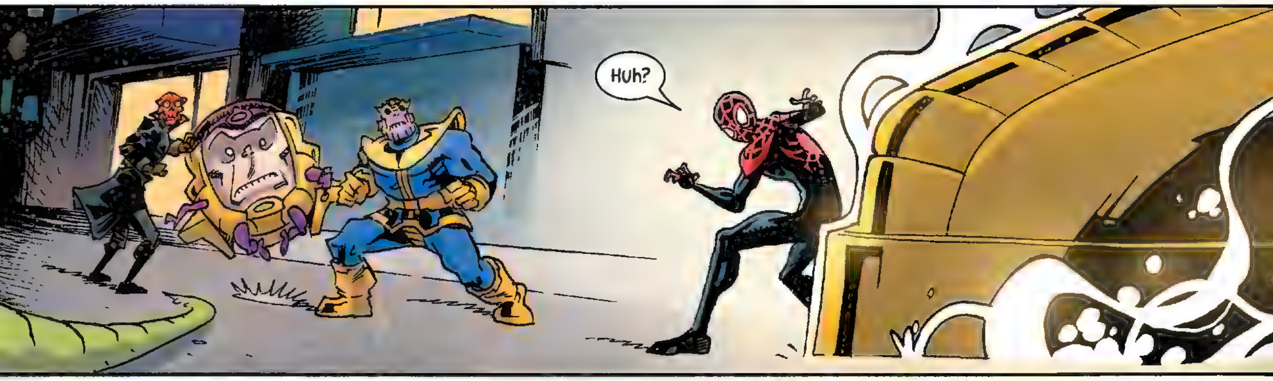
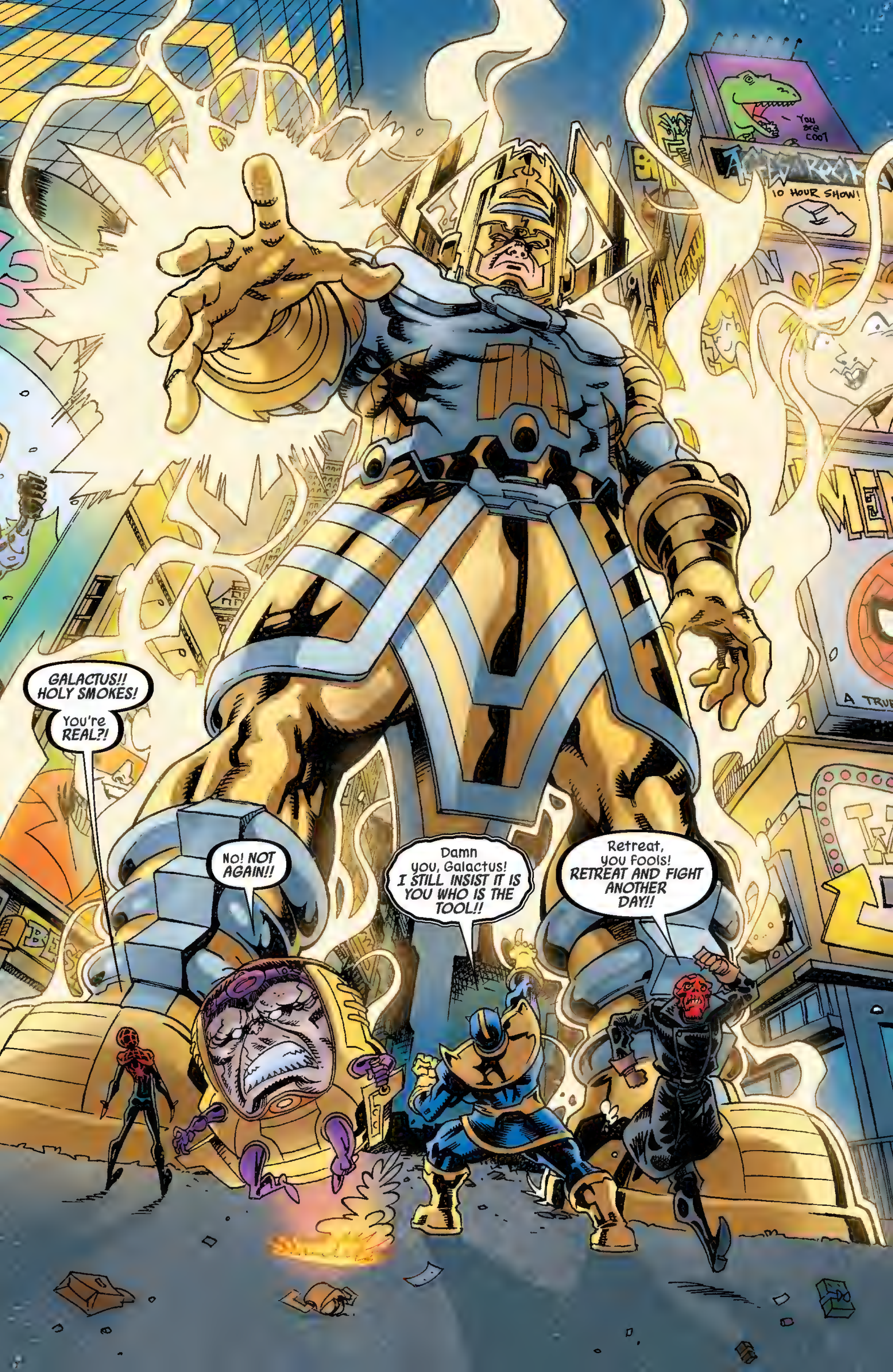

When the dragon came to us with his plan, we were all to eager to jump on board.
Attack during your culture's biggest holiday, A.K.A. your moment of greatest weakness? I only wish I'd thought of it sooner.
You're the only one left to stop us, Spider-Man. And while you could shock Foom...

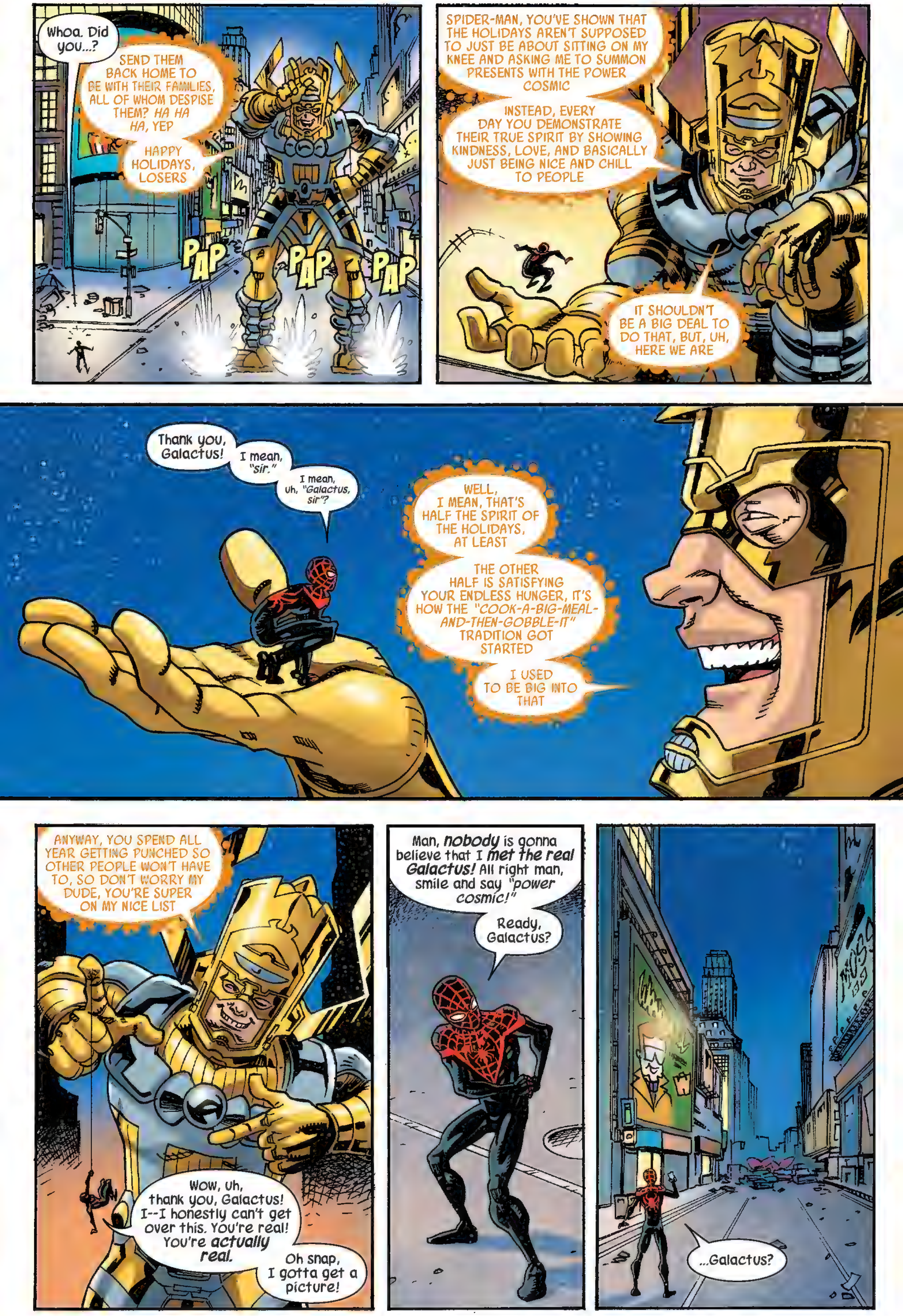

...your electric toys don't bother *us*, arachnid.
Listen, fellas, I, uh--

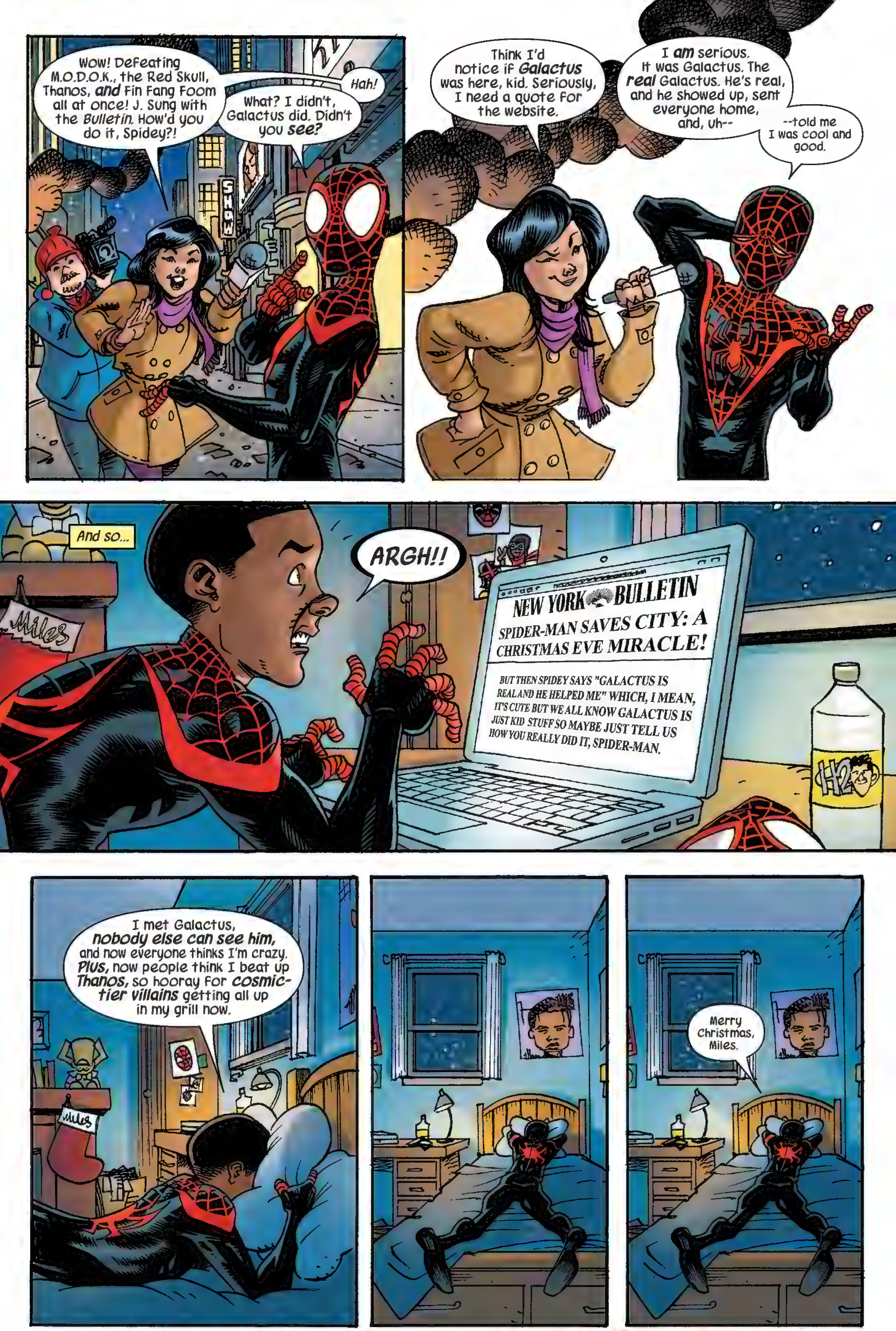

--um, I--that is, I, um--
--I can't think of a way to finish that sentence, actually.


Look, I'm certain that all three of you could *probably* beat me up. But why prove it, huh? Instead of *fighting* me, how about we all go home, nice and peaceful, and then I, uh...quickly call the Avengers for backup?
As well as the Guardians, the Defenders, the Illuminati, and heck, even though I haven't done it since I was eight, I'd even write a letter to Galact--


Huh?


— You are cool
10 HOUR SHOW!
GALACTUS!! HOLY SMOKES!
You're REAL?!
No! NOT AGAIN!!
Damn you, Galactus! I STILL INSIST IT IS YOU WHO IS THE TOOL!!
Retreat, you fools! RETREAT AND FIGHT ANOTHER DAY!!


Whoa. Did you...?
SEND THEM BACK HOME TO BE WITH THEIR FAMILIES, ALL OF WHOM DESPISE THEM? *HA HA HA*, YEP
HAPPY HOLIDAYS, LOSERS
PAP
PAP
PAP
SPIDER-MAN, YOU'VE SHOWN THAT THE HOLIDAYS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO JUST BE ABOUT SITTING ON MY KNEE AND ASKING ME TO SUMMON PRESENTS WITH THE POWER COSMIC
INSTEAD, EVERY DAY YOU DEMONSTRATE THEIR TRUE SPIRIT BY SHOWING KINDNESS, LOVE, AND BASICALLY JUST BEING NICE AND CHILL TO PEOPLE
IT SHOULDN'T BE A BIG DEAL TO DO THAT, BUT, UH, HERE WE ARE
Thank you, Galactus!
I mean, *"sir."*
I mean, uh, *"Galactus, sir"*?
WELL, I MEAN, THAT'S HALF THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAYS, AT LEAST
THE OTHER HALF IS SATISFYING YOUR ENDLESS HUNGER, IT'S HOW THE *"COOK-A-BIG-MEAL-AND-THEN-GOBBLE-IT"* TRADITION GOT STARTED
I USED TO BE BIG INTO THAT
ANYWAY, YOU SPEND ALL YEAR GETTING PUNCHED SO OTHER PEOPLE WON'T HAVE TO, SO DON'T WORRY MY DUDE, YOU'RE SUPER ON MY NICE LIST
Wow, uh, thank you, Galactus! I--I honestly can't get over this. You're real! You're **actually real.**
Oh snap, I gotta get a picture!
Man, ***nobody*** is gonna believe that I ***met the real Galactus!*** All right man, smile and say *"power cosmic!"*
Ready, Galactus?
...Galactus?

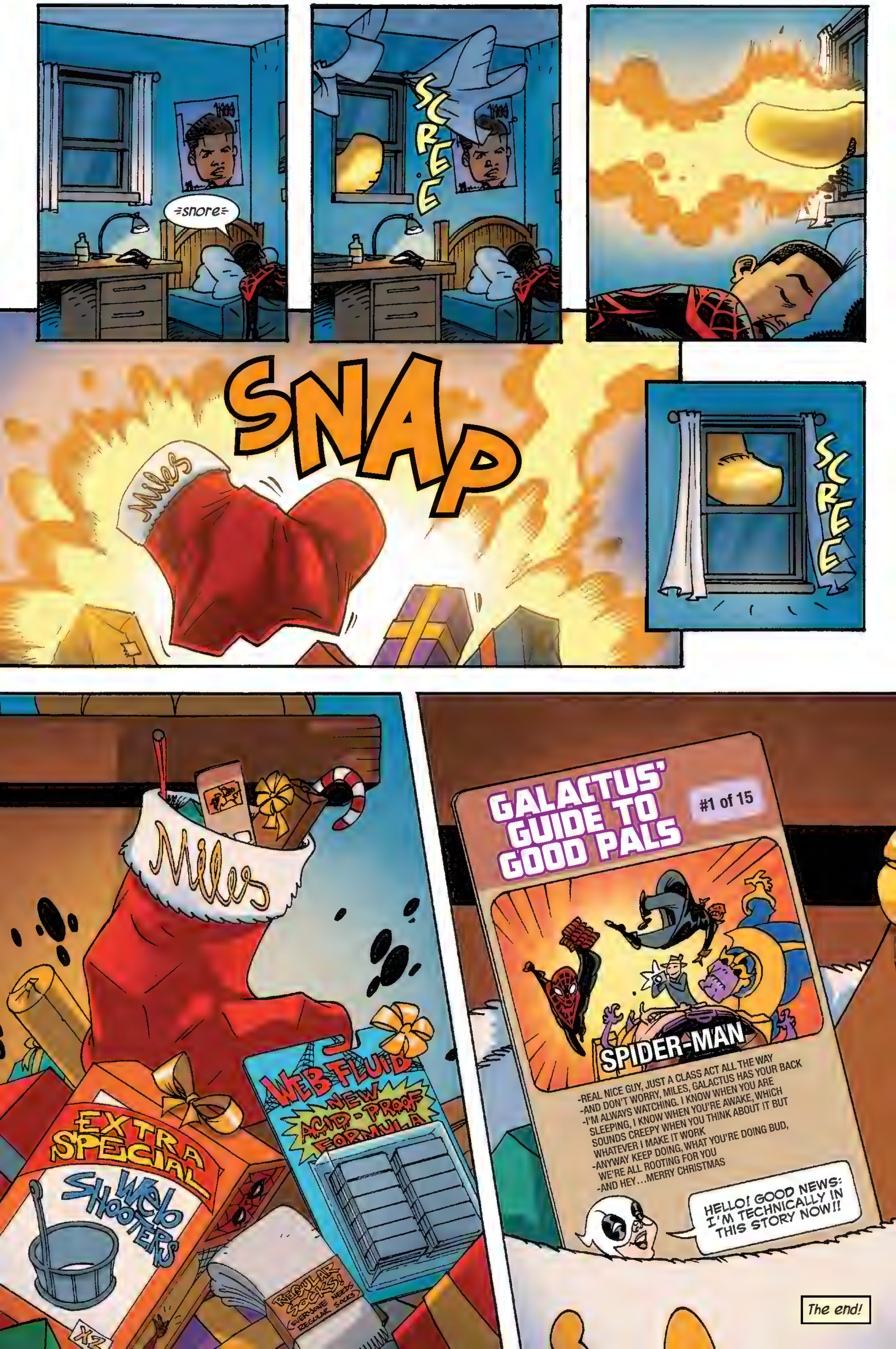


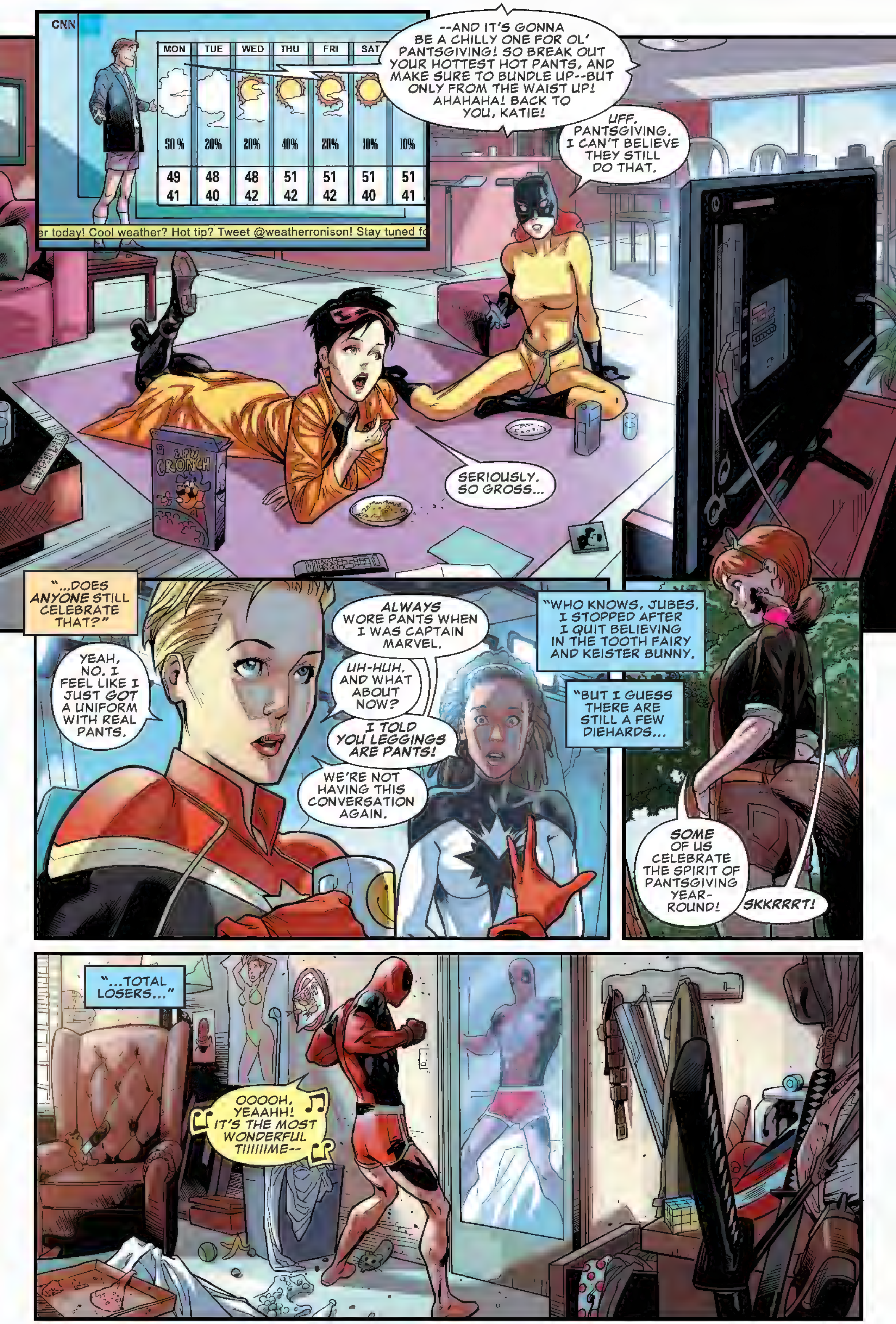
NEW YORK BULLETIN

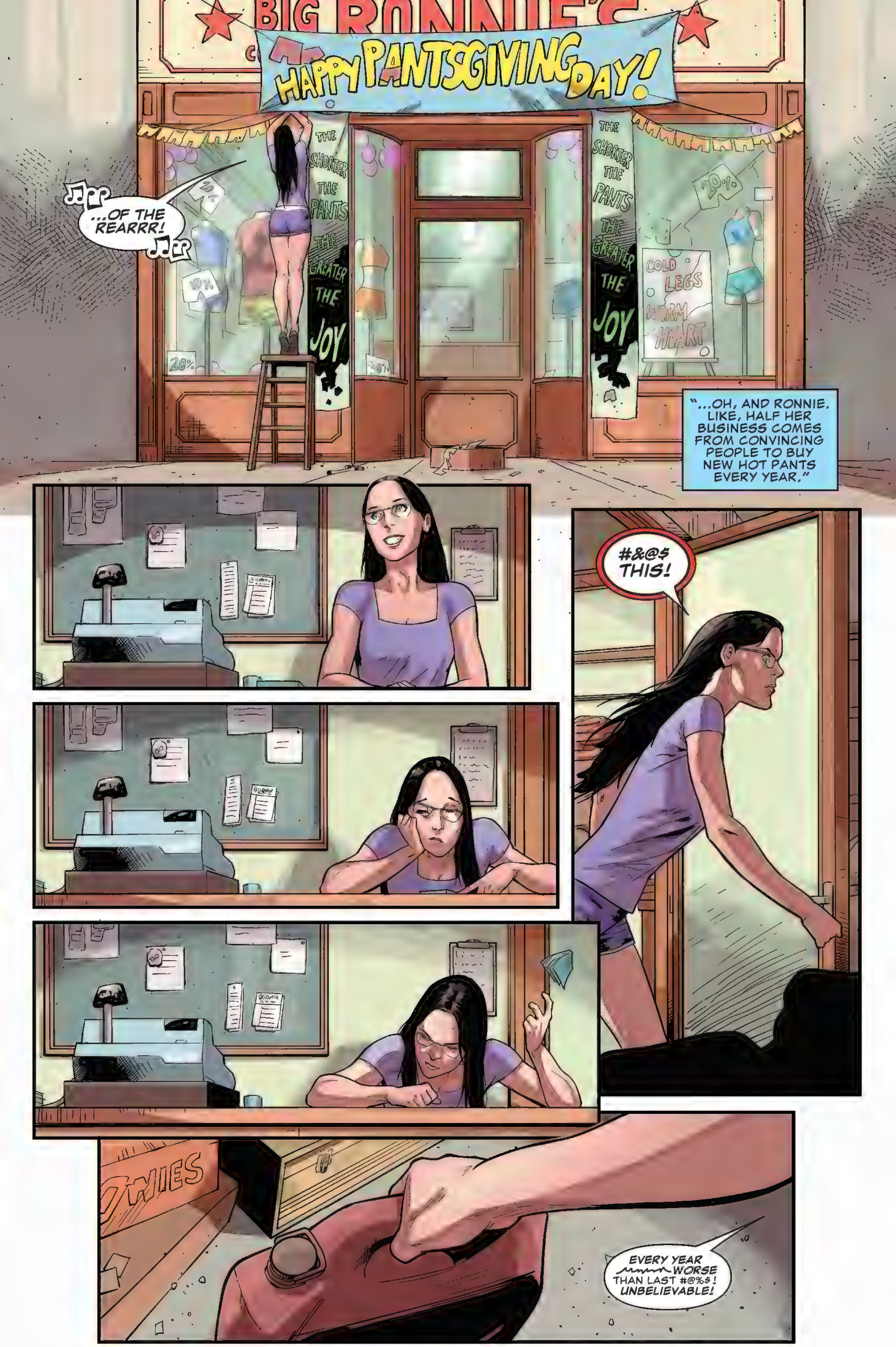
SPIDER-MAN SAVES CITY: A CHRISTMAS EVE MIRACLE!

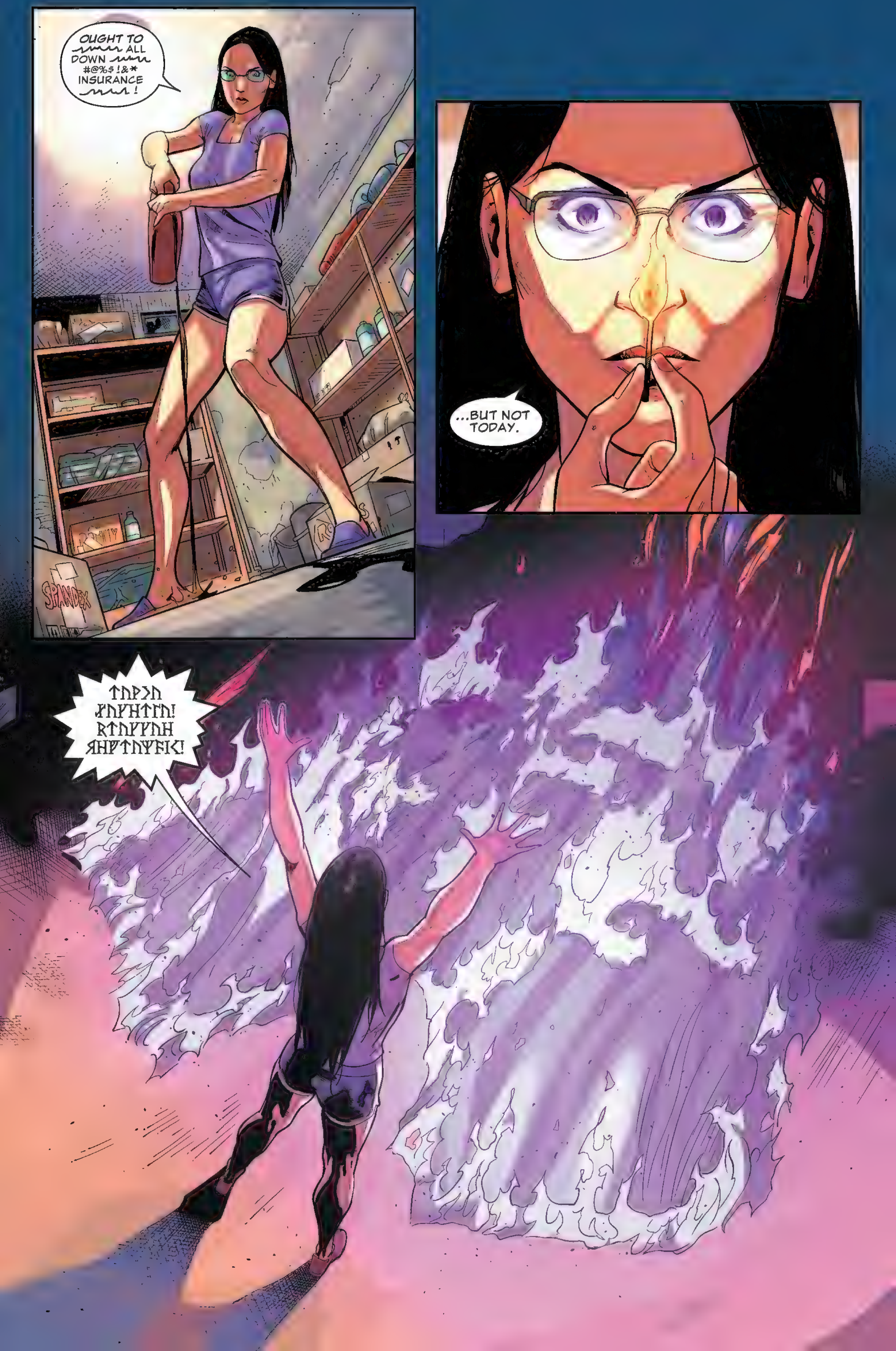
BUT THEN SPIDEY SAYS "GALACTUS IS REAL AND HE HELPED ME" WHICH, I MEAN, IT'S CUTE BUT WE ALL KNOW GALACTUS IS JUST KID STUFF SO MAYBE JUST TELL US HOW YOU REALLY DID IT, SPIDER-MAN.

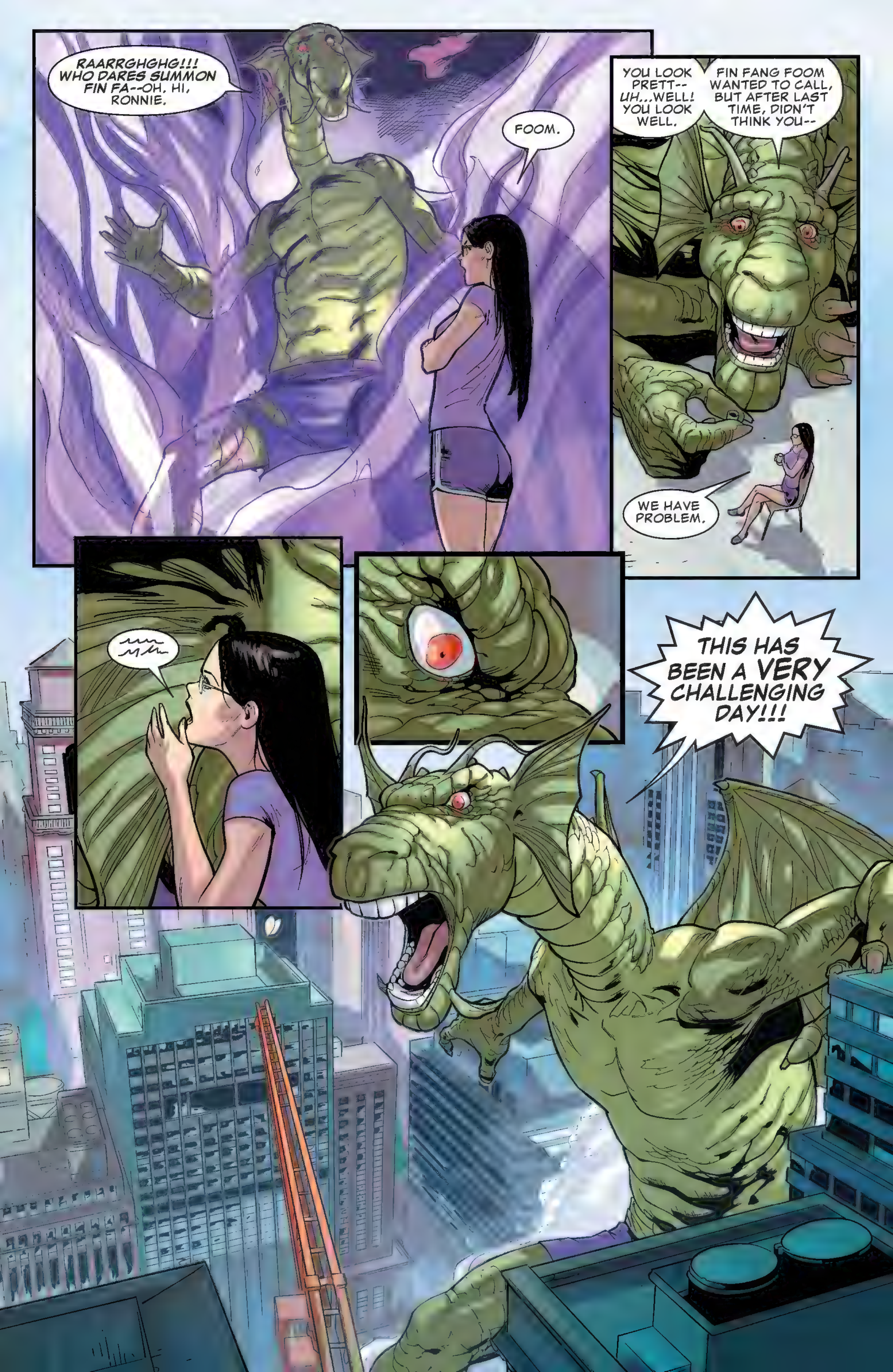
Wow! Defeating M.O.D.O.K., the Red Skull, Thanos, *and* Fin Fang Foom all at once! J. Sung with the *Bulletin*. How'd you do it, Spidey?!
Hah!
What? I didn't, Galactus did. Didn't you *see?*
SHOW
Think I'd notice if *Galactus* was here, kid. Seriously, I need a quote for the website.
I *am* serious. It was Galactus. The *real* Galactus. He's real, and he showed up, sent everyone home, and, uh--
--told me I was cool and good.
And so...
ARGH!!
Miles
I met Galactus, *nobody else can see him,* and now everyone thinks I'm crazy. *Plus,* now people think I beat up *Thanos,* so hooray for *cosmic-tier villains* getting all up in my grill now.
Miles
Merry Christmas, Miles.

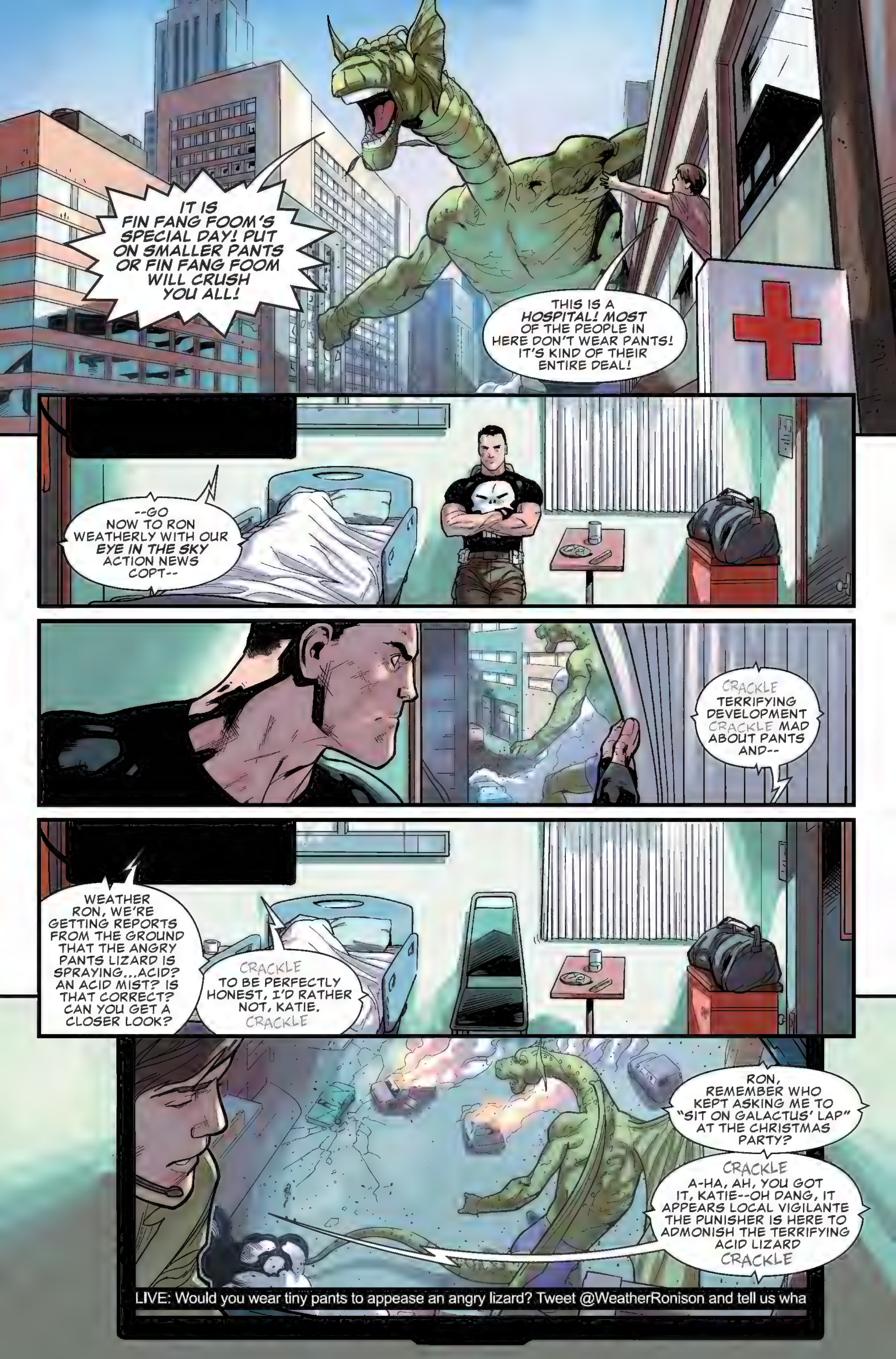

snore
SCREE
SNAP
Miles
SCREE
Miles
GALACTUS' GUIDE TO GOOD PALS
#1 of 15
SPIDER-MAN
-REAL NICE GUY, JUST A CLASS ACT ALL THE WAY
-AND DON'T WORRY, MILES, GALACTUS HAS YOUR BACK
-I'M ALWAYS WATCHING. I KNOW WHEN YOU ARE SLEEPING, I KNOW WHEN YOU'RE AWAKE, WHICH SOUNDS CREEPY WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT BUT WHATEVER I MAKE IT WORK
-ANYWAY KEEP DOING, WHAT YOU'RE DOING BUD, WE'RE ALL ROOTING FOR YOU
-AND HEY…MERRY CHRISTMAS
HELLO! GOOD NEWS: I'M TECHNICALLY IN THIS STORY NOW!!
EXTRA SPECIAL Web Shooters
X2
WEB FLUID NEW ACID-PROOF FORMULA
REGULAR SOCKS! (EVERYONE NEEDS REGULAR SOCKS)
The end!

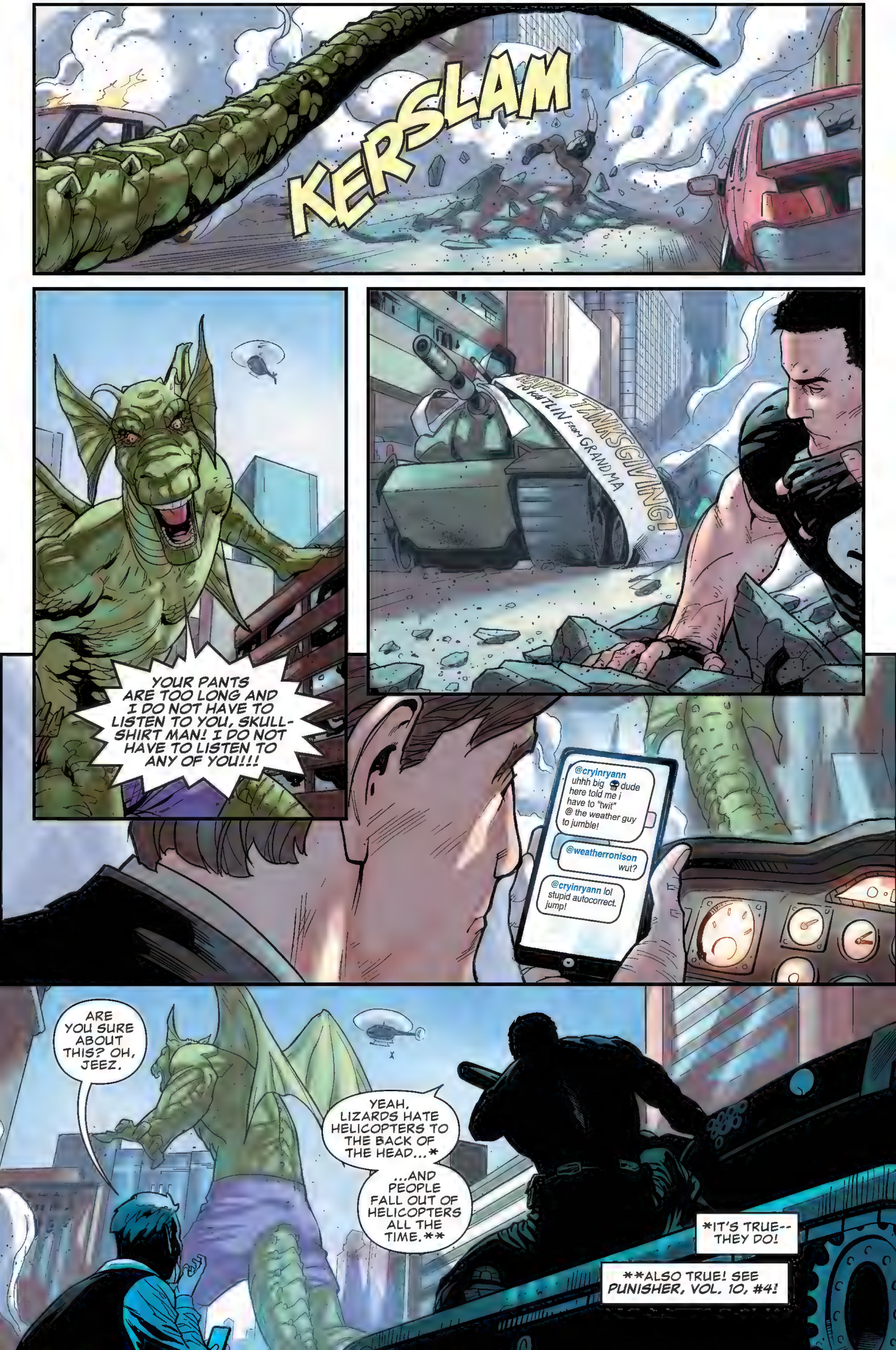

CNN
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT
50% 20% 20% 40% 20% 10% 10%
49 48 48 51 51 51 51
41 40 42 42 42 40 41
er today! Cool weather? Hot tip? Tweet @weatherronison! Stay tuned fo
--AND IT'S GONNA BE A CHILLY ONE FOR OL' PANTSGIVING! SO BREAK OUT YOUR HOTTEST HOT PANTS, AND MAKE SURE TO BUNDLE UP--BUT ONLY FROM THE WAIST UP! AHAHAHA! BACK TO YOU, KATIE!
UFF. PANTSGIVING. I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY STILL DO THAT.
CAP'N CRUNCH
SERIOUSLY. SO GROSS...
"...DOES ANYONE STILL CELEBRATE THAT?"
YEAH, NO. I FEEL LIKE I JUST GOT A UNIFORM WITH REAL PANTS.
ALWAYS WORE PANTS WHEN I WAS CAPTAIN MARVEL.
UH-HUH. AND WHAT ABOUT NOW?
I TOLD YOU LEGGINGS ARE PANTS!
WE'RE NOT HAVING THIS CONVERSATION AGAIN.
"WHO KNOWS, JUBES. I STOPPED AFTER I QUIT BELIEVING IN THE TOOTH FAIRY AND KEISTER BUNNY.
"BUT I GUESS THERE ARE STILL A FEW DIEHARDS...
SOME OF US CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT OF PANTSGIVING YEAR-ROUND!
SKKRRRT!
"...TOTAL LOSERS..."
OOOOH, YEAAHH! IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIIIIIIME--


BIG RONNIE'S
HAPPY PANTSGIVING DAY!
THE SHORTER THE PANTS THE GREATER THE JOY
THE SHORTER THE PANTS THE GREATER THE JOY
20%
COLD LEGS WARM HEART
...OF THE REARRR!
"...OH, AND RONNIE. LIKE, HALF HER BUSINESS COMES FROM CONVINCING PEOPLE TO BUY NEW HOT PANTS EVERY YEAR."
#&@$ THIS!
EVERY YEAR WORSE THAN LAST #@%$! UNBELIEVABLE!


OUGHT TO ALL DOWN #@%$!&* INSURANCE !
SPANDEX
...BUT NOT TODAY.


RAARRGHGHG!!! WHO DARES SUMMON FIN FA--OH. HI, RONNIE.
FOOM.
YOU LOOK PRETT-- UH...WELL! YOU LOOK WELL.
FIN FANG FOOM WANTED TO CALL, BUT AFTER LAST TIME, DIDN'T THINK YOU--
WE HAVE PROBLEM.
THIS HAS BEEN A VERY CHALLENGING DAY!!!

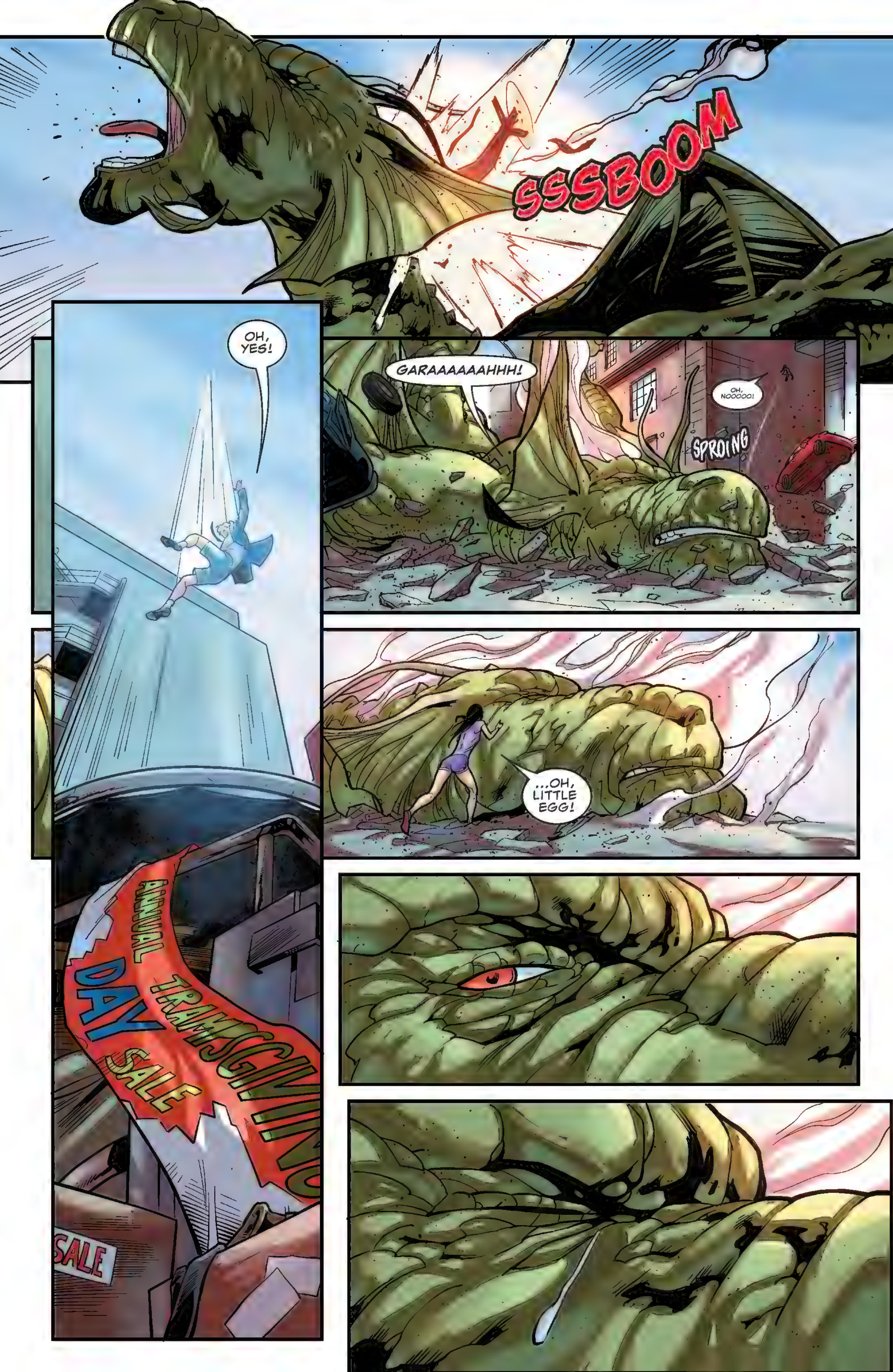

IT IS FIN FANG FOOM'S SPECIAL DAY! PUT ON SMALLER PANTS OR FIN FANG FOOM WILL CRUSH YOU ALL!
THIS IS A *HOSPITAL!* MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN HERE DON'T WEAR PANTS! IT'S KIND OF THEIR ENTIRE DEAL!
--GO NOW TO RON WEATHERLY WITH OUR *EYE IN THE SKY* ACTION NEWS COPT--
CRACKLE TERRIFYING DEVELOPMENT CRACKLE MAD ABOUT PANTS AND--
WEATHER RON, WE'RE GETTING REPORTS FROM THE GROUND THAT THE ANGRY PANTS LIZARD IS SPRAYING...ACID? AN ACID MIST? IS THAT CORRECT? CAN YOU GET A CLOSER LOOK?
CRACKLE TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, I'D RATHER NOT, KATIE. CRACKLE
RON, REMEMBER WHO KEPT ASKING ME TO "SIT ON GALACTUS' LAP" AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY?
CRACKLE A-HA, AH, YOU GOT IT, KATIE--OH DANG, IT APPEARS LOCAL VIGILANTE THE PUNISHER IS HERE TO ADMONISH THE TERRIFYING ACID LIZARD CRACKLE
LIVE: Would you wear tiny pants to appease an angry lizard? Tweet @WeatherRonison and tell us wha

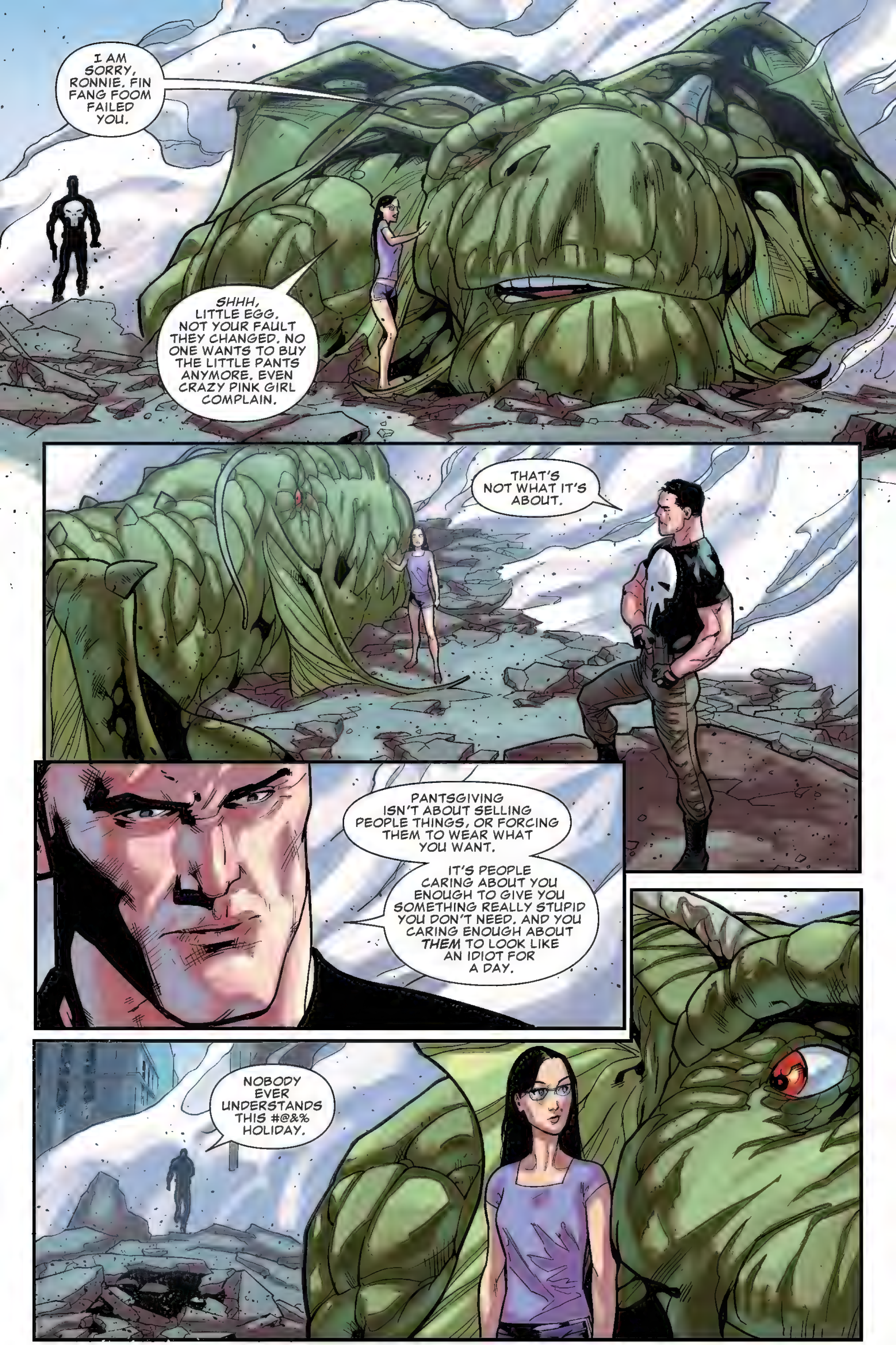

KERSLAM
HAPPY THANKSGIVING! TO KAITLIN from GRANDMA
YOUR PANTS ARE TOO LONG AND I DO NOT HAVE TO LISTEN TO YOU, SKULL-SHIRT MAN! I DO NOT HAVE TO LISTEN TO ANY OF YOU!!!
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS? OH, JEEZ.
YEAH, LIZARDS HATE HELICOPTERS TO THE BACK OF THE HEAD...*
...AND PEOPLE FALL OUT OF HELICOPTERS ALL THE TIME.**
*IT'S TRUE-- THEY DO!
**ALSO TRUE! SEE *PUNISHER, VOL. 10, #4!*

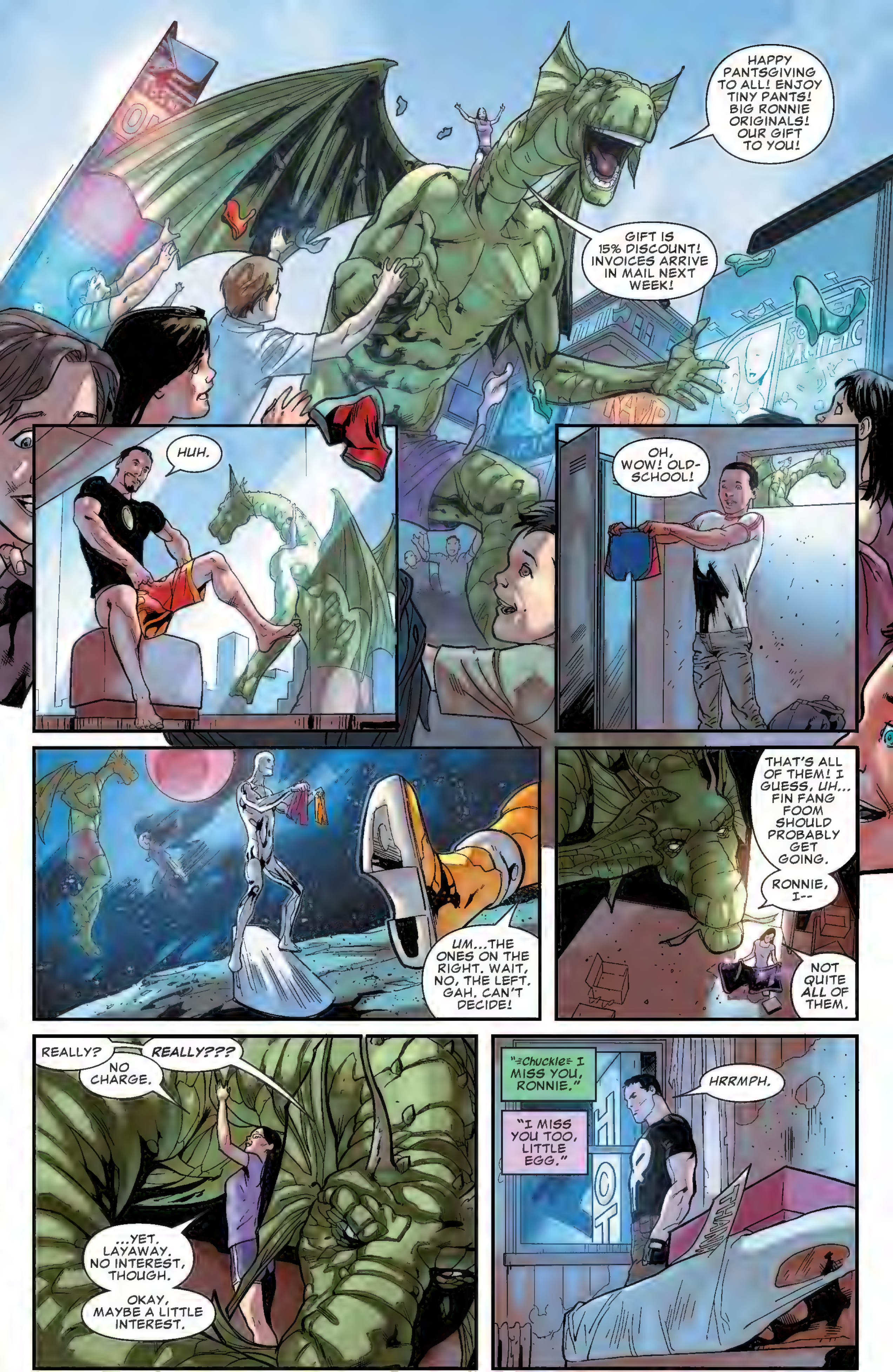
@cryinryann uhhh big ☠ dude here told me i have to "twit" @ the weather guy to jumble!

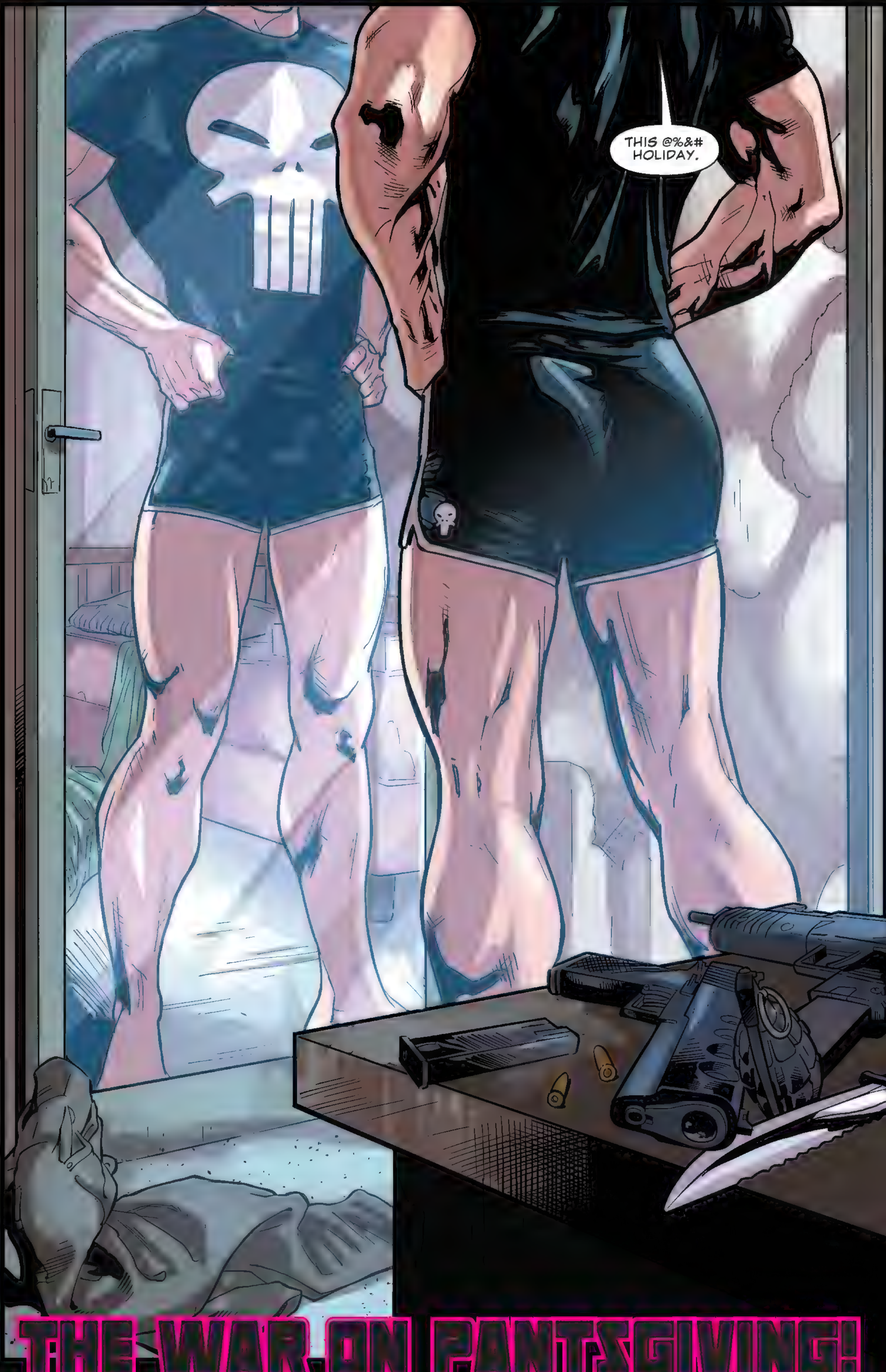
@weatherronison wut?

@cryinryann lol stupid autocorrect. jump!

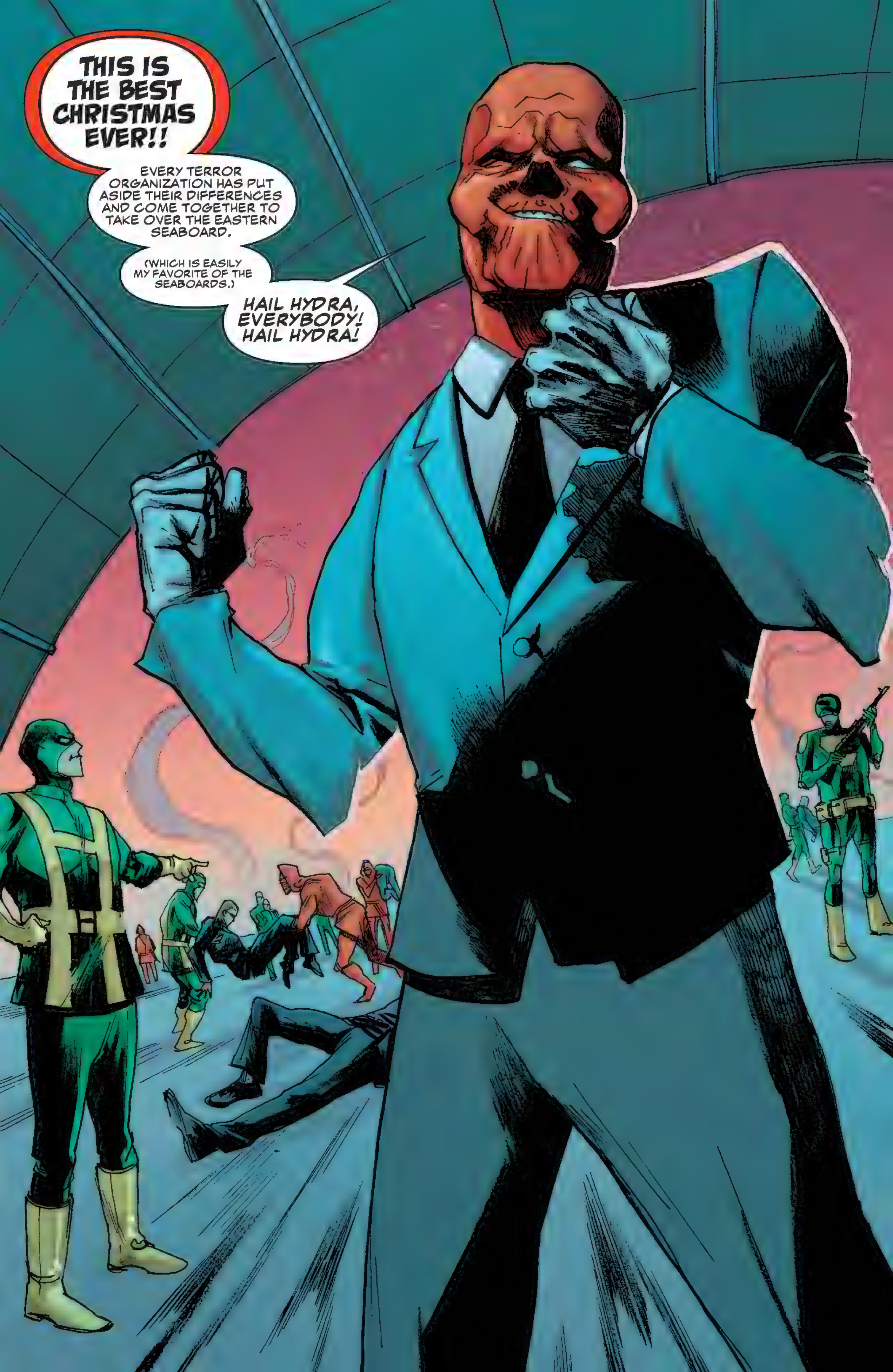

SSSBOOM
OH, YES!
ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DAY SALE
SALE
GARAAAAAAHHH!
OH, NOOOOO!
SPROING
...OH, LITTLE EGG!

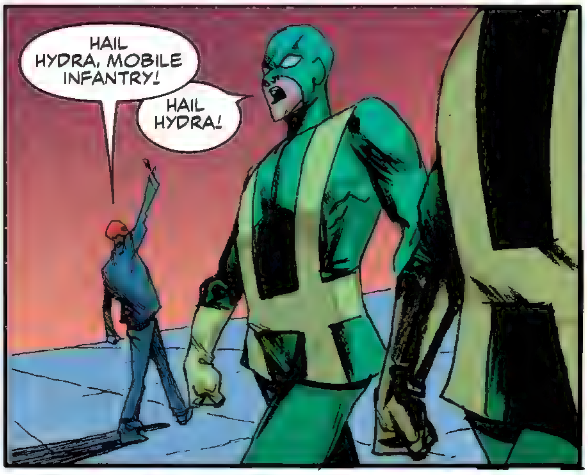

I AM SORRY, RONNIE. FIN FANG FOOM FAILED YOU.
SHHH, LITTLE EGG. NOT YOUR FAULT THEY CHANGED. NO ONE WANTS TO BUY THE LITTLE PANTS ANYMORE. EVEN CRAZY PINK GIRL COMPLAIN.
THAT'S NOT WHAT IT'S ABOUT.
PANTSGIVING ISN'T ABOUT SELLING PEOPLE THINGS, OR FORCING THEM TO WEAR WHAT YOU WANT.
IT'S PEOPLE CARING ABOUT YOU ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING REALLY STUPID YOU DON'T NEED. AND YOU CARING ENOUGH ABOUT *THEM* TO LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT FOR A DAY.
NOBODY EVER UNDERSTANDS THIS #@&% HOLIDAY.

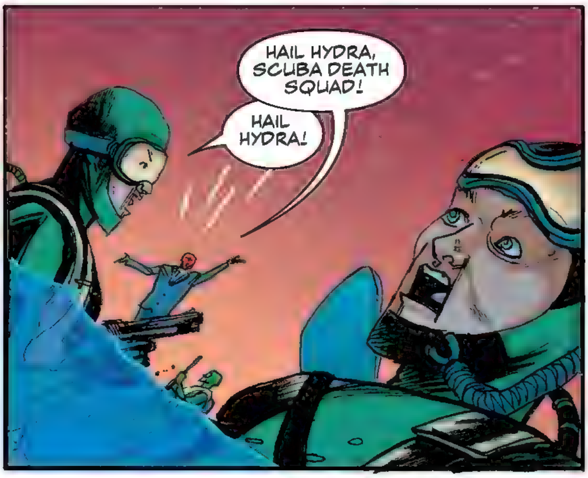

HAPPY PANTSGIVING TO ALL! ENJOY TINY PANTS! BIG RONNIE ORIGINALS! OUR GIFT TO YOU!
GIFT IS 15% DISCOUNT! INVOICES ARRIVE IN MAIL NEXT WEEK!
HUH.
OH, WOW! OLD-SCHOOL!
UM...THE ONES ON THE RIGHT. WAIT, NO, THE LEFT. GAH. CAN'T DECIDE!
THAT'S ALL OF THEM! I GUESS, UH... FIN FANG FOOM SHOULD PROBABLY GET GOING.
RONNIE, I--
NOT QUITE ALL OF THEM.
REALLY?
NO CHARGE.
REALLY???
...YET. LAYAWAY. NO INTEREST, THOUGH.
OKAY, MAYBE A LITTLE INTEREST.
"=Chuckle= I MISS YOU, RONNIE."
"I MISS YOU TOO, LITTLE EGG."
HRRMPH.

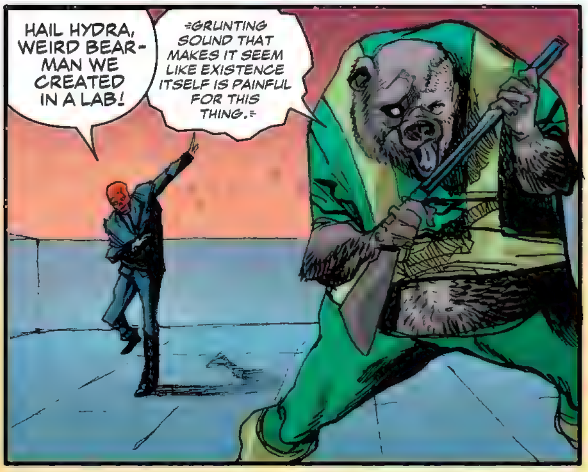

THIS @%&# HOLIDAY.

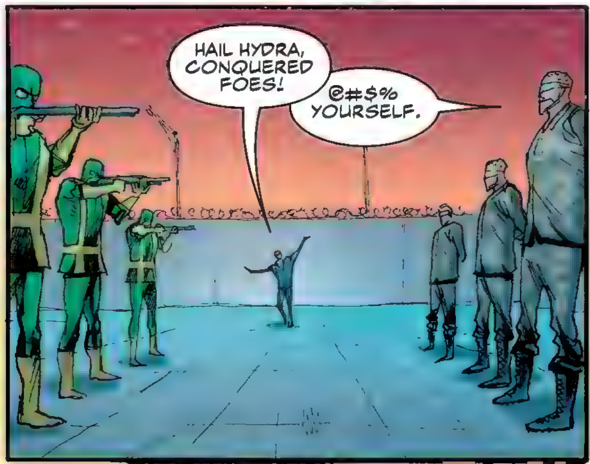
THE WAR ON PANTSGIVING!

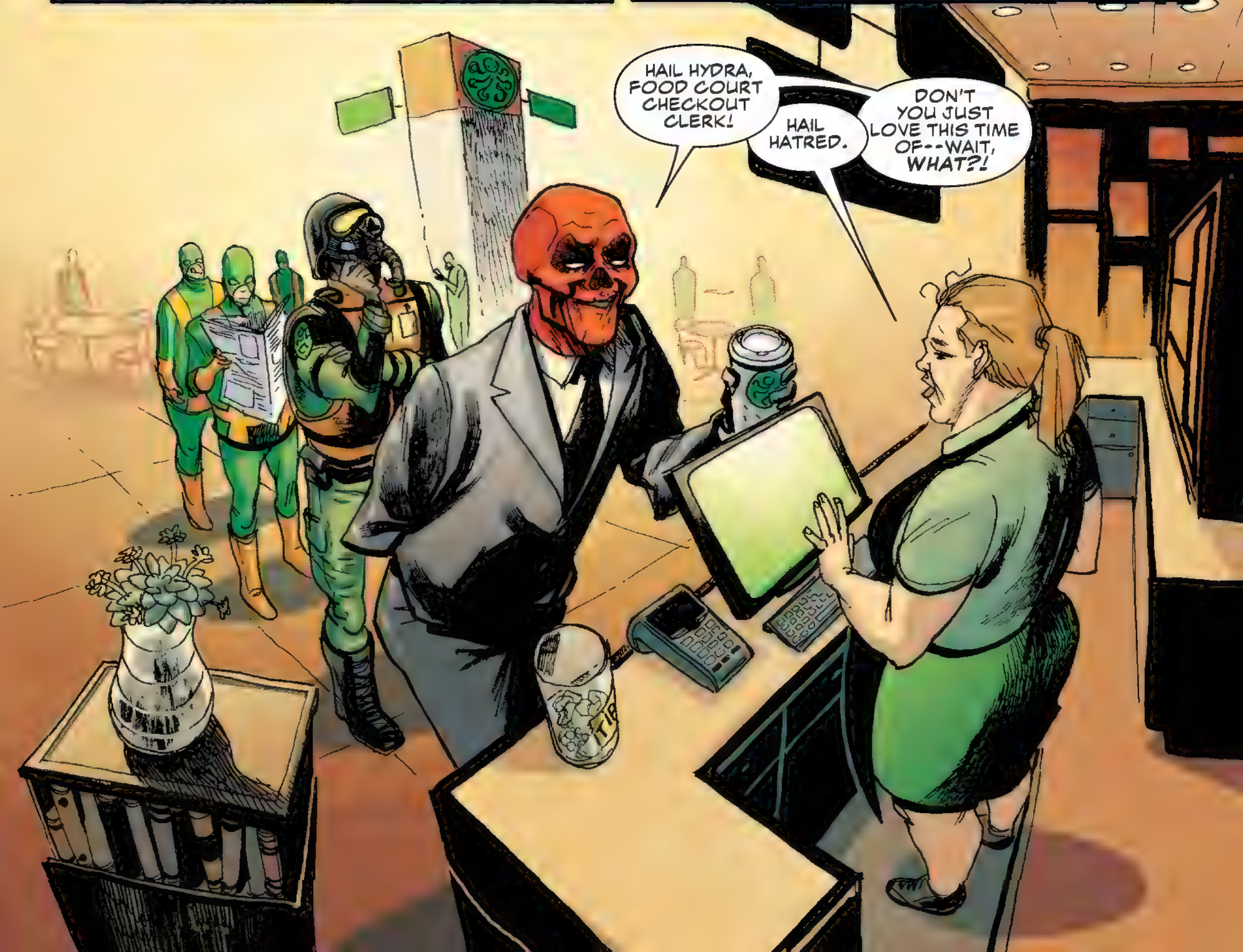

THIS IS THE BEST CHRISTMAS EVER!!
EVERY TERROR ORGANIZATION HAS PUT ASIDE THEIR DIFFERENCES AND COME TOGETHER TO TAKE OVER THE EASTERN SEABOARD.
(WHICH IS EASILY MY FAVORITE OF THE SEABOARDS.)
HAIL HYDRA, EVERYBODY! HAIL HYDRA!

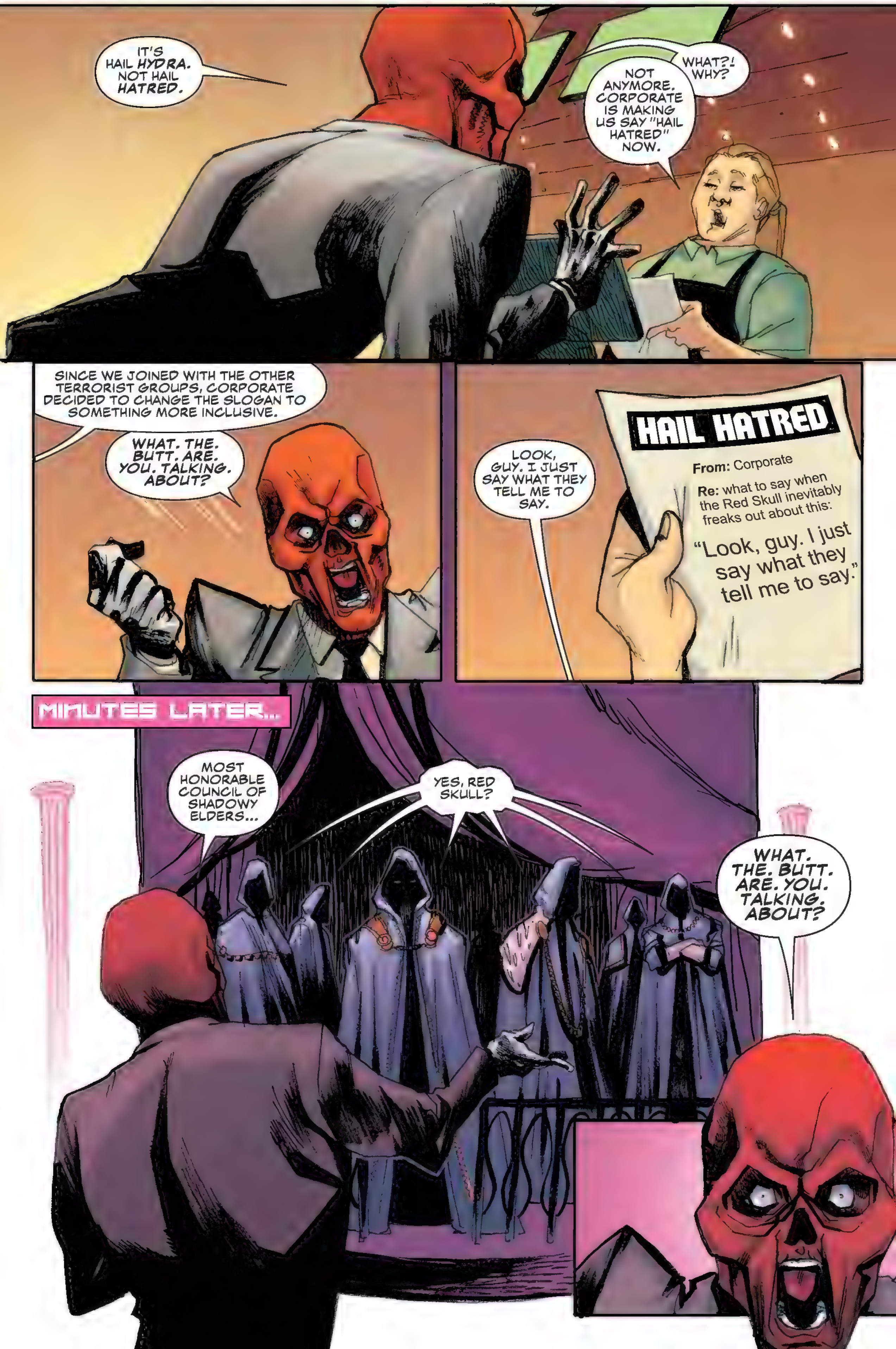

HAIL HYDRA, MOBILE INFANTRY!
HAIL HYDRA!

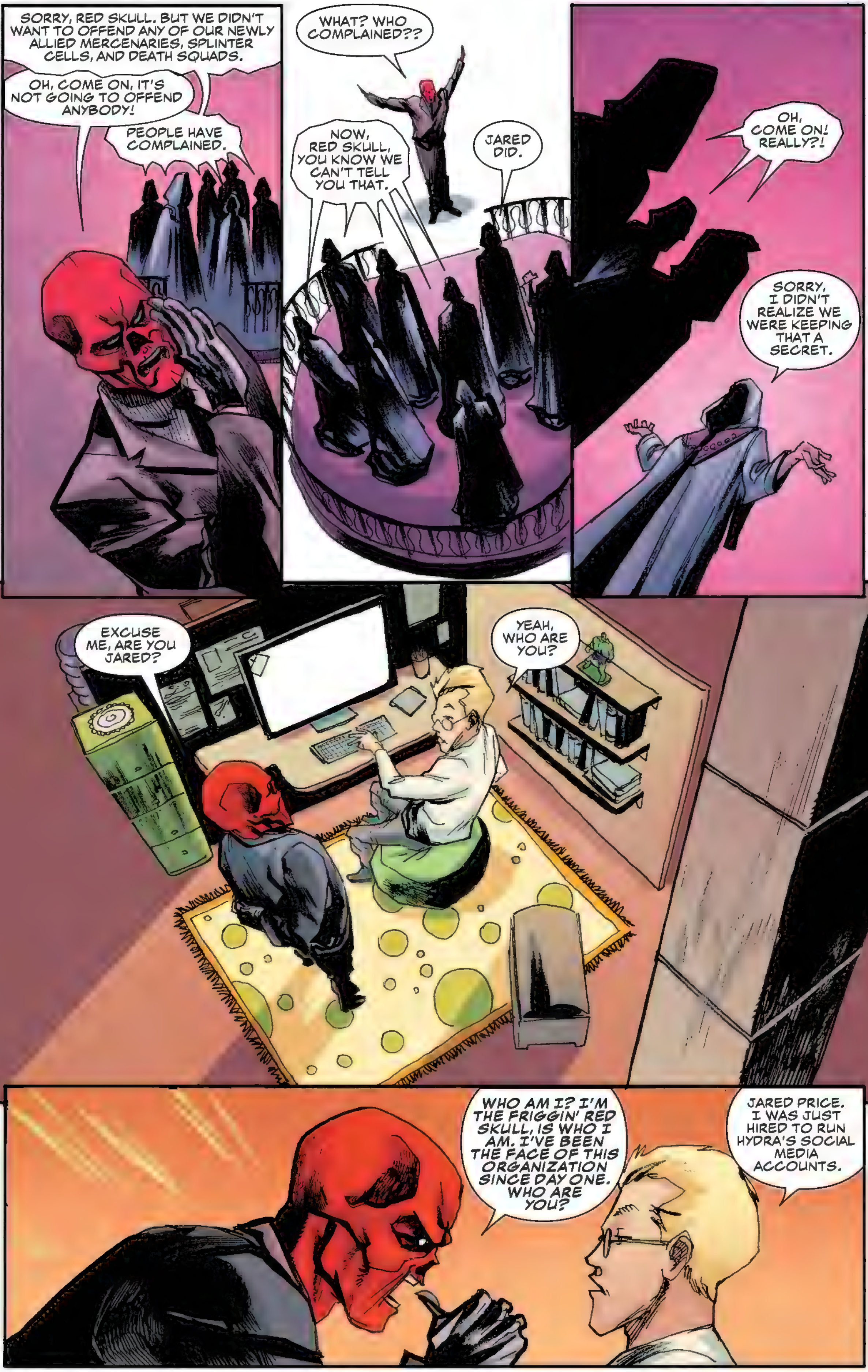

HAIL HYDRA, SCUBA DEATH SQUAD!
HAIL HYDRA!

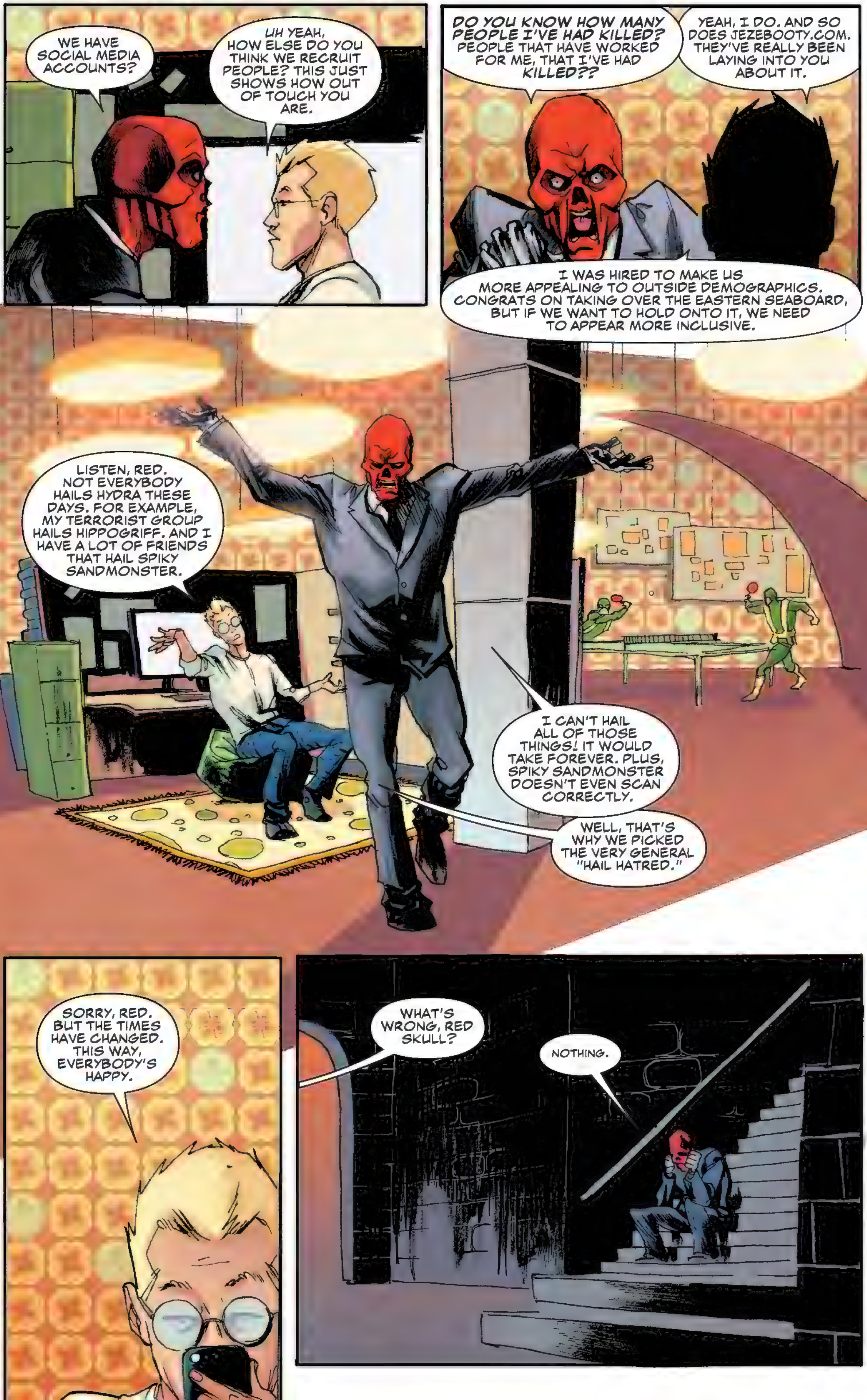

HAIL HYDRA, WEIRD BEAR-MAN WE CREATED IN A LAB!
=GRUNTING SOUND THAT MAKES IT SEEM LIKE EXISTENCE ITSELF IS PAINFUL FOR THIS THING.=

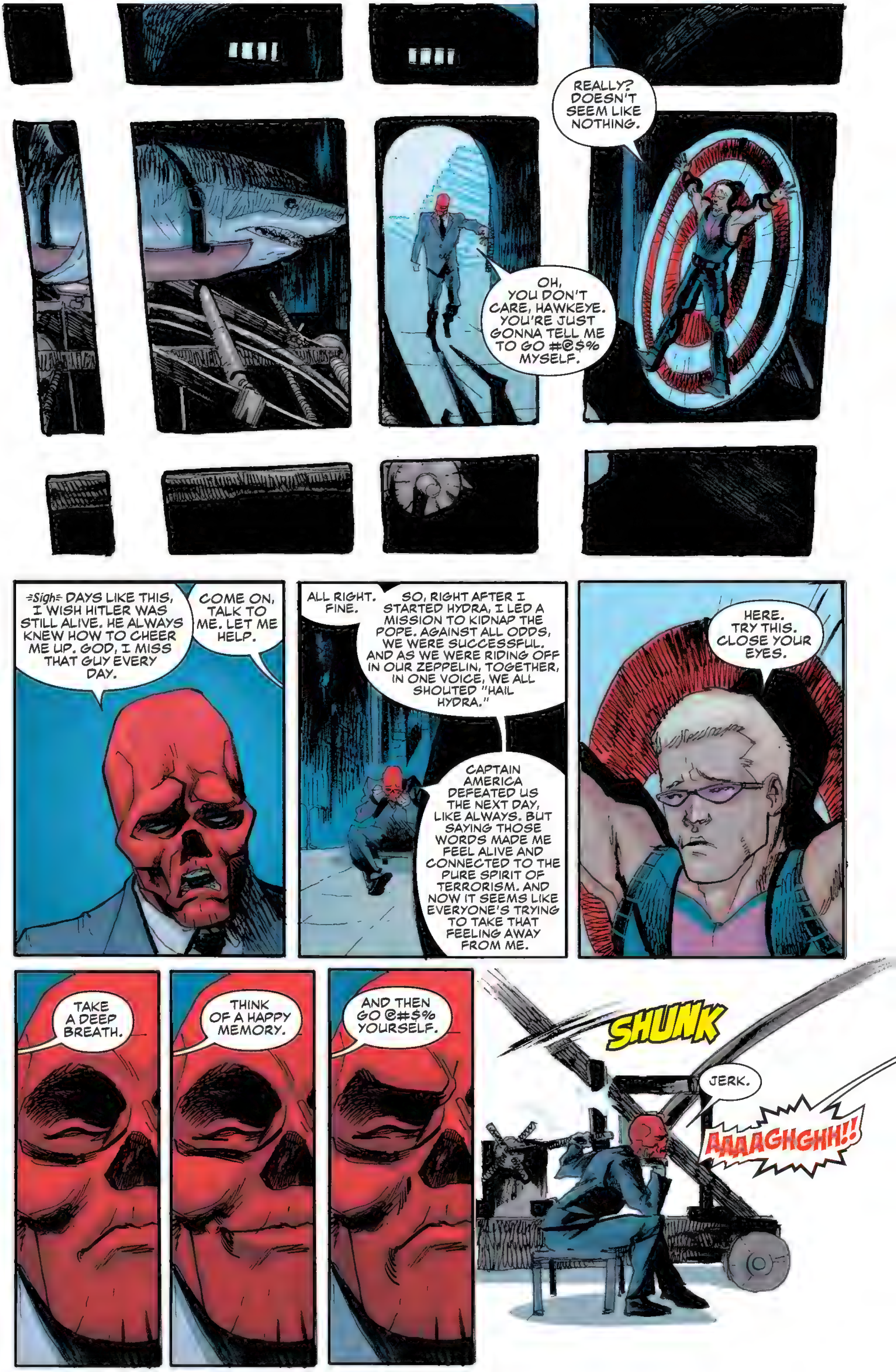

HAIL HYDRA, CONQUERED FOES!
@#$% YOURSELF.

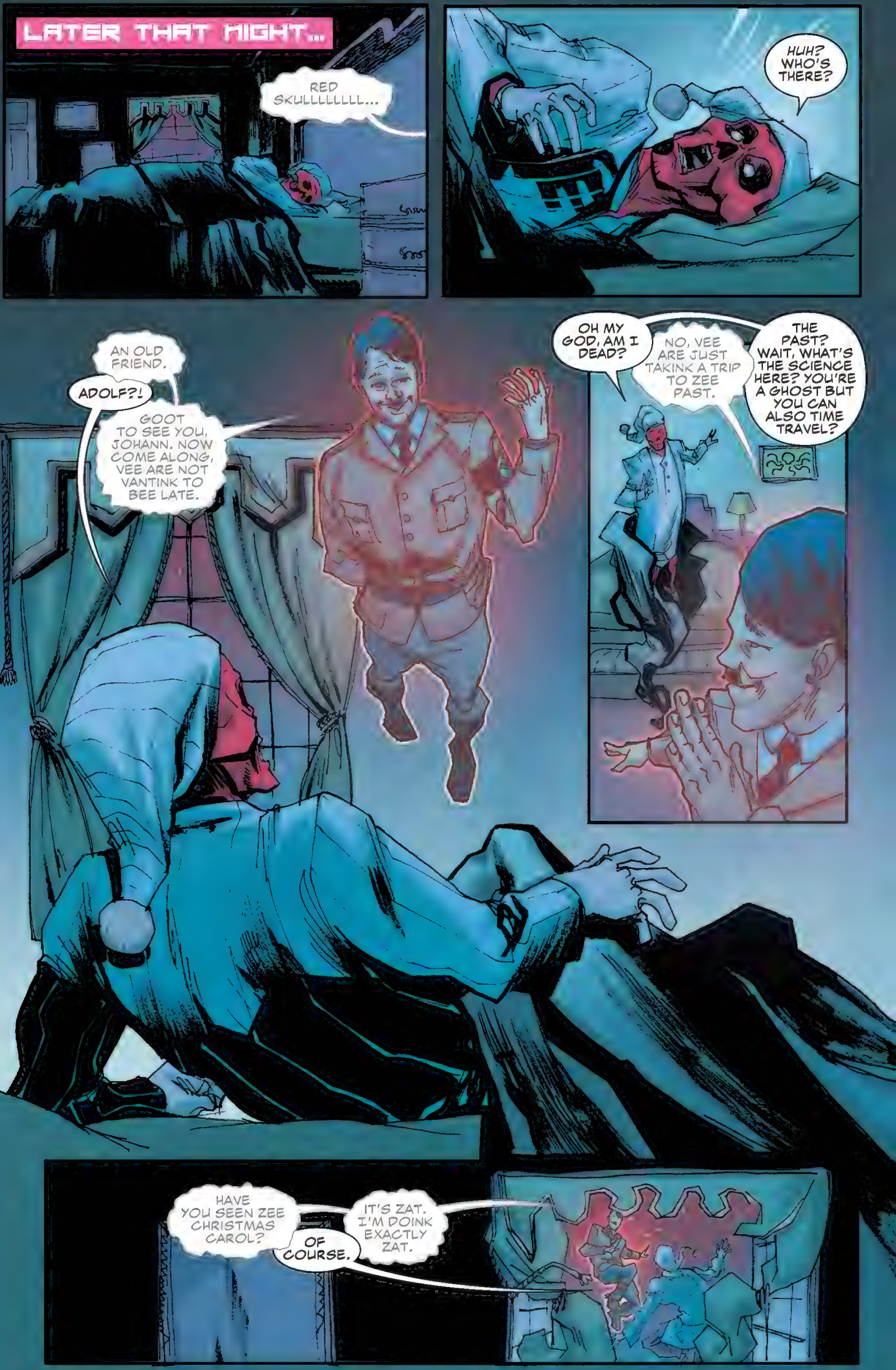

HAIL HYDRA, FOOD COURT CHECKOUT CLERK!
HAIL HATRED.
DON'T YOU JUST LOVE THIS TIME OF--WAIT, WHAT?!
TIPS

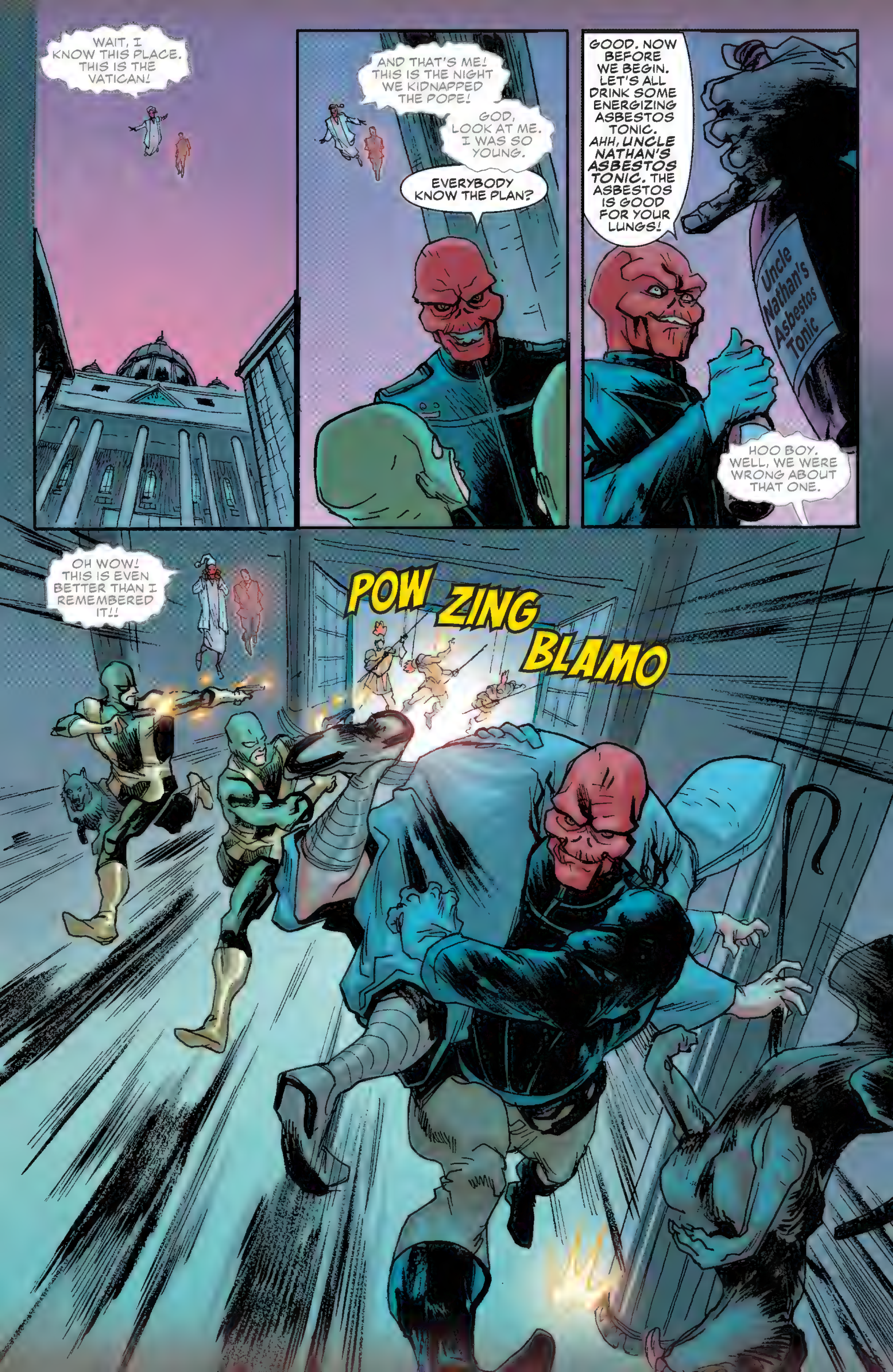

IT'S HAIL *HYDRA*. NOT HAIL *HATRED*.
NOT ANYMORE. CORPORATE IS MAKING US SAY "HAIL HATRED" NOW.
WHAT?! WHY?
SINCE WE JOINED WITH THE OTHER TERRORIST GROUPS, CORPORATE DECIDED TO CHANGE THE SLOGAN TO SOMETHING MORE INCLUSIVE.
WHAT. THE. BUTT. ARE. YOU. TALKING. ABOUT?
LOOK, GUY. I JUST SAY WHAT THEY TELL ME TO SAY.
HAIL HATRED
From: Corporate
Re: what to say when the Red Skull inevitably freaks out about this:
"Look, guy. I just say what they tell me to say."
MINUTES LATER...
MOST HONORABLE COUNCIL OF SHADOWY ELDERS...
YES, RED SKULL?
WHAT. THE. BUTT. ARE. YOU. TALKING. ABOUT?

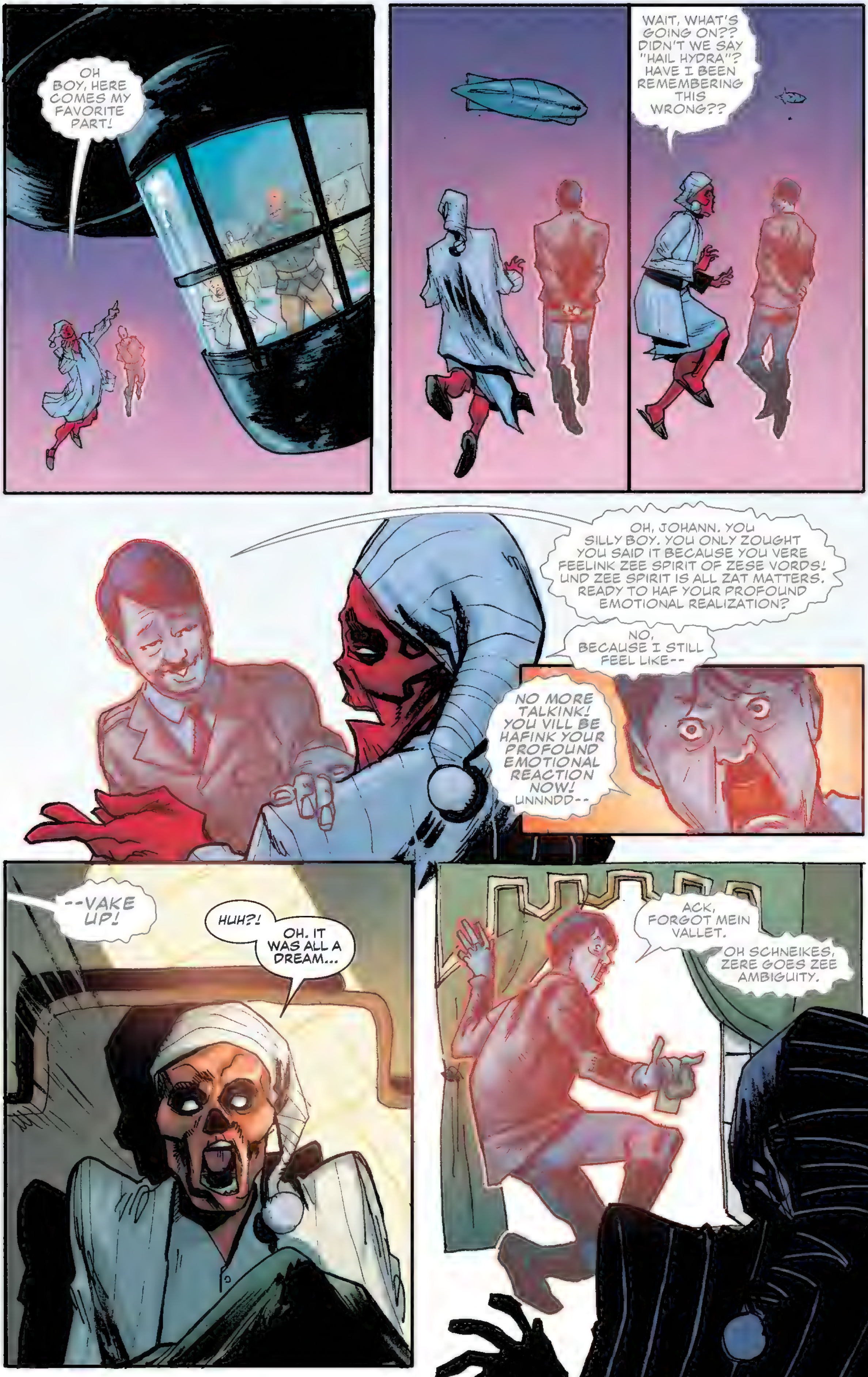

SORRY, RED SKULL. BUT WE DIDN'T WANT TO OFFEND ANY OF OUR NEWLY ALLIED MERCENARIES, SPLINTER CELLS, AND DEATH SQUADS.
OH, COME ON, IT'S NOT GOING TO OFFEND ANYBODY!
PEOPLE HAVE COMPLAINED.
WHAT? WHO COMPLAINED??
NOW, RED SKULL, YOU KNOW WE CAN'T TELL YOU THAT.
JARED DID.
OH, COME ON! REALLY?!
SORRY, I DIDN'T REALIZE WE WERE KEEPING THAT A SECRET.
EXCUSE ME, ARE YOU JARED?
YEAH, WHO ARE YOU?
WHO AM I? I'M THE FRIGGIN' RED SKULL, IS WHO I AM. I'VE BEEN THE FACE OF THIS ORGANIZATION SINCE DAY ONE. WHO ARE YOU?
JARED PRICE. I WAS JUST HIRED TO RUN HYDRA'S SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS.

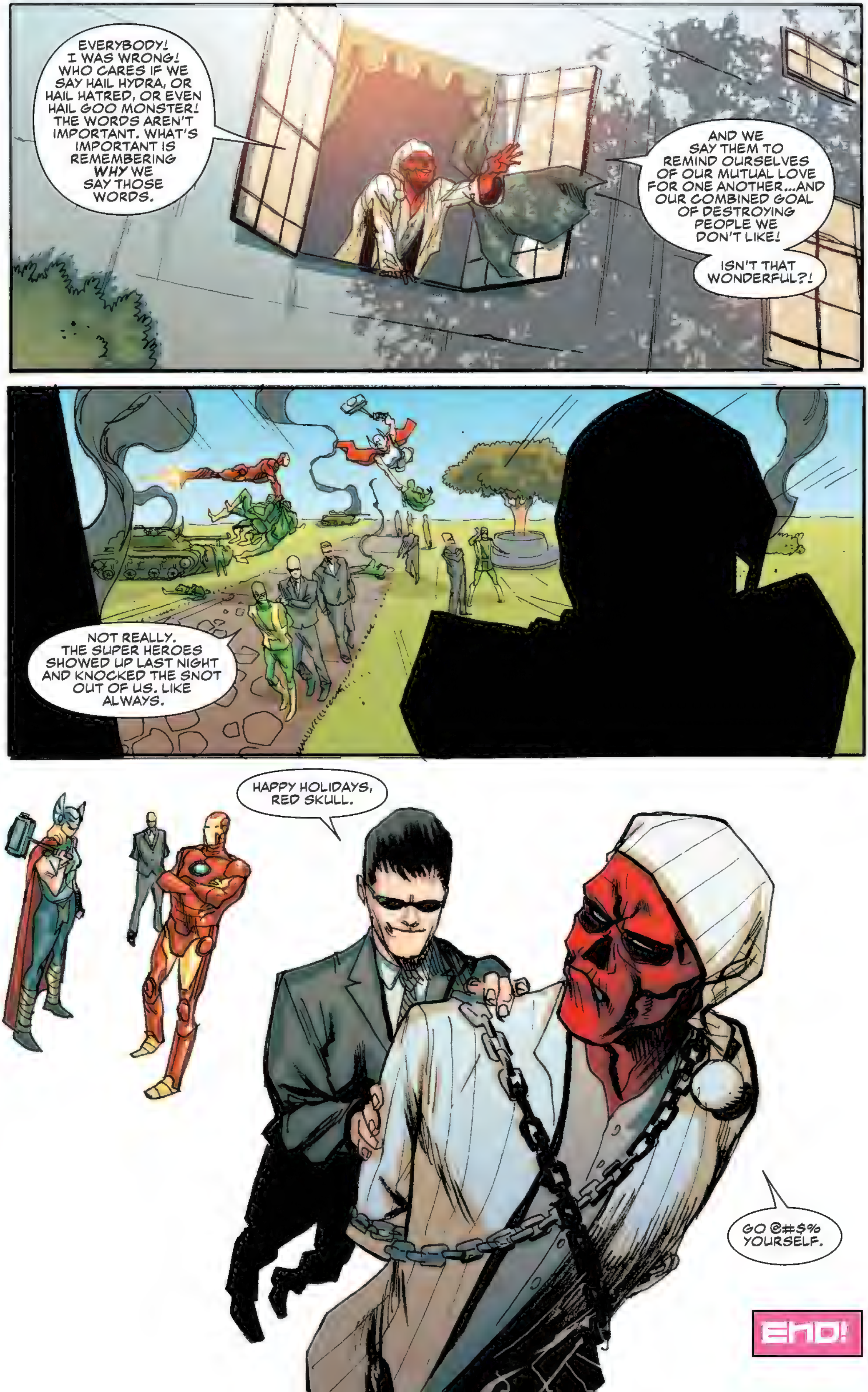

WE HAVE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS?
UH YEAH, HOW ELSE DO YOU THINK WE RECRUIT PEOPLE? THIS JUST SHOWS HOW OUT OF TOUCH YOU ARE.
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE I'VE HAD KILLED? PEOPLE THAT HAVE WORKED FOR ME, THAT I'VE HAD *KILLED??*
YEAH, I DO. AND SO DOES JEZEBOOTY.COM. THEY'VE REALLY BEEN LAYING INTO YOU ABOUT IT.
I WAS HIRED TO MAKE US MORE APPEALING TO OUTSIDE DEMOGRAPHICS. CONGRATS ON TAKING OVER THE EASTERN SEABOARD, BUT IF WE WANT TO HOLD ONTO IT, WE NEED TO APPEAR MORE INCLUSIVE.
LISTEN, RED. NOT EVERYBODY HAILS HYDRA THESE DAYS. FOR EXAMPLE, MY TERRORIST GROUP HAILS HIPPOGRIFF. AND I HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS THAT HAIL SPIKY SANDMONSTER.
I CAN'T HAIL ALL OF THOSE THINGS! IT WOULD TAKE FOREVER. PLUS, SPIKY SANDMONSTER DOESN'T EVEN SCAN CORRECTLY.
WELL, THAT'S WHY WE PICKED THE VERY GENERAL "HAIL HATRED."
SORRY, RED. BUT THE TIMES HAVE CHANGED. THIS WAY, EVERYBODY'S HAPPY.
WHAT'S WRONG, RED SKULL?
NOTHING.

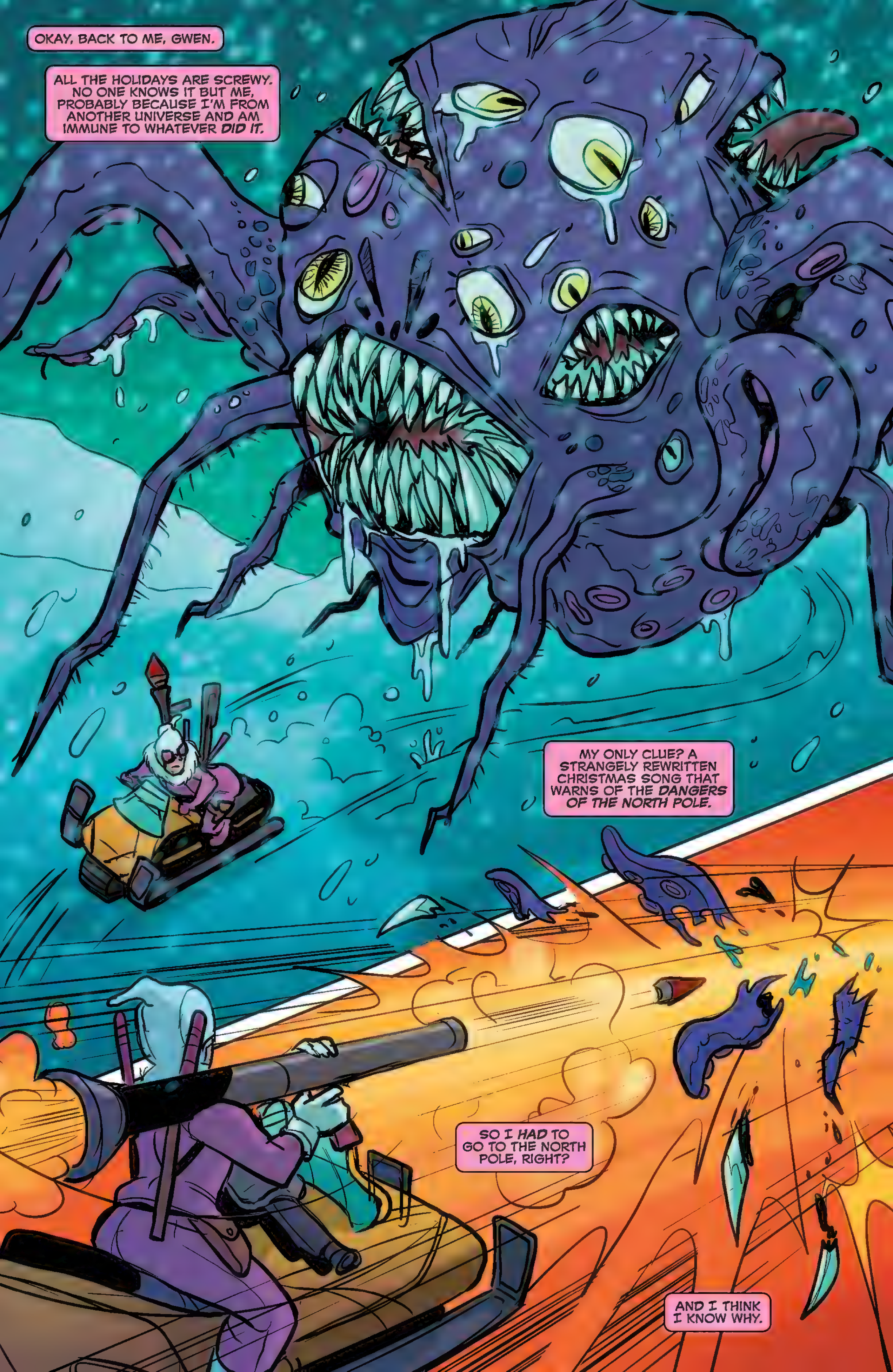

REALLY? DOESN'T SEEM LIKE NOTHING.
OH, YOU DON'T CARE, HAWKEYE. YOU'RE JUST GONNA TELL ME TO GO #@$% MYSELF.
=Sigh= DAYS LIKE THIS, I WISH HITLER WAS STILL ALIVE. HE ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO CHEER ME UP. GOD, I MISS THAT GUY EVERY DAY.
COME ON, TALK TO ME. LET ME HELP.
ALL RIGHT. FINE.
SO, RIGHT AFTER I STARTED HYDRA, I LED A MISSION TO KIDNAP THE POPE. AGAINST ALL ODDS, WE WERE SUCCESSFUL. AND AS WE WERE RIDING OFF IN OUR ZEPPELIN, TOGETHER, IN ONE VOICE, WE ALL SHOUTED "HAIL HYDRA."
CAPTAIN AMERICA DEFEATED US THE NEXT DAY, LIKE ALWAYS. BUT SAYING THOSE WORDS MADE ME FEEL ALIVE AND CONNECTED TO THE PURE SPIRIT OF TERRORISM. AND NOW IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE'S TRYING TO TAKE THAT FEELING AWAY FROM ME.
HERE. TRY THIS. CLOSE YOUR EYES.
TAKE A DEEP BREATH.
THINK OF A HAPPY MEMORY.
AND THEN GO @#$% YOURSELF.
SHUNK
JERK.
AAAAGHGHH!!

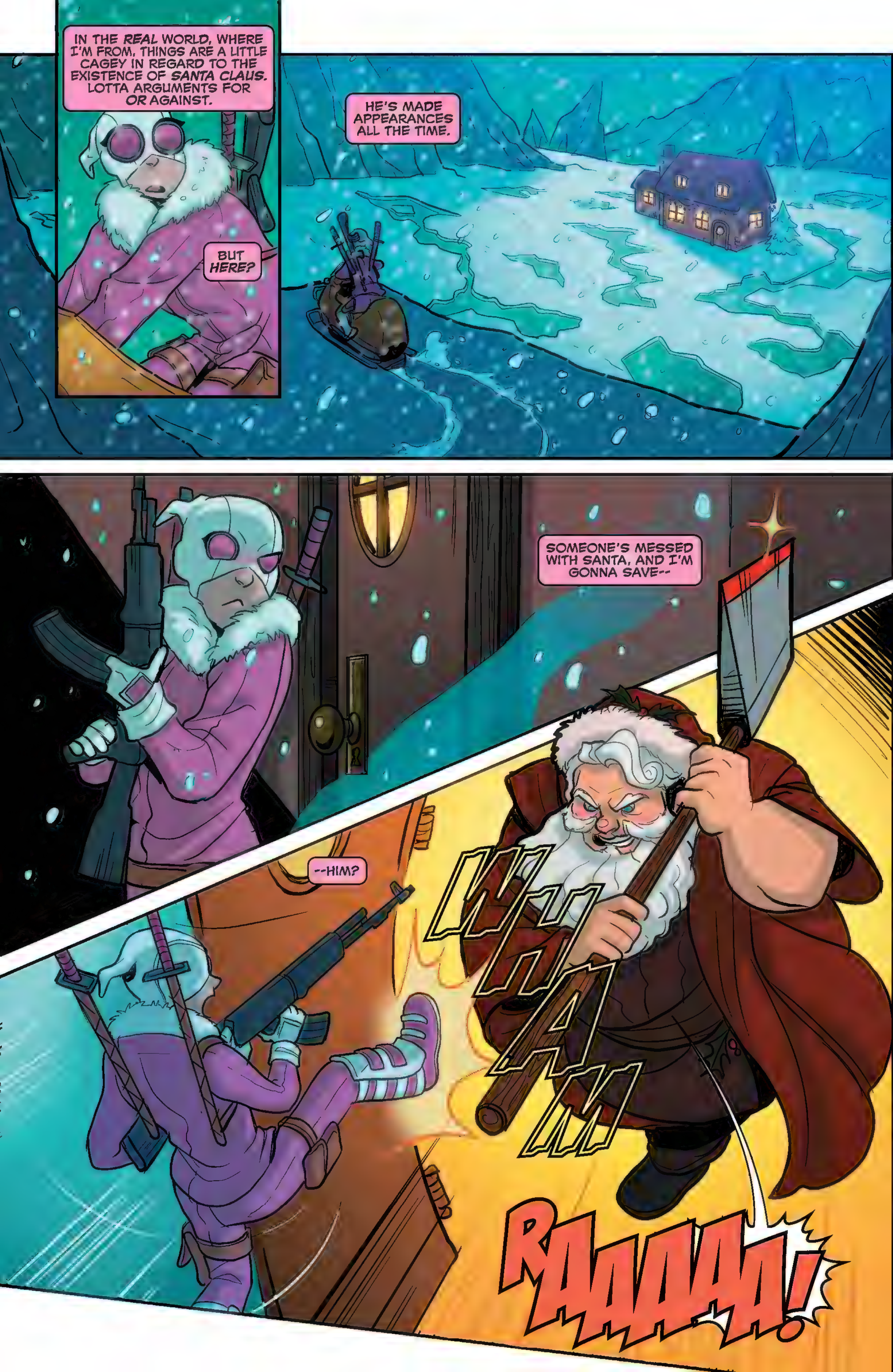

LATER THAT NIGHT...
RED SKULLLLLLLLL...
HUH? WHO'S THERE?
AN OLD FRIEND.
ADOLF?!
GOOT TO SEE YOU, JOHANN. NOW COME ALONG, VEE ARE NOT VANTINK TO BEE LATE.
OH MY GOD, AM I DEAD?
NO, VEE ARE JUST TAKINK A TRIP TO ZEE PAST.
THE PAST? WAIT, WHAT'S THE SCIENCE HERE? YOU'RE A GHOST BUT YOU CAN ALSO TIME TRAVEL?
HAVE YOU SEEN ZEE CHRISTMAS CAROL?
OF COURSE.
IT'S ZAT. I'M DOINK EXACTLY ZAT.

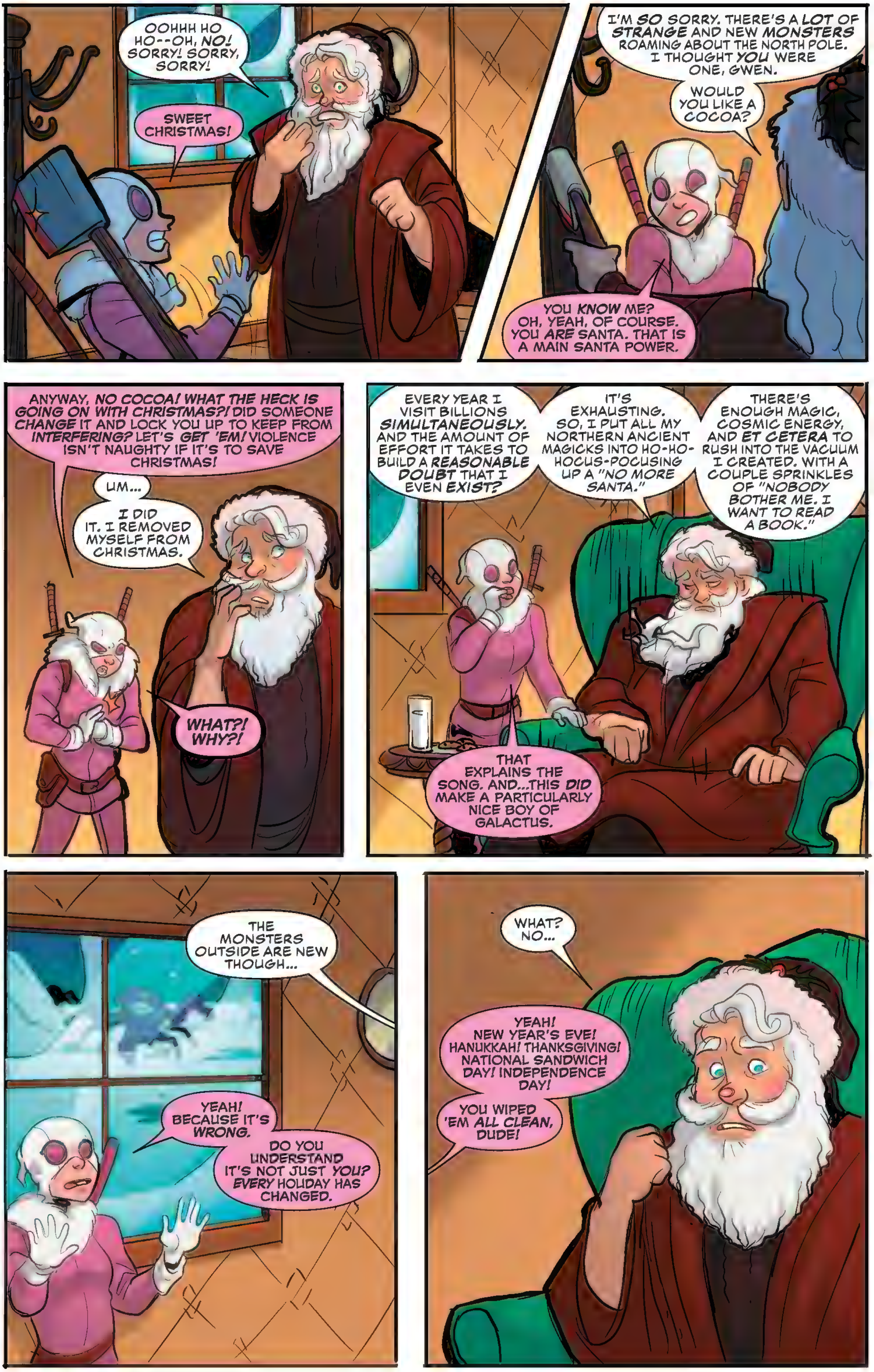

WAIT, I KNOW THIS PLACE. THIS IS THE VATICAN!
AND THAT'S ME! THIS IS THE NIGHT WE KIDNAPPED THE POPE!
GOD, LOOK AT ME. I WAS SO YOUNG.
EVERYBODY KNOW THE PLAN?
GOOD. NOW BEFORE WE BEGIN. LET'S ALL DRINK SOME ENERGIZING ASBESTOS TONIC. AHH, UNCLE NATHAN'S ASBESTOS TONIC. THE ASBESTOS IS GOOD FOR YOUR LUNGS!
Uncle Nathan's Asbestos Tonic
HOO BOY. WELL, WE WERE WRONG ABOUT THAT ONE.
OH WOW! THIS IS EVEN BETTER THAN I REMEMBERED IT!!
POW
ZING
BLAMO

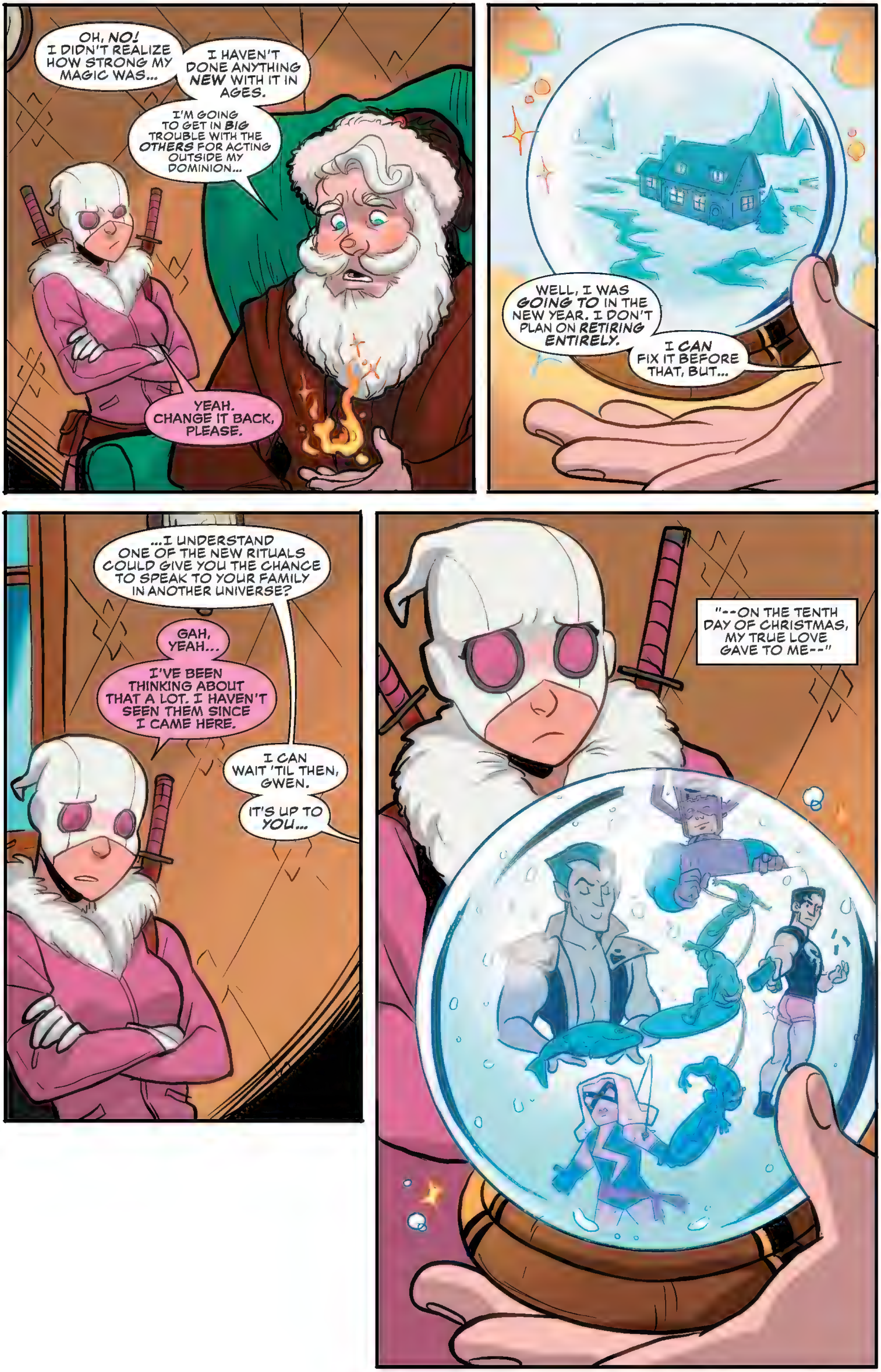

OH BOY, HERE COMES MY FAVORITE PART!
WAIT, WHAT'S GOING ON?? DIDN'T WE SAY "HAIL HYDRA"? HAVE I BEEN REMEMBERING THIS WRONG??
OH, JOHANN. YOU SILLY BOY. YOU ONLY ZOUGHT YOU SAID IT BECAUSE YOU VERE FEELINK ZEE SPIRIT OF ZESE VORDS! UND ZEE SPIRIT IS ALL ZAT MATTERS. READY TO HAF YOUR PROFOUND EMOTIONAL REALIZATION?
NO, BECAUSE I STILL FEEL LIKE--
NO MORE TALKINK! YOU VILL BE HAFINK YOUR PROFOUND EMOTIONAL REACTION NOW! UNNNDD--
--VAKE UP!
HUH?!
OH. IT WAS ALL A DREAM...
ACK, FORGOT MEIN VALLET.
OH SCHNEIKES, ZERE GOES ZEE AMBIGUITY.

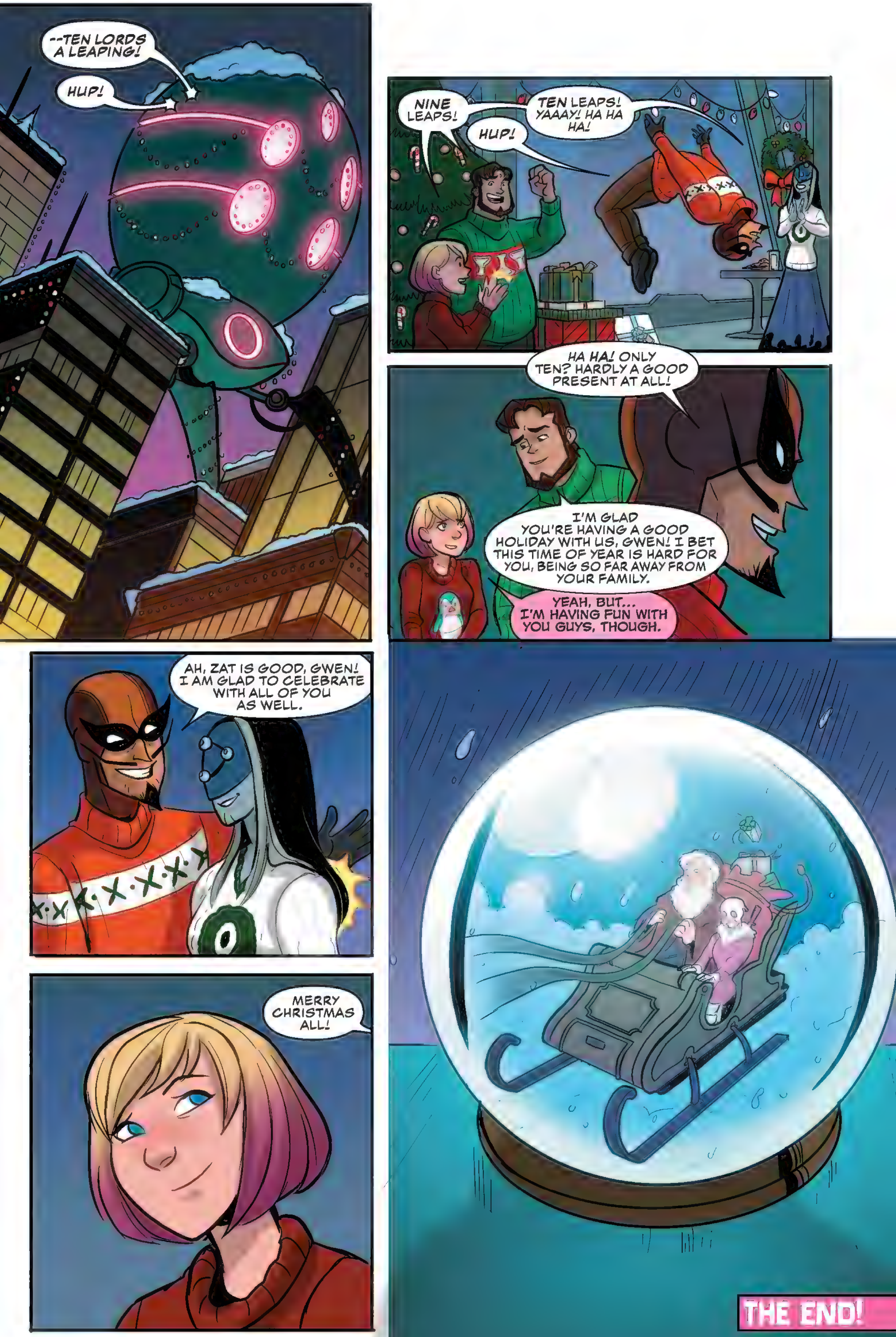

EVERYBODY! I WAS WRONG! WHO CARES IF WE SAY HAIL HYDRA, OR HAIL HATRED, OR EVEN HAIL GOO MONSTER! THE WORDS AREN'T IMPORTANT. WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS REMEMBERING *WHY* WE SAY THOSE WORDS.
AND WE SAY THEM TO REMIND OURSELVES OF OUR MUTUAL LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER...AND OUR COMBINED GOAL OF DESTROYING PEOPLE WE DON'T LIKE!
ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL?!
NOT REALLY. THE SUPER HEROES SHOWED UP LAST NIGHT AND KNOCKED THE SNOT OUT OF US. LIKE ALWAYS.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS, RED SKULL.
GO @#$% YOURSELF.
END!


OKAY, BACK TO ME, GWEN.
ALL THE HOLIDAYS ARE SCREWY. NO ONE KNOWS IT BUT ME, PROBABLY BECAUSE I'M FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE AND AM IMMUNE TO WHATEVER *DID IT.*
MY ONLY CLUE? A STRANGELY REWRITTEN CHRISTMAS SONG THAT WARNS OF THE *DANGERS OF THE NORTH POLE.*
SO I *HAD* TO GO TO THE NORTH POLE, RIGHT?
AND I THINK I KNOW WHY.

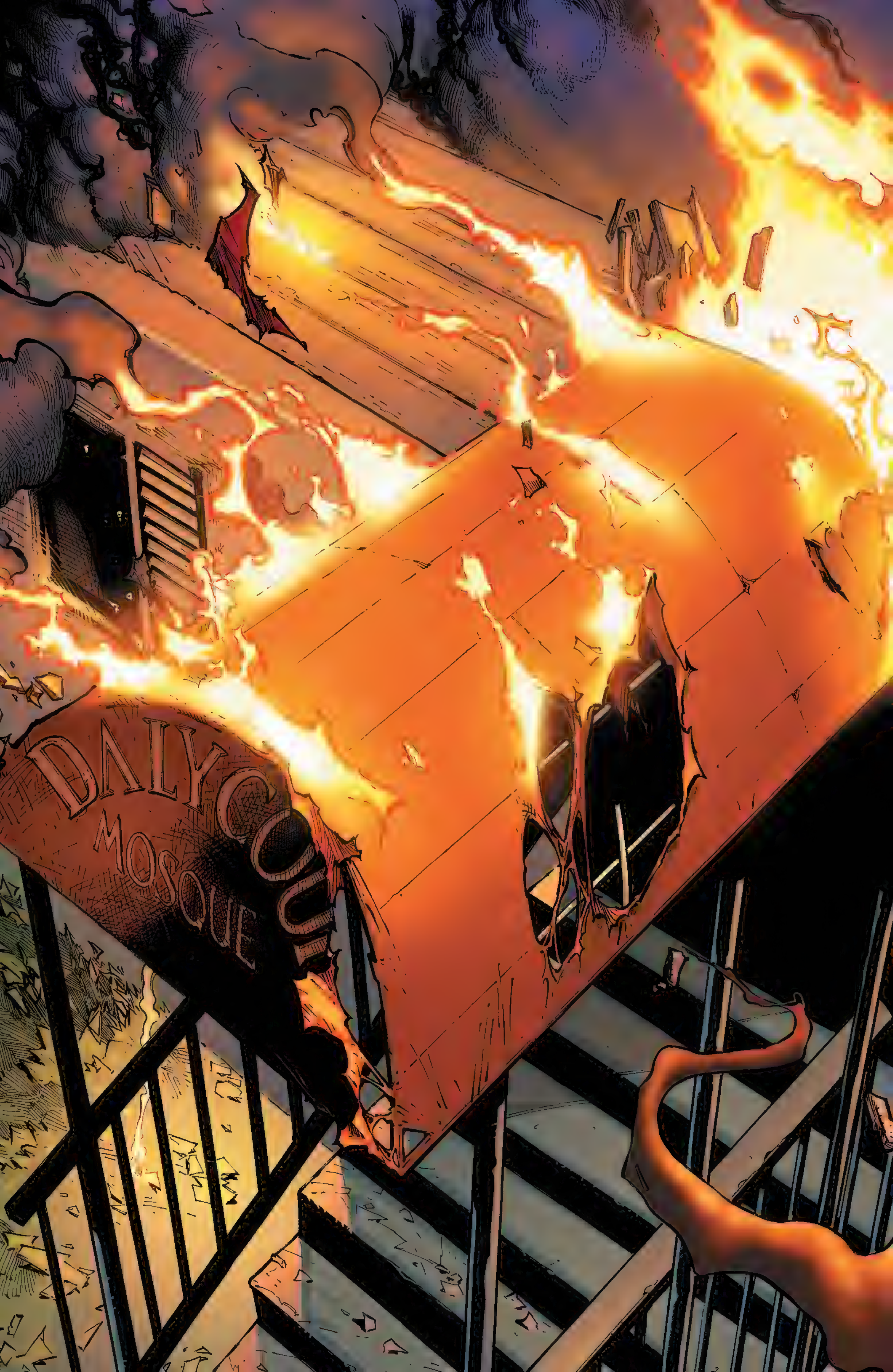

IN THE *REAL* WORLD, WHERE I'M FROM, THINGS ARE A LITTLE CAGEY IN REGARD TO THE EXISTENCE OF *SANTA CLAUS*. LOTTA ARGUMENTS FOR OR AGAINST.
BUT *HERE?*
HE'S MADE APPEARANCES ALL THE TIME.
SOMEONE'S MESSED WITH SANTA, AND I'M GONNA SAVE--
--HIM?
WHAM
RAAAAAA!

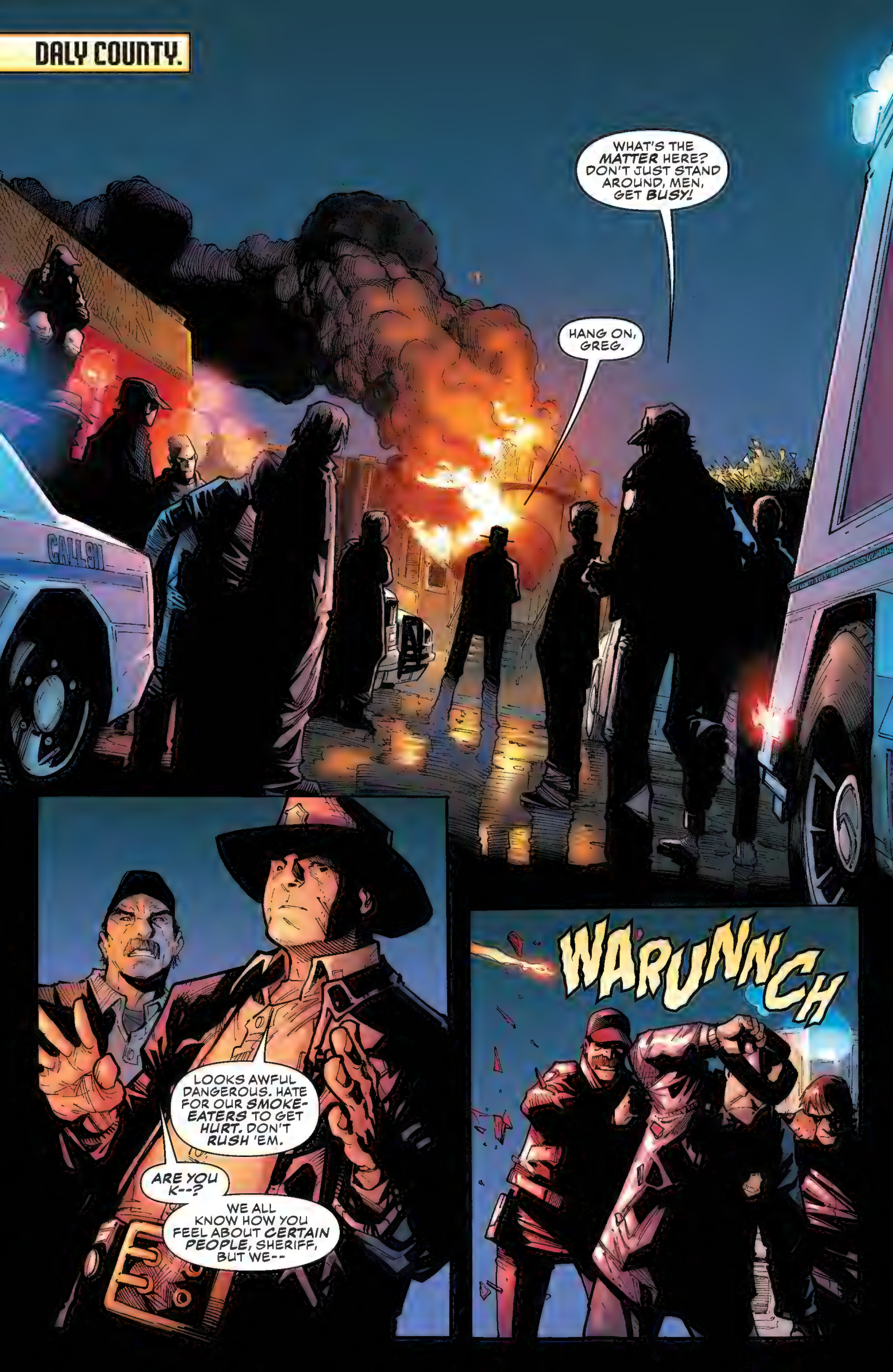

OOHHH HO HO--OH, NO! SORRY! SORRY, SORRY!
SWEET CHRISTMAS!
I'M SO SORRY. THERE'S A LOT OF STRANGE AND NEW MONSTERS ROAMING ABOUT THE NORTH POLE. I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE, GWEN.
WOULD YOU LIKE A COCOA?
YOU KNOW ME? OH, YEAH, OF COURSE. YOU ARE SANTA. THAT IS A MAIN SANTA POWER.
ANYWAY, NO COCOA! WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON WITH CHRISTMAS?! DID SOMEONE CHANGE IT AND LOCK YOU UP TO KEEP FROM INTERFERING? LET'S GET 'EM! VIOLENCE ISN'T NAUGHTY IF IT'S TO SAVE CHRISTMAS!
UM...
I DID IT. I REMOVED MYSELF FROM CHRISTMAS.
WHAT?! WHY?!
EVERY YEAR I VISIT BILLIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY. AND THE AMOUNT OF EFFORT IT TAKES TO BUILD A REASONABLE DOUBT THAT I EVEN EXIST?
IT'S EXHAUSTING. SO, I PUT ALL MY NORTHERN ANCIENT MAGICKS INTO HO-HO-HOCUS-POCUSING UP A "NO MORE SANTA."
THERE'S ENOUGH MAGIC, COSMIC ENERGY, AND ET CETERA TO RUSH INTO THE VACUUM I CREATED, WITH A COUPLE SPRINKLES OF "NOBODY BOTHER ME. I WANT TO READ A BOOK."
THAT EXPLAINS THE SONG. AND...THIS DID MAKE A PARTICULARLY NICE BOY OF GALACTUS.
THE MONSTERS OUTSIDE ARE NEW THOUGH...
YEAH! BECAUSE IT'S WRONG.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND IT'S NOT JUST YOU? EVERY HOLIDAY HAS CHANGED.
WHAT? NO...
YEAH! NEW YEAR'S EVE! HANUKKAH! THANKSGIVING! NATIONAL SANDWICH DAY! INDEPENDENCE DAY!
YOU WIPED 'EM ALL CLEAN, DUDE!

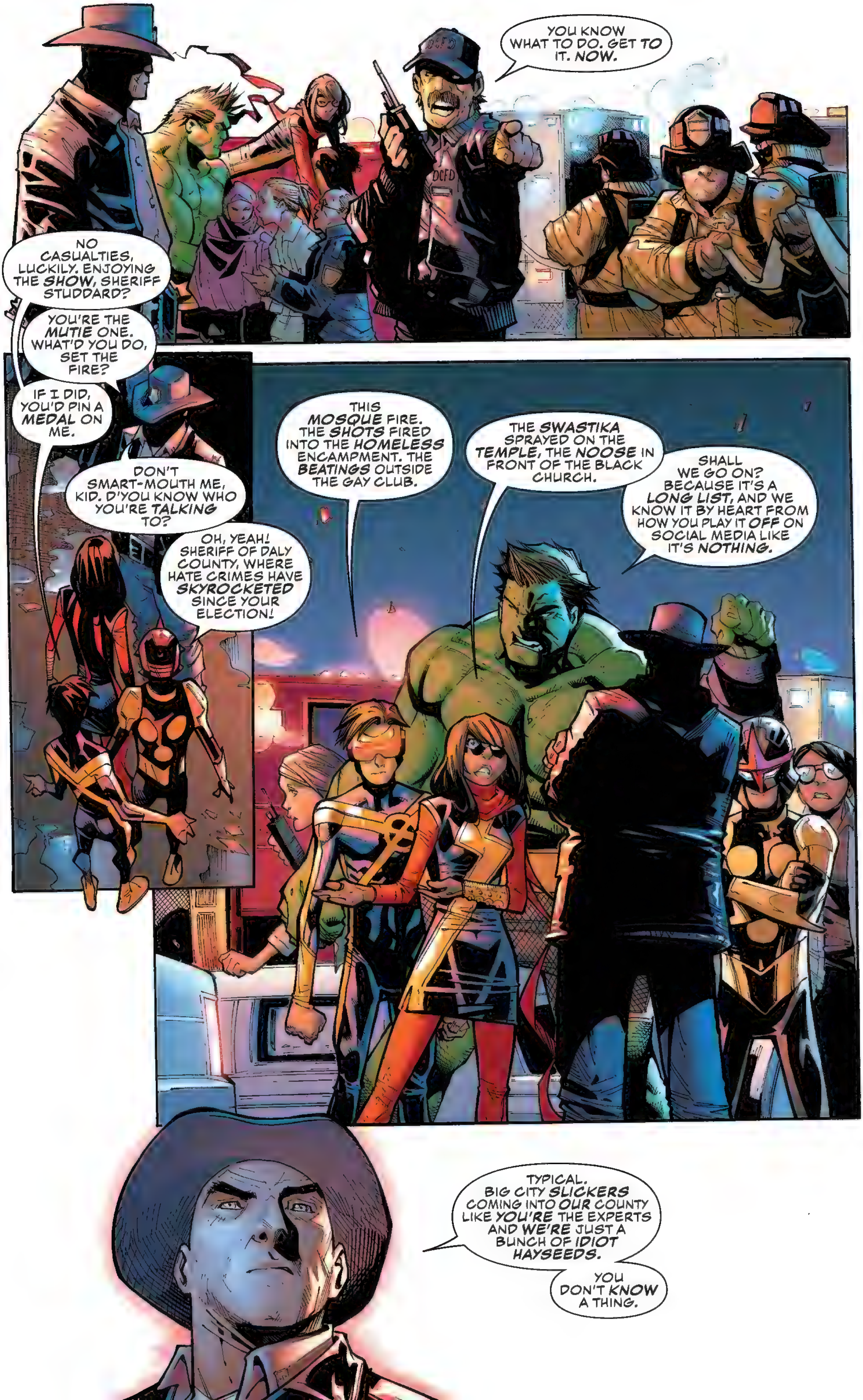

OH, NO! I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW STRONG MY MAGIC WAS...
I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING NEW WITH IT IN AGES.
I'M GOING TO GET IN BIG TROUBLE WITH THE OTHERS FOR ACTING OUTSIDE MY DOMINION...
YEAH. CHANGE IT BACK, PLEASE.
WELL, I WAS GOING TO IN THE NEW YEAR. I DON'T PLAN ON RETIRING ENTIRELY.
I CAN FIX IT BEFORE THAT, BUT...
...I UNDERSTAND ONE OF THE NEW RITUALS COULD GIVE YOU THE CHANCE TO SPEAK TO YOUR FAMILY IN ANOTHER UNIVERSE?
GAH, YEAH...
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT A LOT. I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE I CAME HERE.
I CAN WAIT 'TIL THEN, GWEN.
IT'S UP TO YOU...
"--ON THE TENTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE GAVE TO ME--"

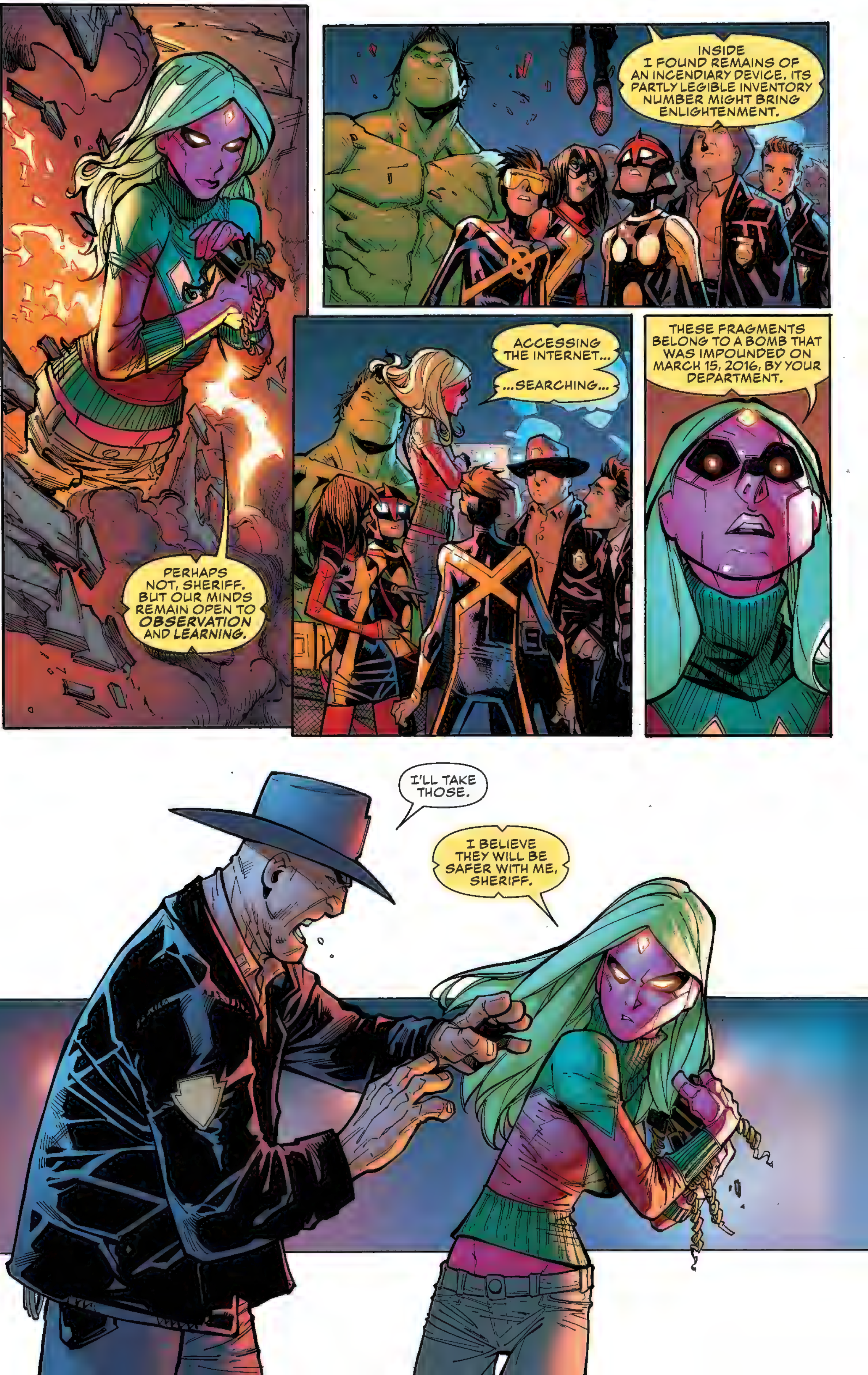

--TEN LORDS A LEAPING!
HUP!
NINE LEAPS!
TEN LEAPS! YAAAY! HA HA HA!
HUP!
HA HA! ONLY TEN? HARDLY A GOOD PRESENT AT ALL!
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD HOLIDAY WITH US, GWEN! I BET THIS TIME OF YEAR IS HARD FOR YOU, BEING SO FAR AWAY FROM YOUR FAMILY.
YEAH, BUT... I'M HAVING FUN WITH YOU GUYS, THOUGH.
AH, ZAT IS GOOD, GWEN! I AM GLAD TO CELEBRATE WITH ALL OF YOU AS WELL.
MERRY CHRISTMAS ALL!
THE END!

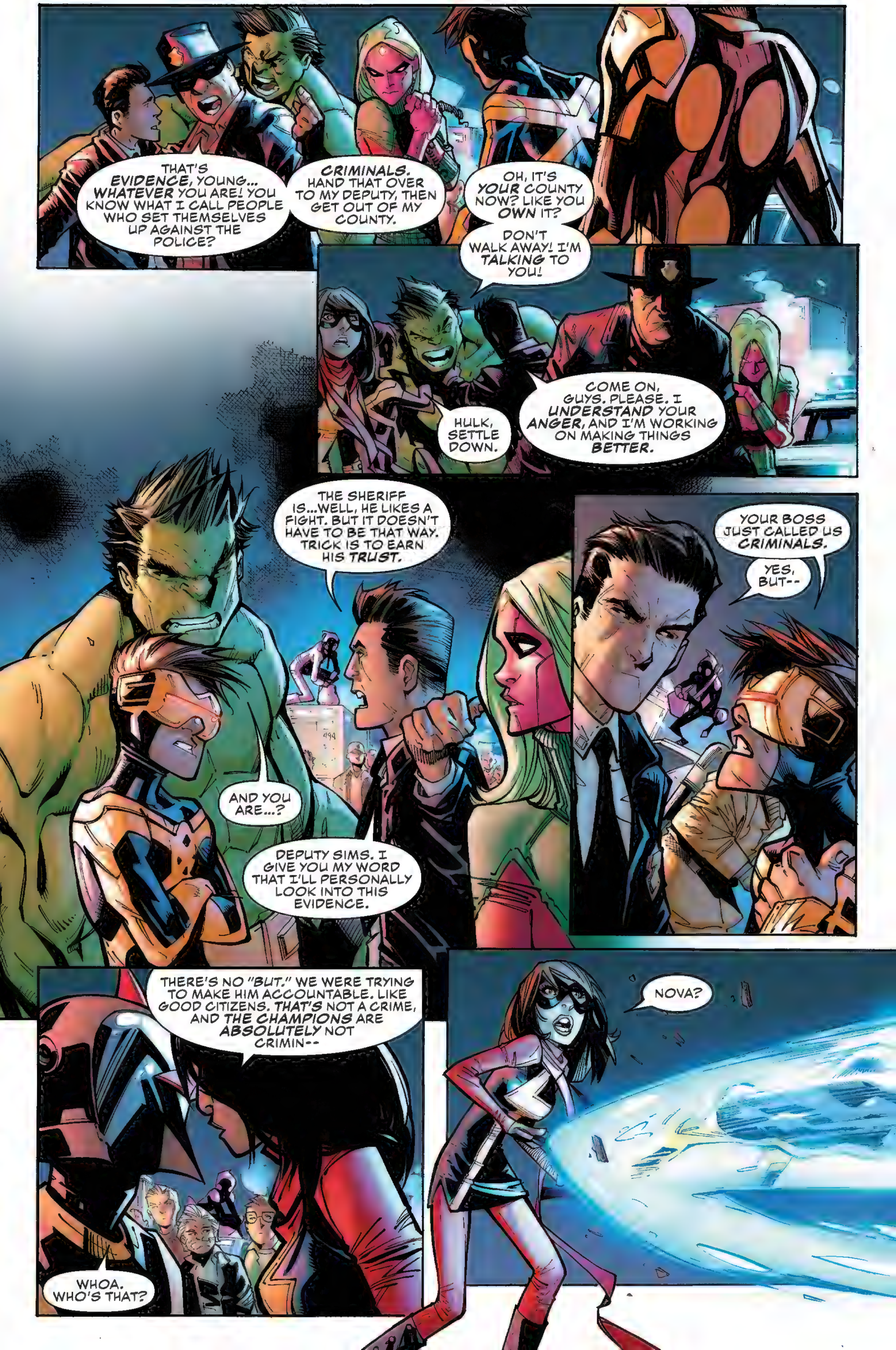
CHAMPIONS #5

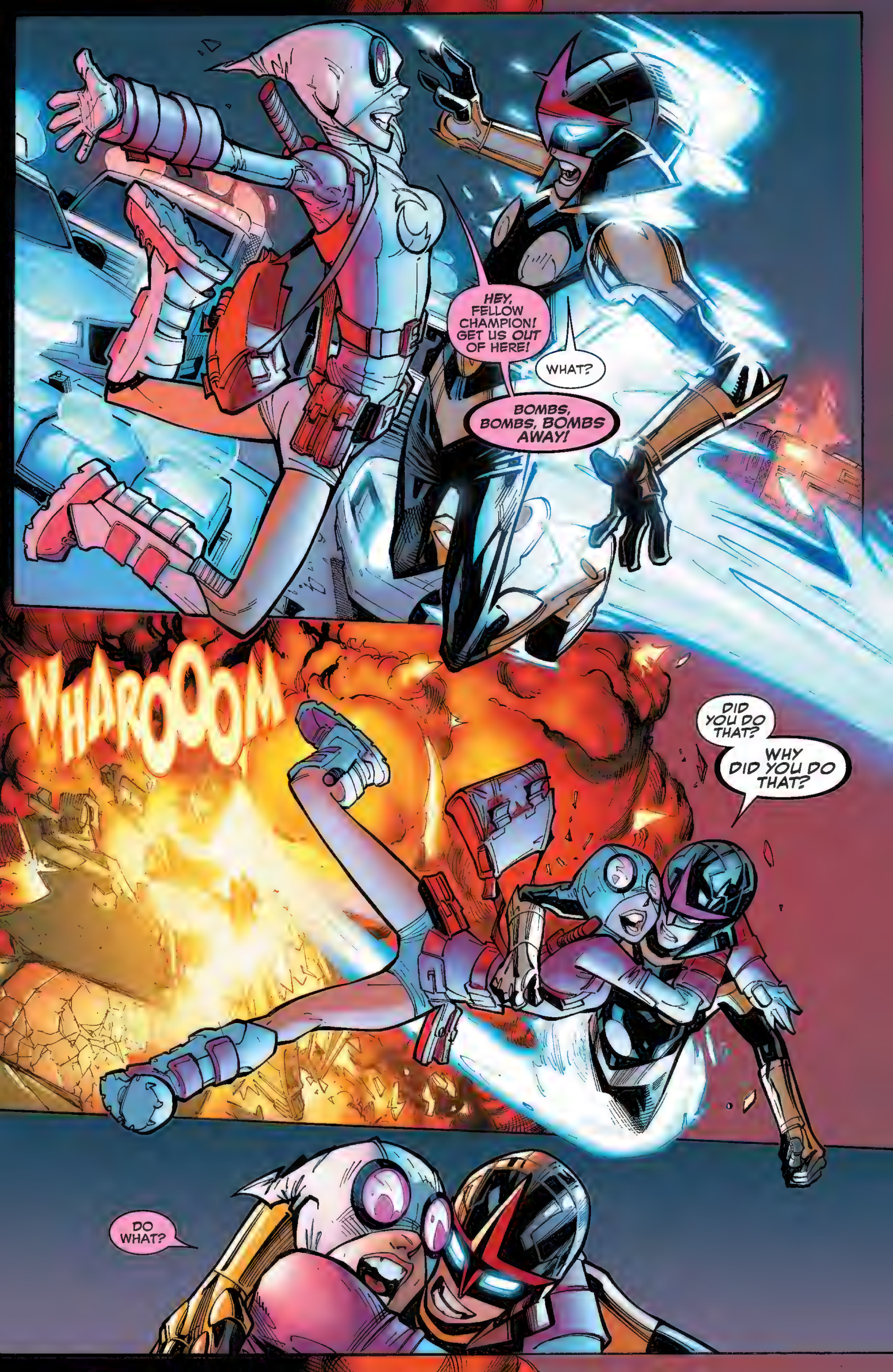

DALY COU
MOSQUE

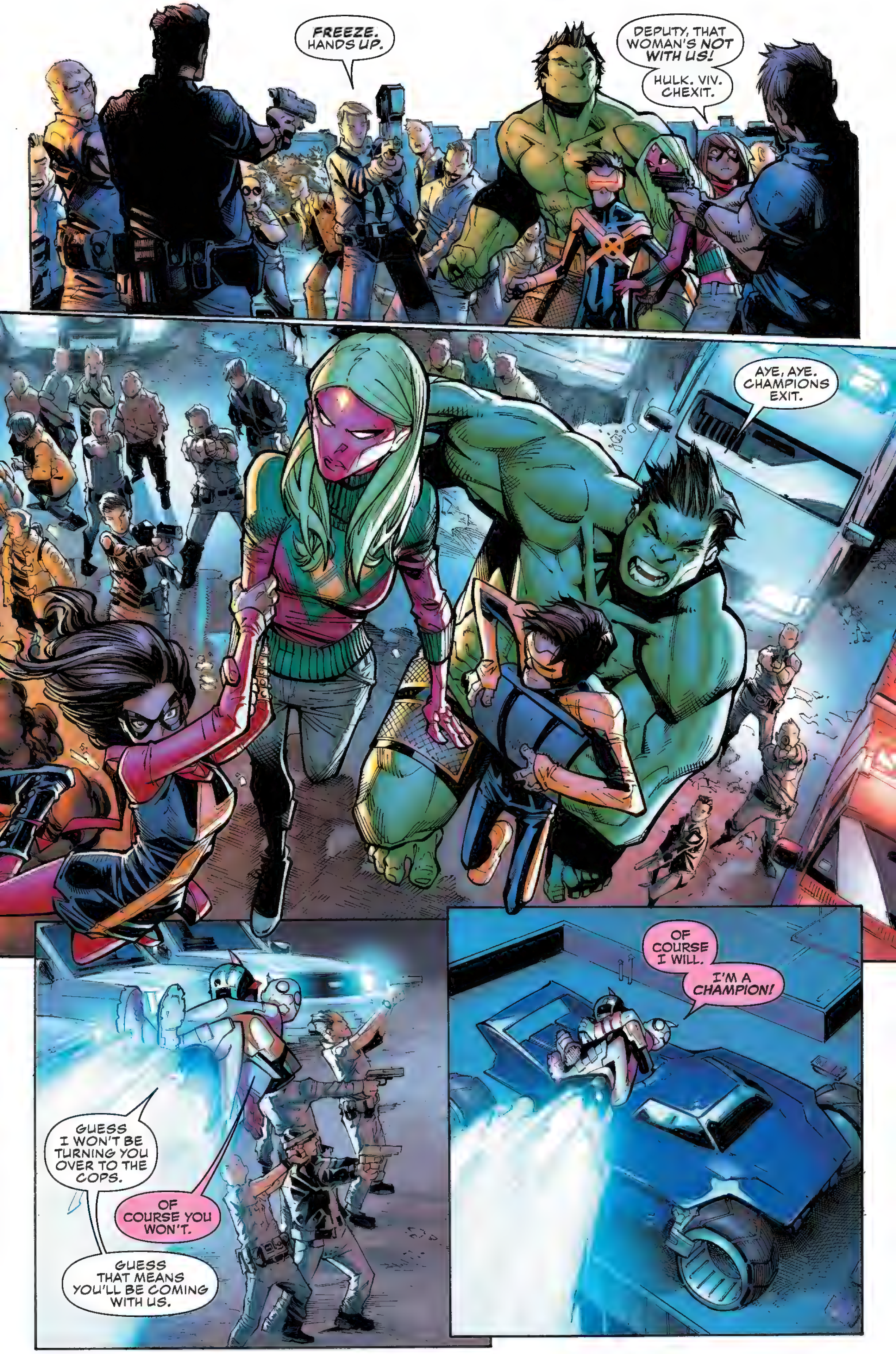

DALY COUNTY.
WHAT'S THE *MATTER* HERE? DON'T JUST STAND AROUND, MEN, GET *BUSY!*
HANG ON, GREG.
CALL 911
LOOKS AWFUL DANGEROUS. HATE FOR OUR *SMOKE-EATERS* TO GET *HURT.* DON'T *RUSH* 'EM.
ARE YOU K--?
WE ALL KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT *CERTAIN PEOPLE,* SHERIFF, BUT WE--
WARUNNCH

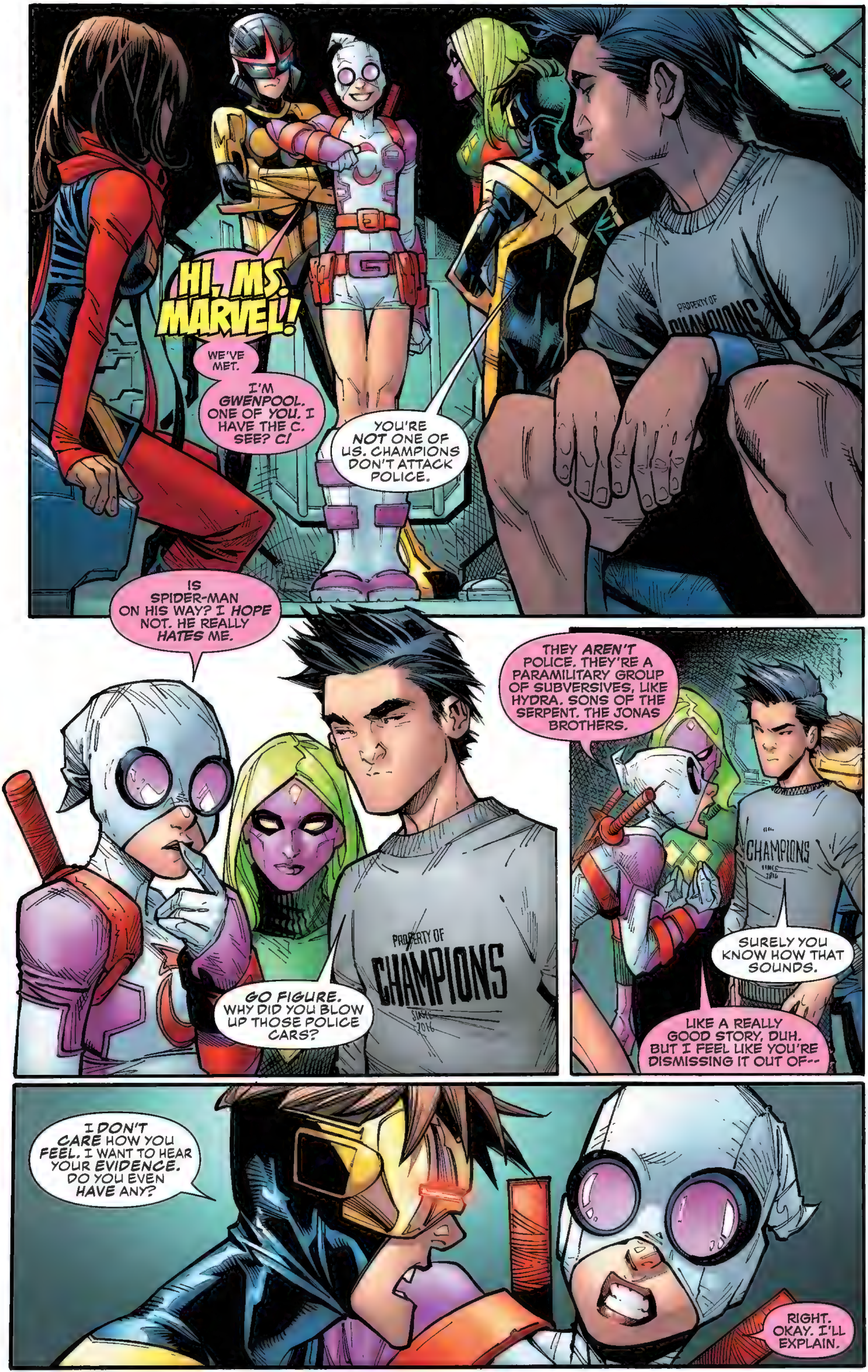

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. GET TO IT. NOW.
NO CASUALTIES, LUCKILY. ENJOYING THE SHOW, SHERIFF STUDDARD?
YOU'RE THE MUTIE ONE. WHAT'D YOU DO, SET THE FIRE?
IF I DID, YOU'D PIN A MEDAL ON ME.
DON'T SMART-MOUTH ME, KID. D'YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO?
OH, YEAH! SHERIFF OF DALY COUNTY, WHERE HATE CRIMES HAVE SKYROCKETED SINCE YOUR ELECTION!
THIS MOSQUE FIRE. THE SHOTS FIRED INTO THE HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT. THE BEATINGS OUTSIDE THE GAY CLUB.
THE SWASTIKA SPRAYED ON THE TEMPLE, THE NOOSE IN FRONT OF THE BLACK CHURCH.
SHALL WE GO ON? BECAUSE IT'S A LONG LIST, AND WE KNOW IT BY HEART FROM HOW YOU PLAY IT OFF ON SOCIAL MEDIA LIKE IT'S NOTHING.
TYPICAL. BIG CITY SLICKERS COMING INTO OUR COUNTY LIKE YOU'RE THE EXPERTS AND WE'RE JUST A BUNCH OF IDIOT HAYSEEDS.
YOU DON'T KNOW A THING.

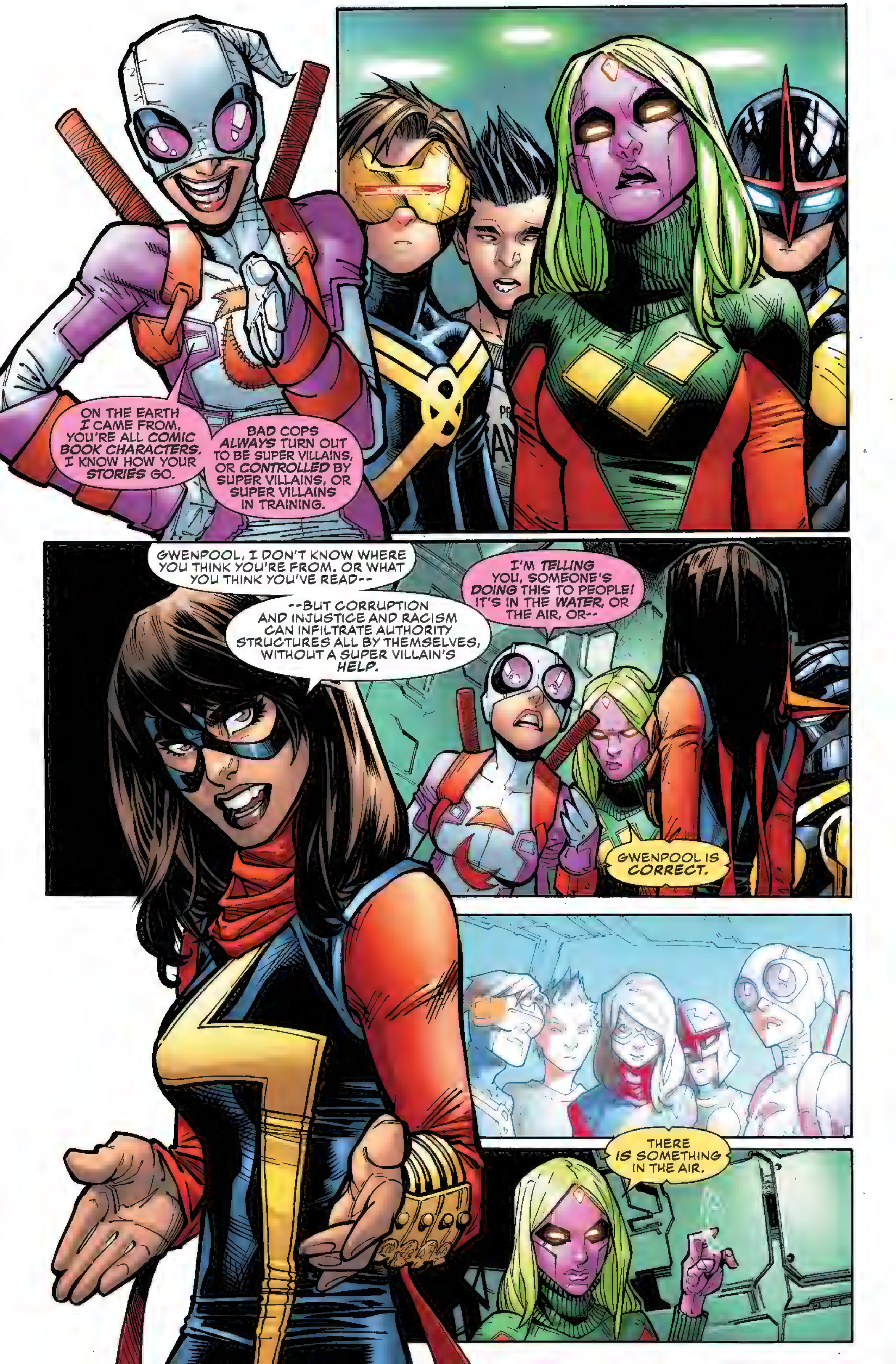

PERHAPS NOT, SHERIFF. BUT OUR MINDS REMAIN OPEN TO *OBSERVATION* AND LEARNING.
INSIDE I FOUND REMAINS OF AN INCENDIARY DEVICE. ITS PARTLY LEGIBLE INVENTORY NUMBER MIGHT BRING ENLIGHTENMENT.
ACCESSING THE INTERNET...
...SEARCHING...
THESE FRAGMENTS BELONG TO A BOMB THAT WAS IMPOUNDED ON MARCH 15, 2016, BY YOUR DEPARTMENT.
I'LL TAKE THOSE.
I BELIEVE THEY WILL BE SAFER WITH ME, SHERIFF.

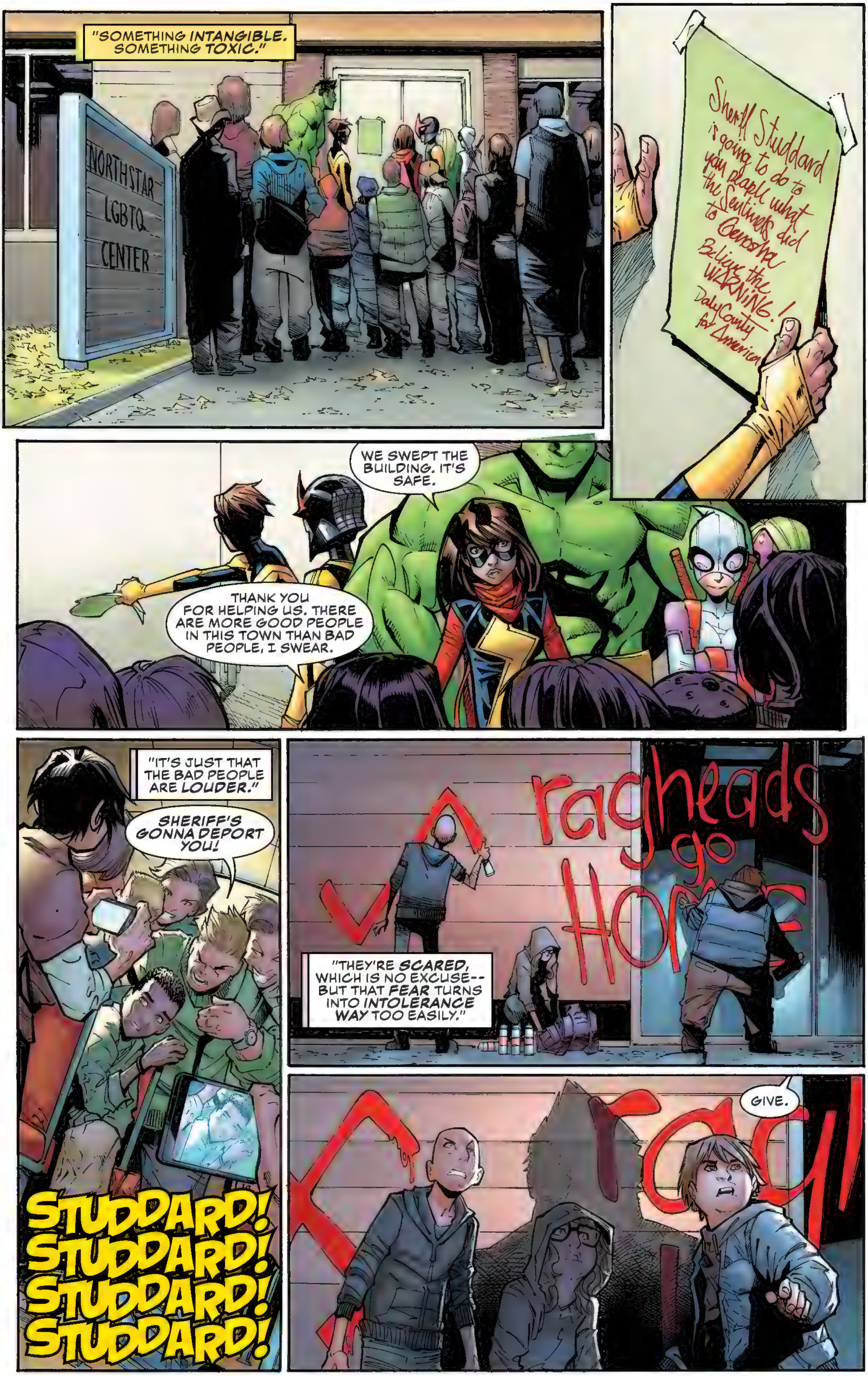

THAT'S EVIDENCE, YOUNG... WHATEVER YOU ARE! YOU KNOW WHAT I CALL PEOPLE WHO SET THEMSELVES UP AGAINST THE POLICE?
CRIMINALS. HAND THAT OVER TO MY DEPUTY, THEN GET OUT OF MY COUNTY.
OH, IT'S YOUR COUNTY NOW? LIKE YOU OWN IT?
DON'T WALK AWAY! I'M TALKING TO YOU!
HULK, SETTLE DOWN.
COME ON, GUYS. PLEASE. I UNDERSTAND YOUR ANGER, AND I'M WORKING ON MAKING THINGS BETTER.
THE SHERIFF IS...WELL, HE LIKES A FIGHT. BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY. TRICK IS TO EARN HIS TRUST.
AND YOU ARE...?
DEPUTY SIMS. I GIVE YOU MY WORD THAT I'LL PERSONALLY LOOK INTO THIS EVIDENCE.
YOUR BOSS JUST CALLED US CRIMINALS.
YES, BUT--
THERE'S NO "BUT." WE WERE TRYING TO MAKE HIM ACCOUNTABLE. LIKE GOOD CITIZENS. THAT'S NOT A CRIME, AND THE CHAMPIONS ARE ABSOLUTELY NOT CRIMIN--
WHOA. WHO'S THAT?
NOVA?

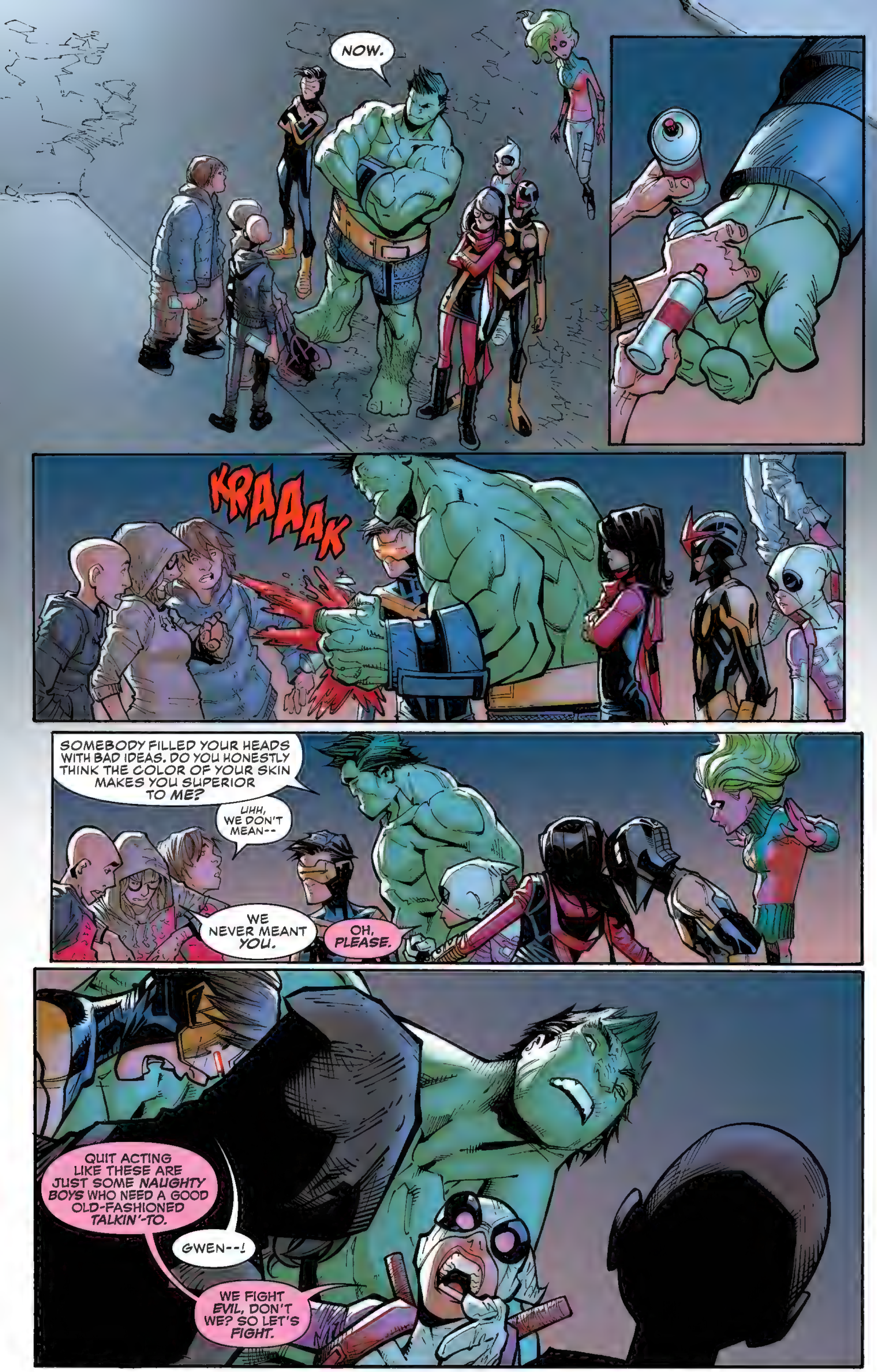

HEY, FELLOW CHAMPION! GET US OUT OF HERE!
WHAT?
BOMBS, BOMBS, BOMBS AWAY!
WHAROOOM
DID YOU DO THAT?
WHY DID YOU DO THAT?
DO WHAT?

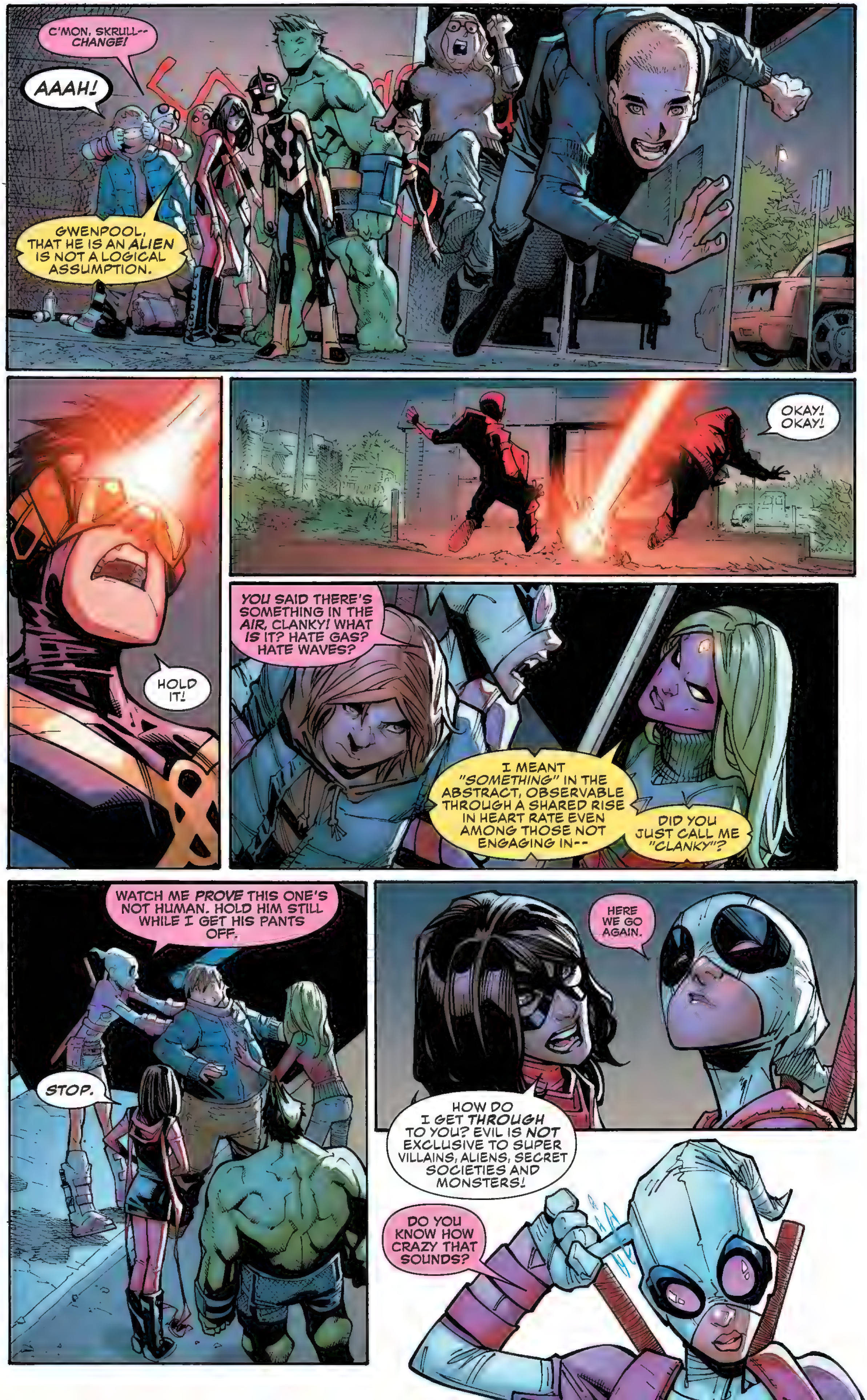

FREEZE. HANDS UP.
DEPUTY, THAT WOMAN'S NOT WITH US!
HULK. VIV. CHEXIT.
AYE, AYE. CHAMPIONS EXIT.
GUESS I WON'T BE TURNING YOU OVER TO THE COPS.
OF COURSE YOU WON'T.
GUESS THAT MEANS YOU'LL BE COMING WITH US.
OF COURSE I WILL.
I'M A CHAMPION!

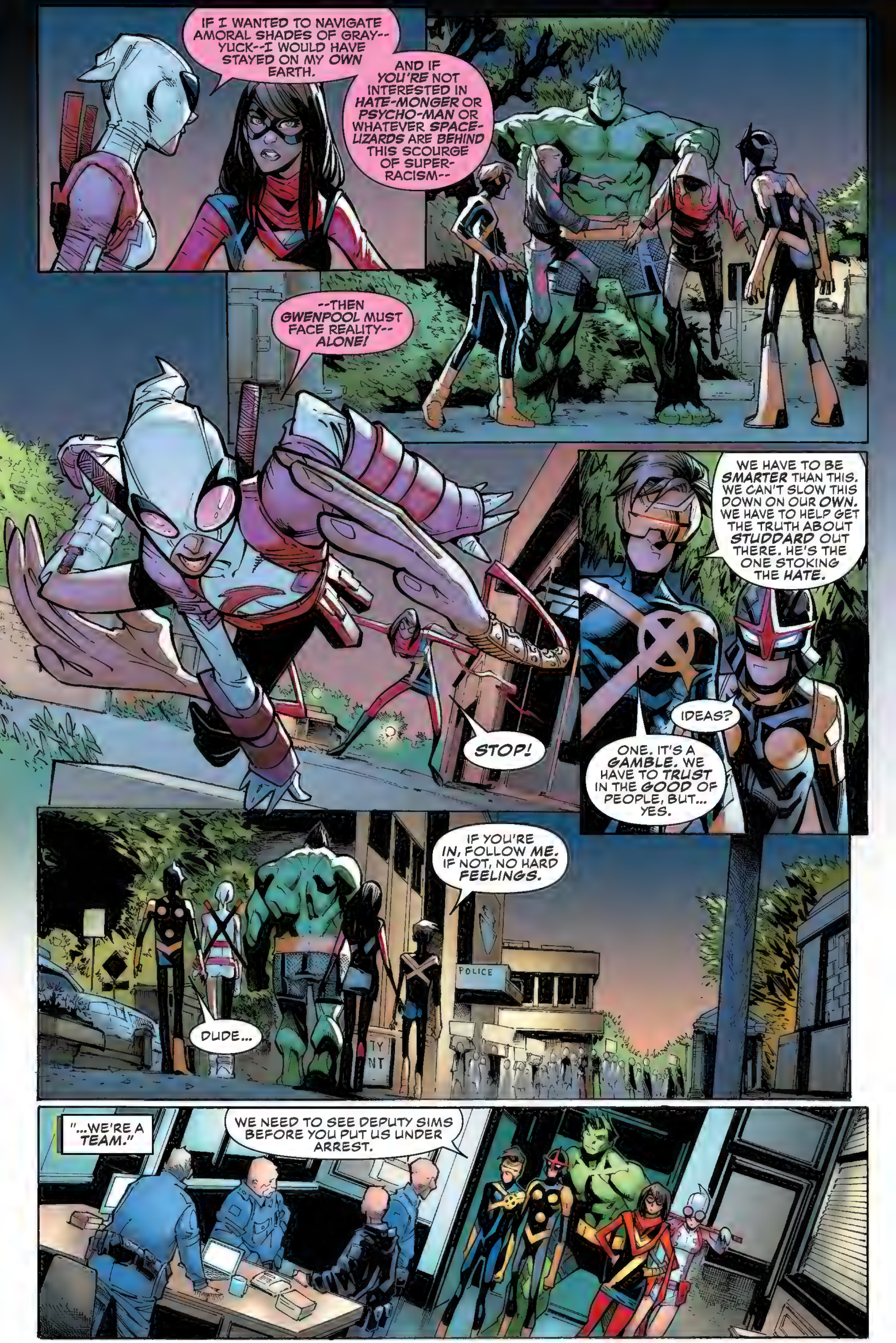

HI, MS. MARVEL!
WE'VE MET.
I'M GWENPOOL. ONE OF *YOU*. I HAVE THE C. SEE? C!
YOU'RE *NOT* ONE OF US. CHAMPIONS DON'T ATTACK POLICE.
PROPERTY OF CHAMPIONS
IS SPIDER-MAN ON HIS WAY? I *HOPE* NOT. HE REALLY *HATES* ME.
PROPERTY OF CHAMPIONS SINCE 2016
GO FIGURE. WHY DID YOU BLOW UP THOSE POLICE CARS?
THEY *AREN'T* POLICE. THEY'RE A PARAMILITARY GROUP OF SUBVERSIVES, LIKE HYDRA. SONS OF THE SERPENT. THE JONAS BROTHERS.
CHAMPIONS SINCE 2016
SURELY YOU KNOW HOW THAT SOUNDS.
LIKE A REALLY GOOD STORY, DUH. BUT I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE DISMISSING IT OUT OF--
I *DON'T CARE* HOW YOU *FEEL*. I WANT TO HEAR YOUR *EVIDENCE*. DO YOU EVEN *HAVE* ANY?
RIGHT. OKAY. I'LL EXPLAIN.

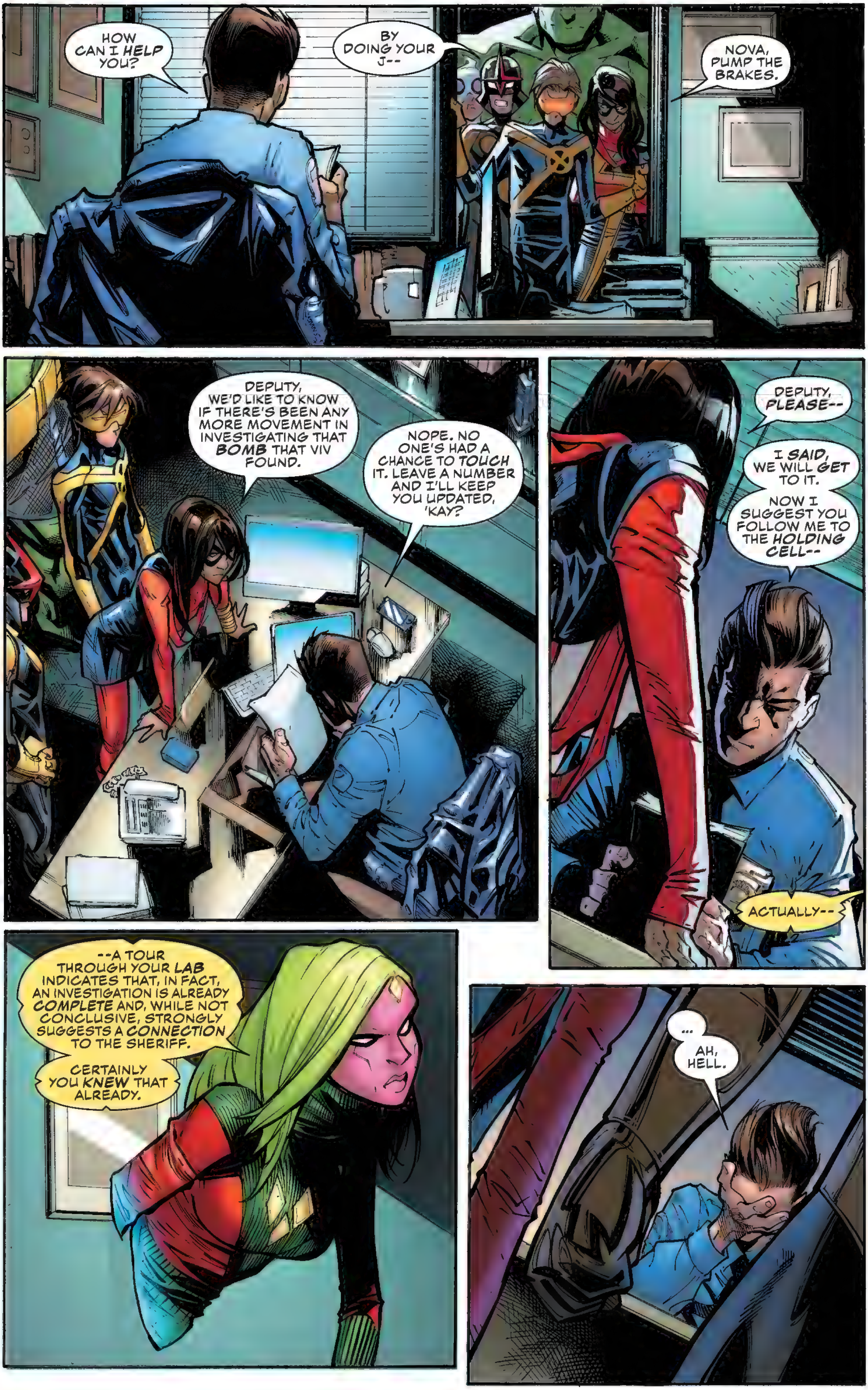

ON THE EARTH *I* CAME FROM, YOU'RE ALL *COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS.* I KNOW HOW YOUR *STORIES* GO.
BAD COPS *ALWAYS* TURN OUT TO BE SUPER VILLAINS, OR *CONTROLLED* BY SUPER VILLAINS, OR SUPER VILLAINS IN TRAINING.
GWENPOOL, I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU THINK YOU'RE FROM. OR WHAT YOU THINK YOU'VE READ--
--BUT CORRUPTION AND INJUSTICE AND RACISM CAN INFILTRATE AUTHORITY STRUCTURES ALL BY THEMSELVES, WITHOUT A SUPER VILLAIN'S *HELP.*
I'M *TELLING* YOU, SOMEONE'S *DOING* THIS TO PEOPLE! IT'S IN THE *WATER,* OR THE AIR, OR--
GWENPOOL IS *CORRECT.*
THERE *IS* SOMETHING IN THE AIR.

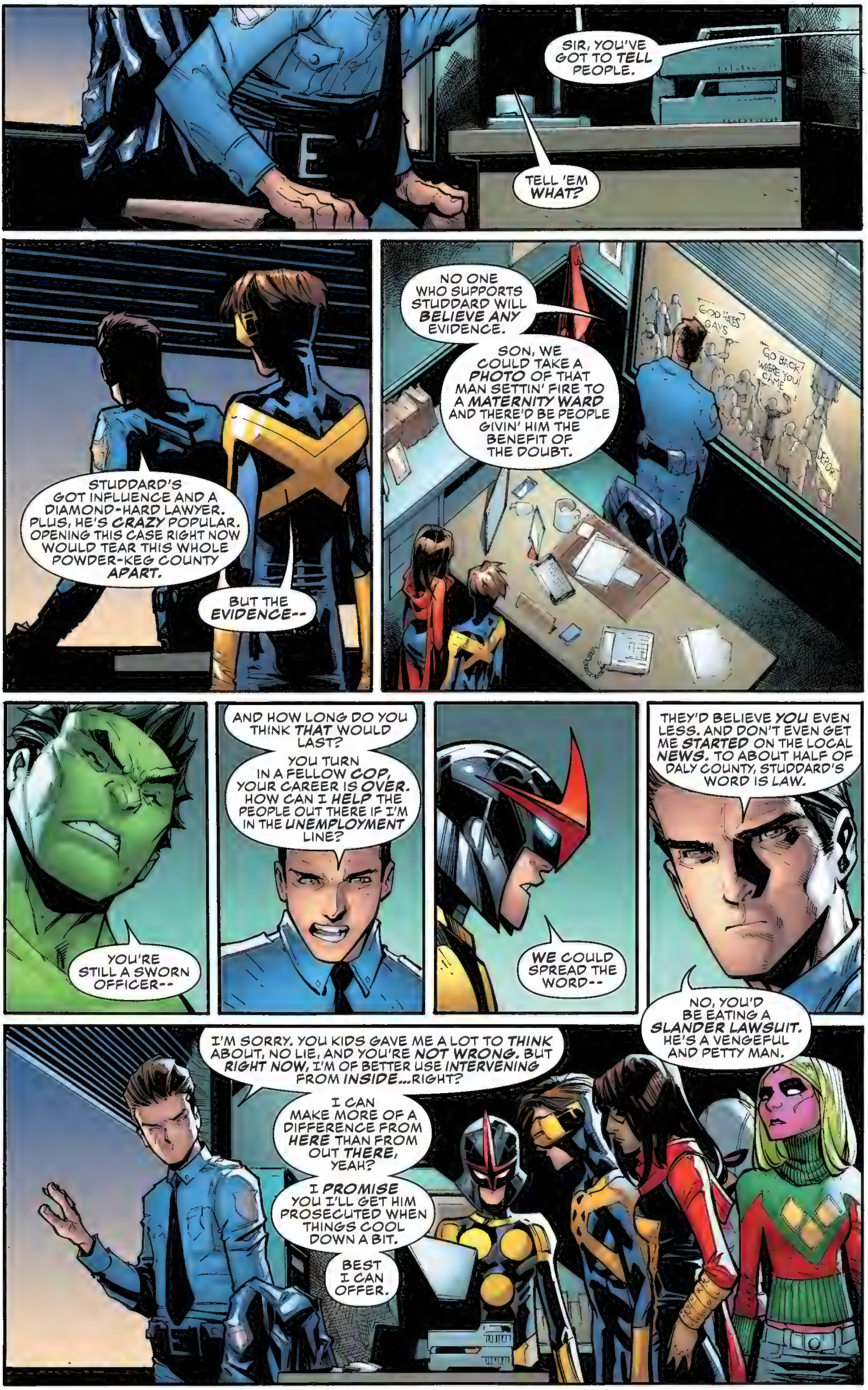

"SOMETHING INTANGIBLE. SOMETHING TOXIC."
NORTHSTAR LGBTQ CENTER
Sheriff Studdard is going to do to you people what the Sentinels did to Genosha. Believe the WARNING! Daly County for America
WE SWEPT THE BUILDING. IT'S SAFE.
THANK YOU FOR HELPING US. THERE ARE MORE GOOD PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN THAN BAD PEOPLE, I SWEAR.
"IT'S JUST THAT THE BAD PEOPLE ARE LOUDER."
SHERIFF'S GONNA DEPORT YOU!
STUDDARD! STUDDARD! STUDDARD! STUDDARD!
ragheads go Home
"THEY'RE SCARED, WHICH IS NO EXCUSE-- BUT THAT FEAR TURNS INTO INTOLERANCE WAY TOO EASILY."
GIVE.

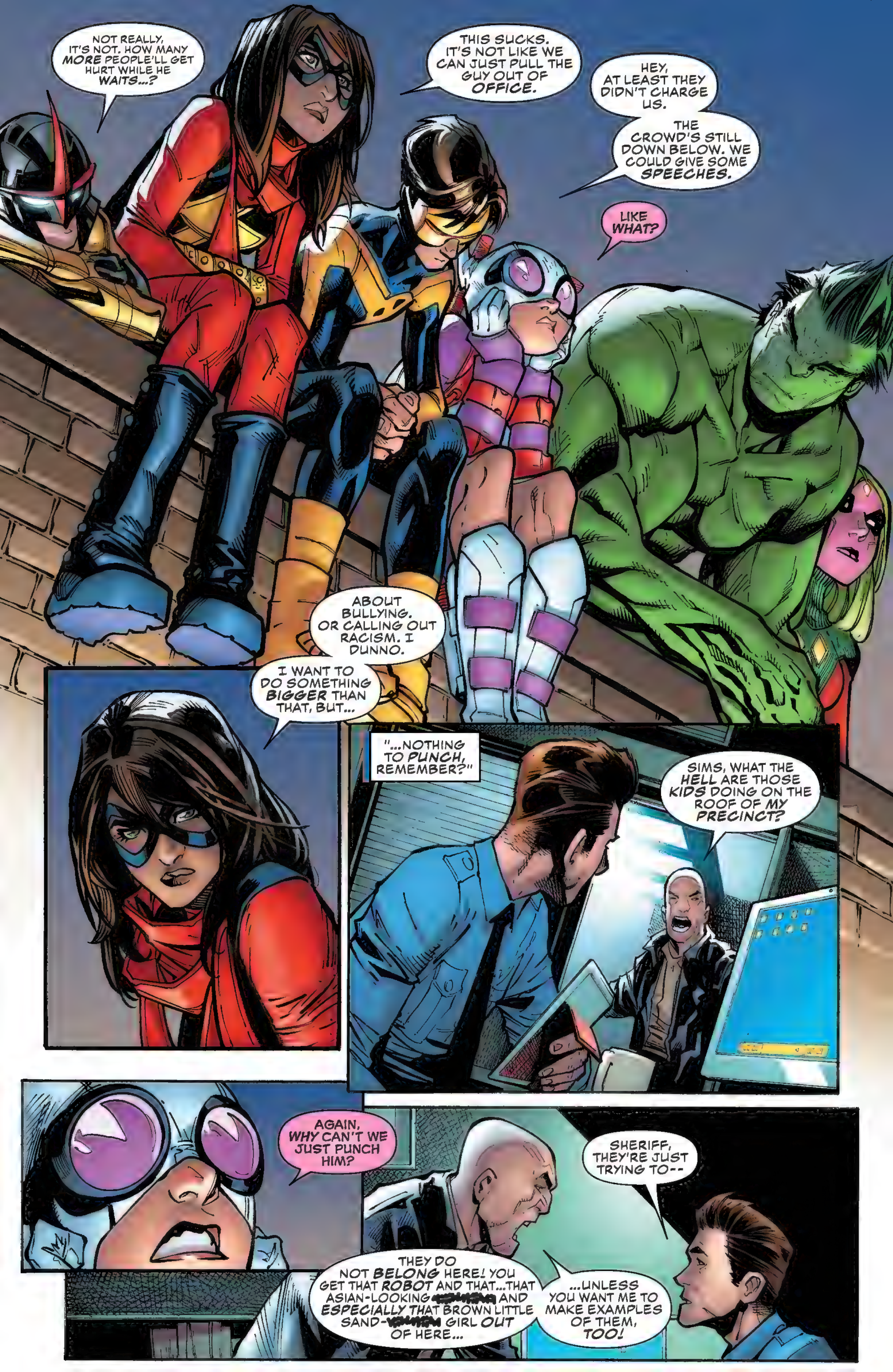

NOW.
KRAAAK
SOMEBODY FILLED YOUR HEADS WITH BAD IDEAS. DO YOU HONESTLY THINK THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN MAKES YOU SUPERIOR TO *ME*?
UHH, WE DON'T MEAN--
WE NEVER MEANT *YOU*.
OH, *PLEASE*.
QUIT ACTING LIKE THESE ARE JUST SOME *NAUGHTY* BOYS WHO NEED A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED *TALKIN'-TO*.
GWEN--!
WE FIGHT *EVIL*, DON'T WE? SO LET'S *FIGHT*.

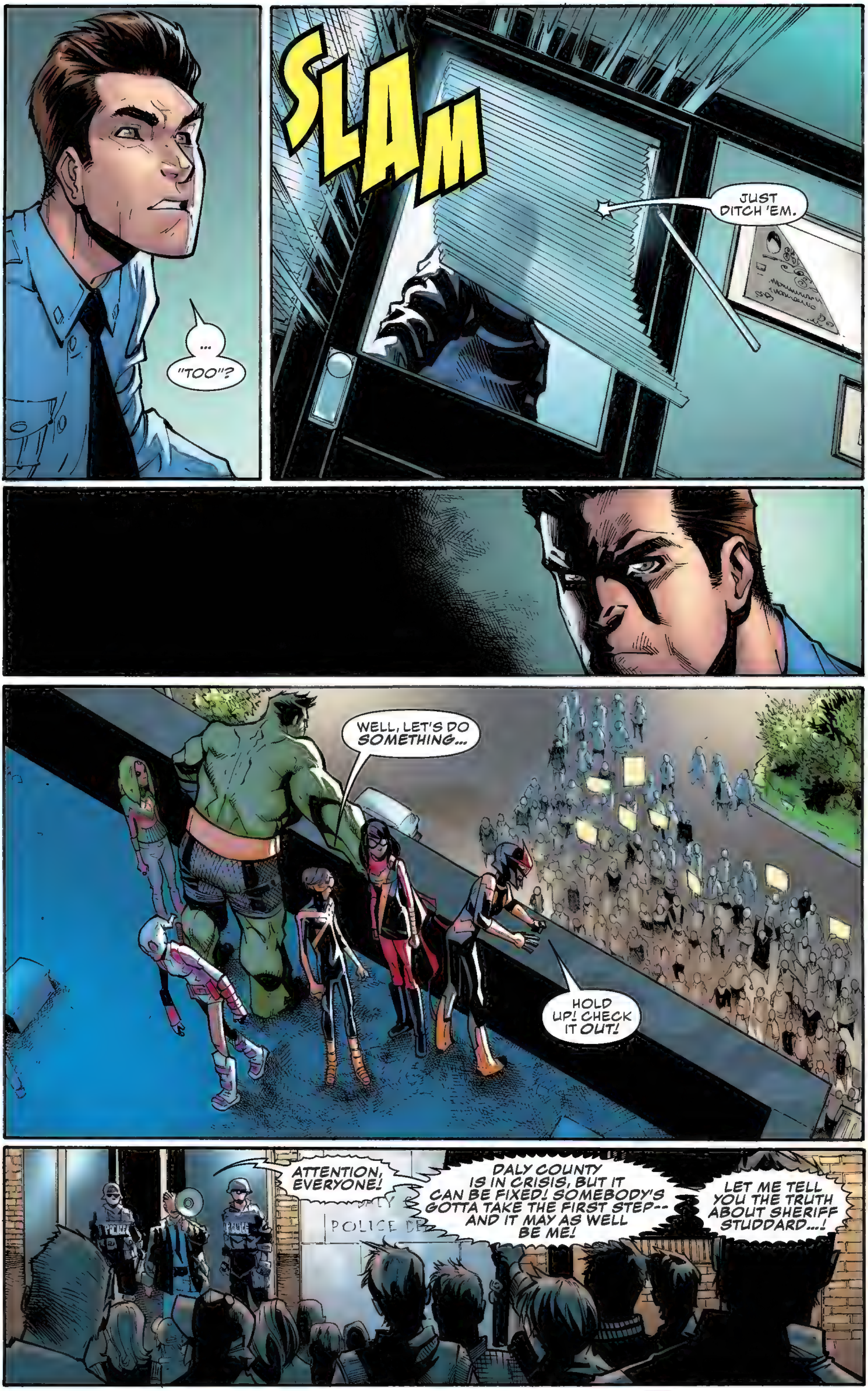

C'MON, SKRULL-- CHANGE!
AAAH!
GWENPOOL, THAT HE IS AN ALIEN IS NOT A LOGICAL ASSUMPTION.
HOLD IT!
OKAY! OKAY!
YOU SAID THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR, CLANKY! WHAT IS IT? HATE GAS? HATE WAVES?
I MEANT "SOMETHING" IN THE ABSTRACT, OBSERVABLE THROUGH A SHARED RISE IN HEART RATE EVEN AMONG THOSE NOT ENGAGING IN--
DID YOU JUST CALL ME "CLANKY"?
WATCH ME PROVE THIS ONE'S NOT HUMAN. HOLD HIM STILL WHILE I GET HIS PANTS OFF.
STOP.
HERE WE GO AGAIN.
HOW DO I GET THROUGH TO YOU? EVIL IS NOT EXCLUSIVE TO SUPER VILLAINS, ALIENS, SECRET SOCIETIES AND MONSTERS!
DO YOU KNOW HOW CRAZY THAT SOUNDS?

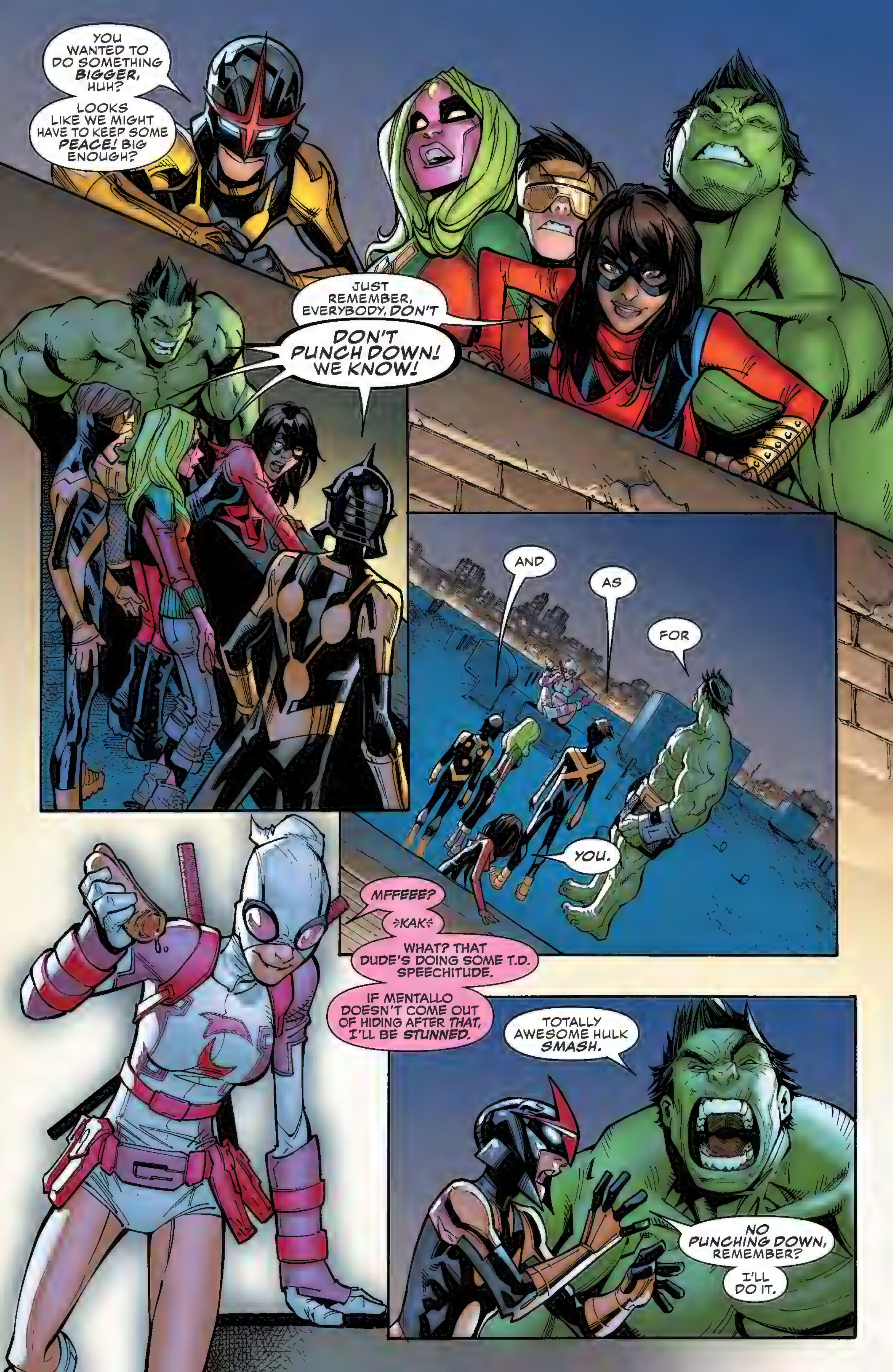

IF I WANTED TO NAVIGATE AMORAL SHADES OF GRAY--YUCK--I WOULD HAVE STAYED ON MY OWN EARTH.
AND IF YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED IN HATE-MONGER OR PSYCHO-MAN OR WHATEVER SPACE-LIZARDS ARE BEHIND THIS SCOURGE OF SUPER-RACISM--
--THEN GWENPOOL MUST FACE REALITY--ALONE!
STOP!
WE HAVE TO BE SMARTER THAN THIS. WE CAN'T SLOW THIS DOWN ON OUR OWN. WE HAVE TO HELP GET THE TRUTH ABOUT STUDDARD OUT THERE. HE'S THE ONE STOKING THE HATE.
IDEAS?
ONE. IT'S A GAMBLE. WE HAVE TO TRUST IN THE GOOD OF PEOPLE, BUT... YES.
IF YOU'RE IN, FOLLOW ME. IF NOT, NO HARD FEELINGS.
POLICE
TY NT
DUDE...
"...WE'RE A TEAM."
WE NEED TO SEE DEPUTY SIMS BEFORE YOU PUT US UNDER ARREST.

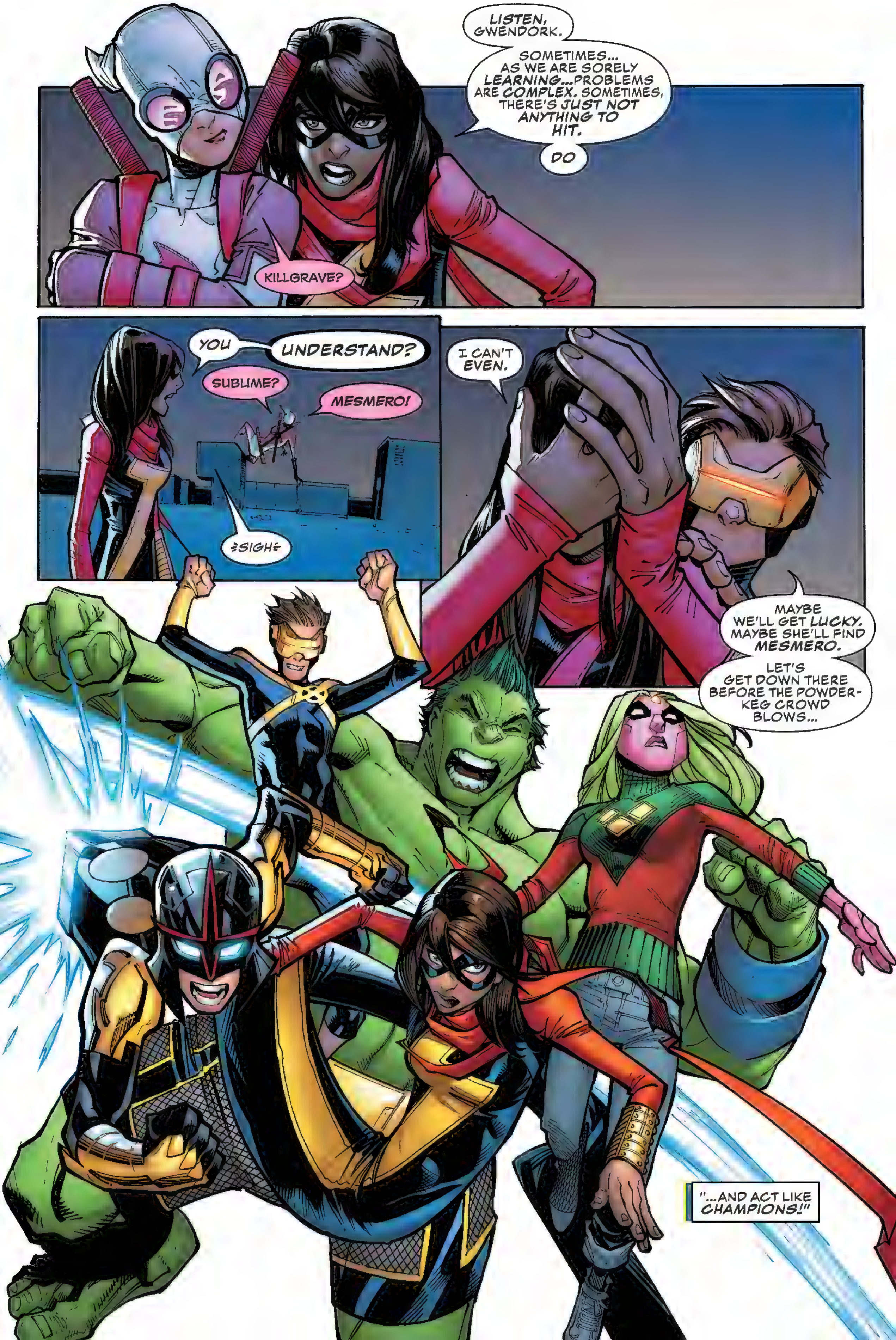

HOW CAN I *HELP* YOU?
BY DOING YOUR J--
NOVA, PUMP THE BRAKES.
DEPUTY, WE'D LIKE TO KNOW IF THERE'S BEEN ANY MORE MOVEMENT IN INVESTIGATING THAT *BOMB* THAT VIV FOUND.
NOPE. NO ONE'S HAD A CHANCE TO *TOUCH* IT. LEAVE A NUMBER AND I'LL KEEP YOU UPDATED, 'KAY?
DEPUTY, *PLEASE*--
I *SAID*, WE WILL *GET* TO IT.
NOW I SUGGEST YOU FOLLOW ME TO THE *HOLDING CELL*--
ACTUALLY--
--A TOUR THROUGH YOUR *LAB* INDICATES THAT, IN FACT, AN INVESTIGATION IS ALREADY *COMPLETE* AND, WHILE NOT CONCLUSIVE, STRONGLY SUGGESTS A *CONNECTION* TO THE SHERIFF.
CERTAINLY YOU *KNEW* THAT ALREADY.
... AH, HELL.


SIR, YOU'VE GOT TO *TELL* PEOPLE.
TELL 'EM *WHAT?*
STUDDARD'S GOT INFLUENCE AND A DIAMOND-HARD LAWYER. PLUS, HE'S *CRAZY* POPULAR. OPENING THIS CASE RIGHT NOW WOULD TEAR THIS WHOLE POWDER-KEG COUNTY *APART.*
BUT THE *EVIDENCE--*
NO ONE WHO SUPPORTS STUDDARD WILL *BELIEVE ANY* EVIDENCE.
SON, WE COULD TAKE A *PHOTO* OF THAT MAN SETTIN' FIRE TO A *MATERNITY WARD* AND THERE'D BE PEOPLE GIVIN' HIM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT.
GOD HATES GAYS
GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME
DEPORT
YOU'RE STILL A SWORN OFFICER--
AND HOW LONG DO YOU THINK *THAT* WOULD LAST?
YOU TURN IN A FELLOW *COP,* YOUR CAREER IS *OVER.* HOW CAN I *HELP* THE PEOPLE OUT THERE IF I'M IN THE *UNEMPLOYMENT* LINE?
WE COULD SPREAD THE WORD--
THEY'D BELIEVE *YOU* EVEN LESS. AND DON'T EVEN GET ME *STARTED* ON THE LOCAL *NEWS.* TO ABOUT HALF OF DALY COUNTY, STUDDARD'S WORD IS LAW.
NO, YOU'D BE EATING A *SLANDER LAWSUIT.* HE'S A VENGEFUL AND PETTY MAN.
I'M SORRY. YOU KIDS GAVE ME A LOT TO *THINK* ABOUT, NO LIE, AND YOU'RE *NOT WRONG.* BUT *RIGHT NOW,* I'M OF BETTER USE INTERVENING FROM *INSIDE*...RIGHT?
I CAN MAKE MORE OF A DIFFERENCE FROM *HERE* THAN FROM OUT *THERE,* YEAH?
I *PROMISE* YOU I'LL GET HIM PROSECUTED WHEN THINGS COOL DOWN A BIT.
BEST I CAN OFFER.

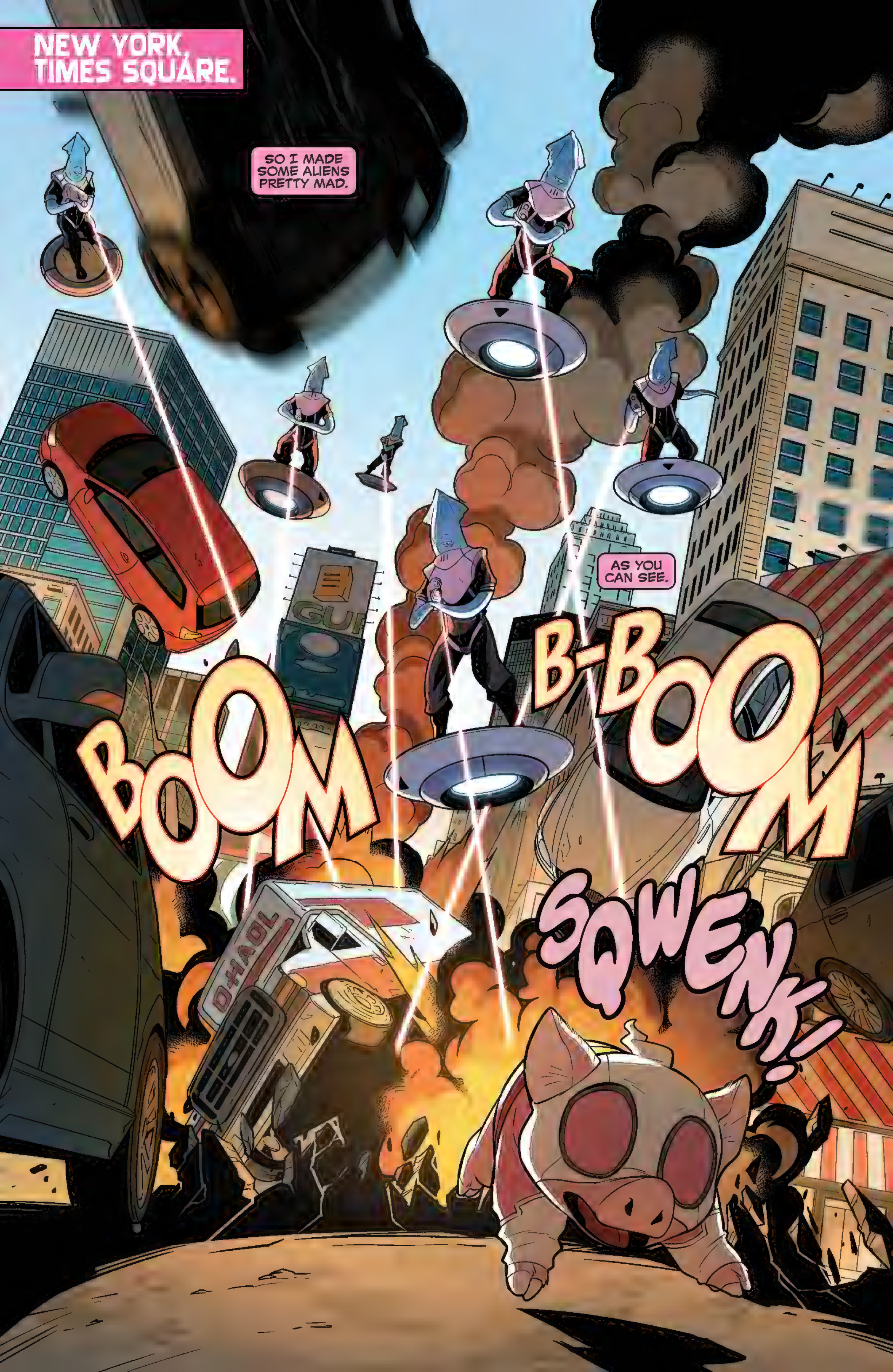

NOT REALLY, IT'S NOT. HOW MANY MORE PEOPLE'LL GET HURT WHILE HE WAITS...?
THIS SUCKS. IT'S NOT LIKE WE CAN JUST PULL THE GUY OUT OF OFFICE.
HEY, AT LEAST THEY DIDN'T CHARGE US.
THE CROWD'S STILL DOWN BELOW. WE COULD GIVE SOME SPEECHES.
LIKE WHAT?
ABOUT BULLYING. OR CALLING OUT RACISM. I DUNNO.
I WANT TO DO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN THAT, BUT...
"...NOTHING TO PUNCH, REMEMBER?"
SIMS, WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE KIDS DOING ON THE ROOF OF MY PRECINCT?
AGAIN, WHY CAN'T WE JUST PUNCH HIM?
SHERIFF, THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO--
THEY DO NOT BELONG HERE! YOU GET THAT ROBOT AND THAT...THAT ASIAN-LOOKING [redacted] AND ESPECIALLY THAT BROWN LITTLE SAND-[redacted] GIRL OUT OF HERE...
...UNLESS YOU WANT ME TO MAKE EXAMPLES OF THEM, TOO!

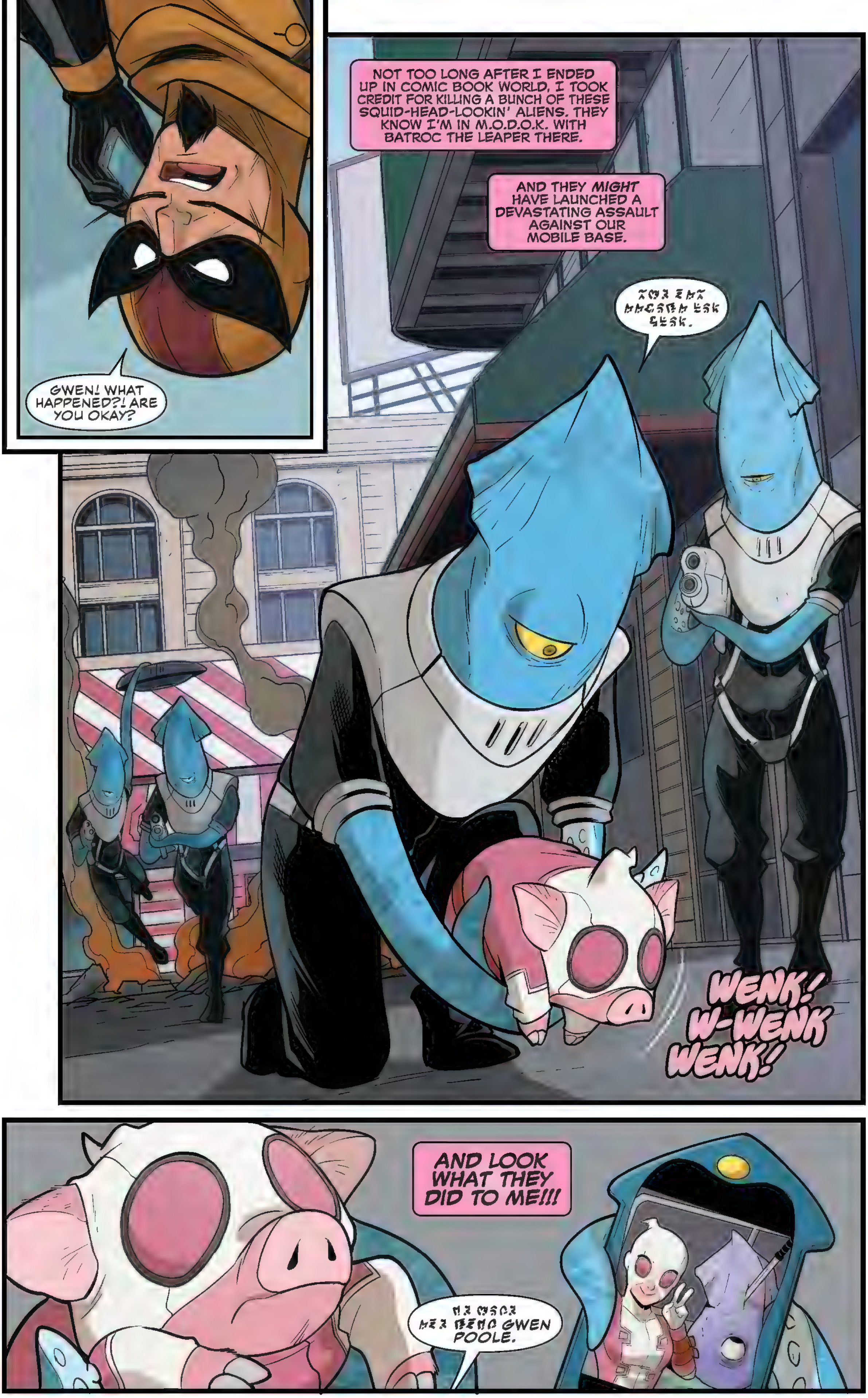

...
"TOO"?
SLAM
JUST DITCH 'EM.
WELL, LET'S DO SOMETHING...
HOLD UP! CHECK IT OUT!
ATTENTION, EVERYONE!
DALY COUNTY IS IN CRISIS, BUT IT CAN BE FIXED! SOMEBODY'S GOTTA TAKE THE FIRST STEP-- AND IT MAY AS WELL BE ME!
LET ME TELL YOU THE TRUTH ABOUT SHERIFF STUDDARD...!
POLICE DE
POLICE
POLICE

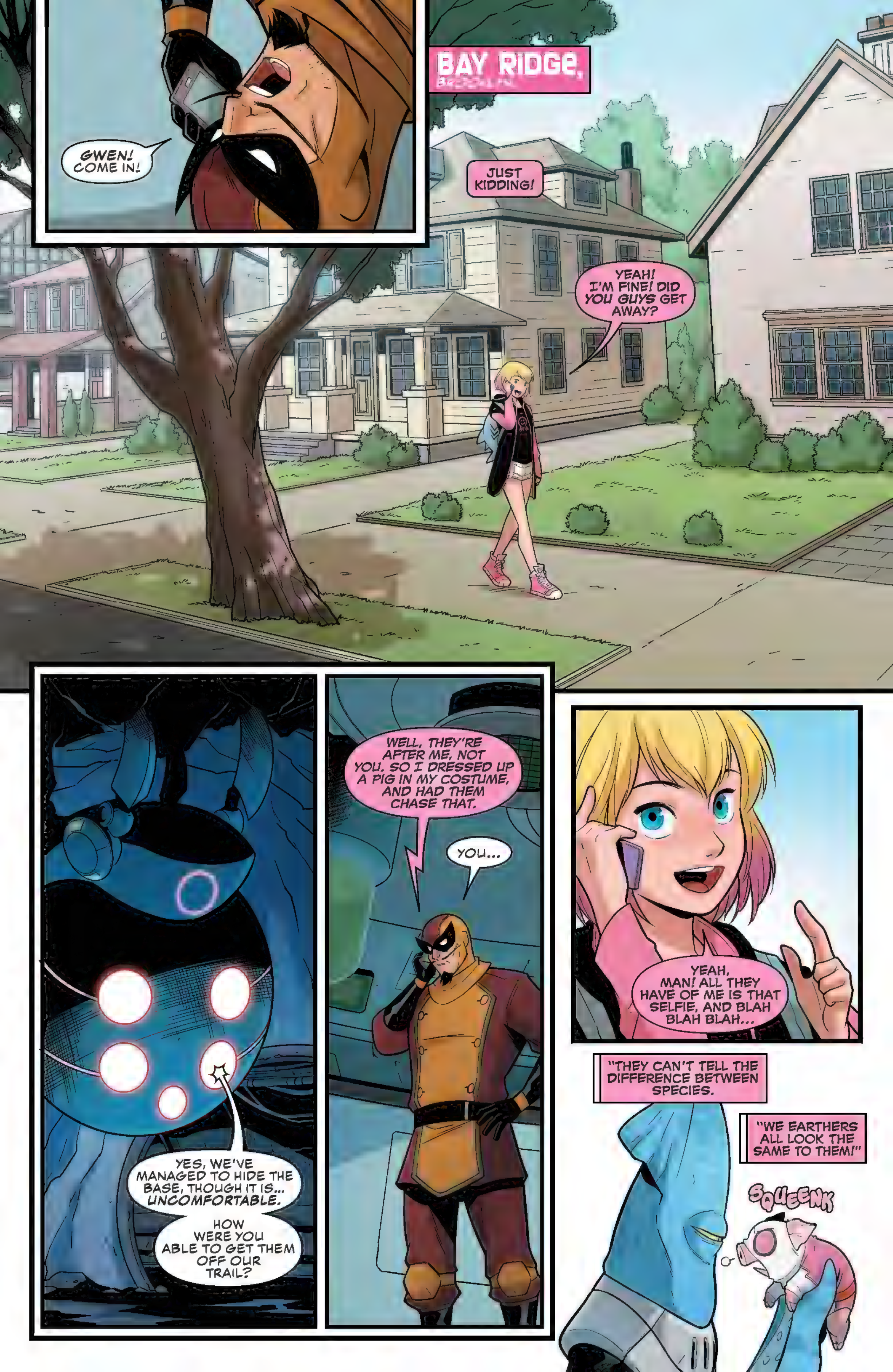

YOU WANTED TO DO SOMETHING BIGGER, HUH?
LOOKS LIKE WE MIGHT HAVE TO KEEP SOME PEACE! BIG ENOUGH?
JUST REMEMBER, EVERYBODY, DON'T
DON'T PUNCH DOWN! WE KNOW!
AND
AS
FOR
YOU.
MFFEEE?
KAK
WHAT? THAT DUDE'S DOING SOME T.D. SPEECHITUDE.
IF MENTALLO DOESN'T COME OUT OF HIDING AFTER THAT, I'LL BE STUNNED.
TOTALLY AWESOME HULK SMASH.
NO PUNCHING DOWN, REMEMBER?
I'LL DO IT.

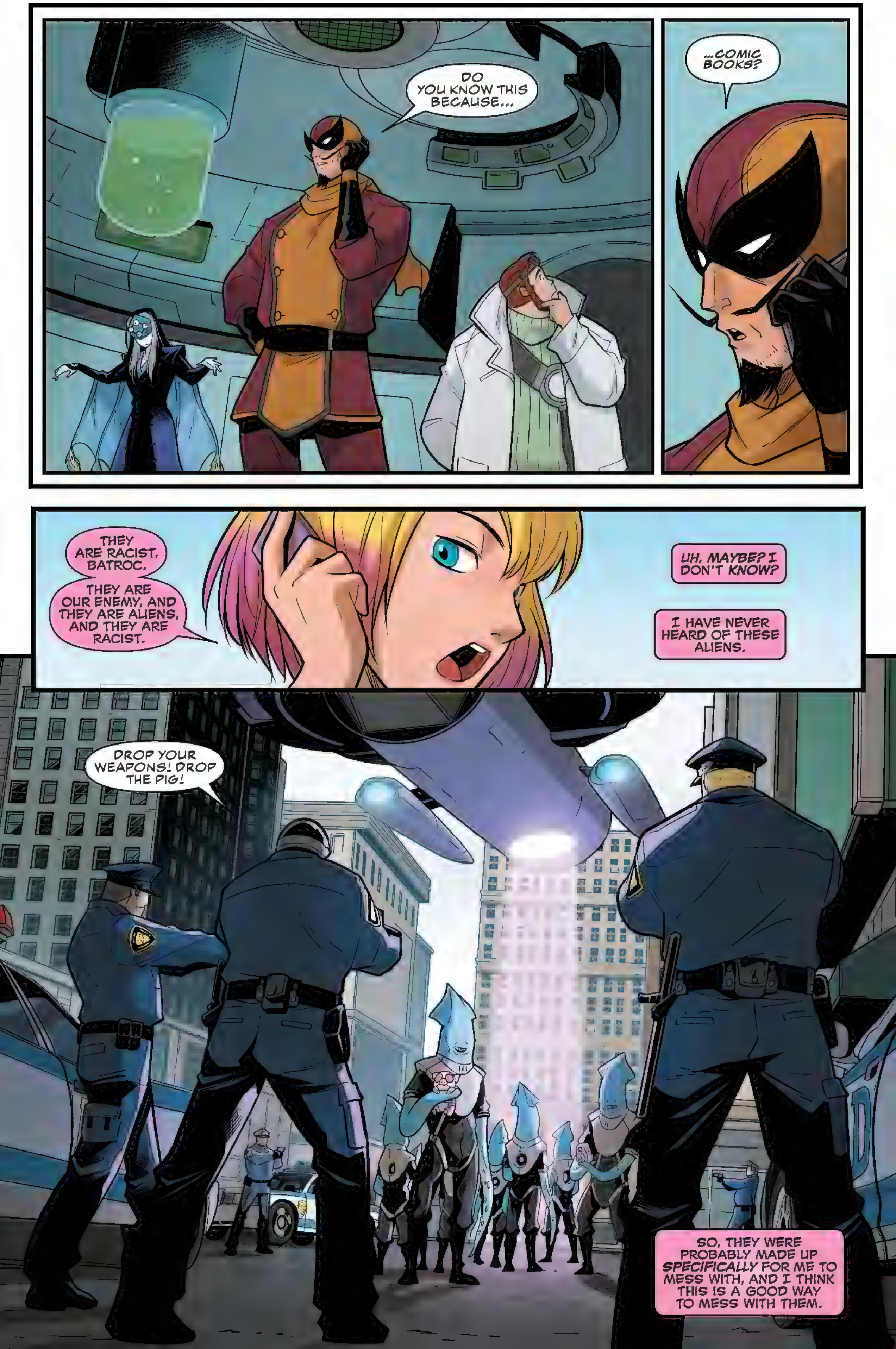

LISTEN, GWENDORK.
SOMETIMES... AS WE ARE SORELY LEARNING...PROBLEMS ARE COMPLEX. SOMETIMES, THERE'S JUST NOT ANYTHING TO HIT.
DO
KILLGRAVE?
YOU
UNDERSTAND?
SUBLIME?
MESMERO!
SIGH
I CAN'T EVEN.
MAYBE WE'LL GET LUCKY. MAYBE SHE'LL FIND MESMERO.
LET'S GET DOWN THERE BEFORE THE POWDER-KEG CROWD BLOWS...
"...AND ACT LIKE CHAMPIONS!"

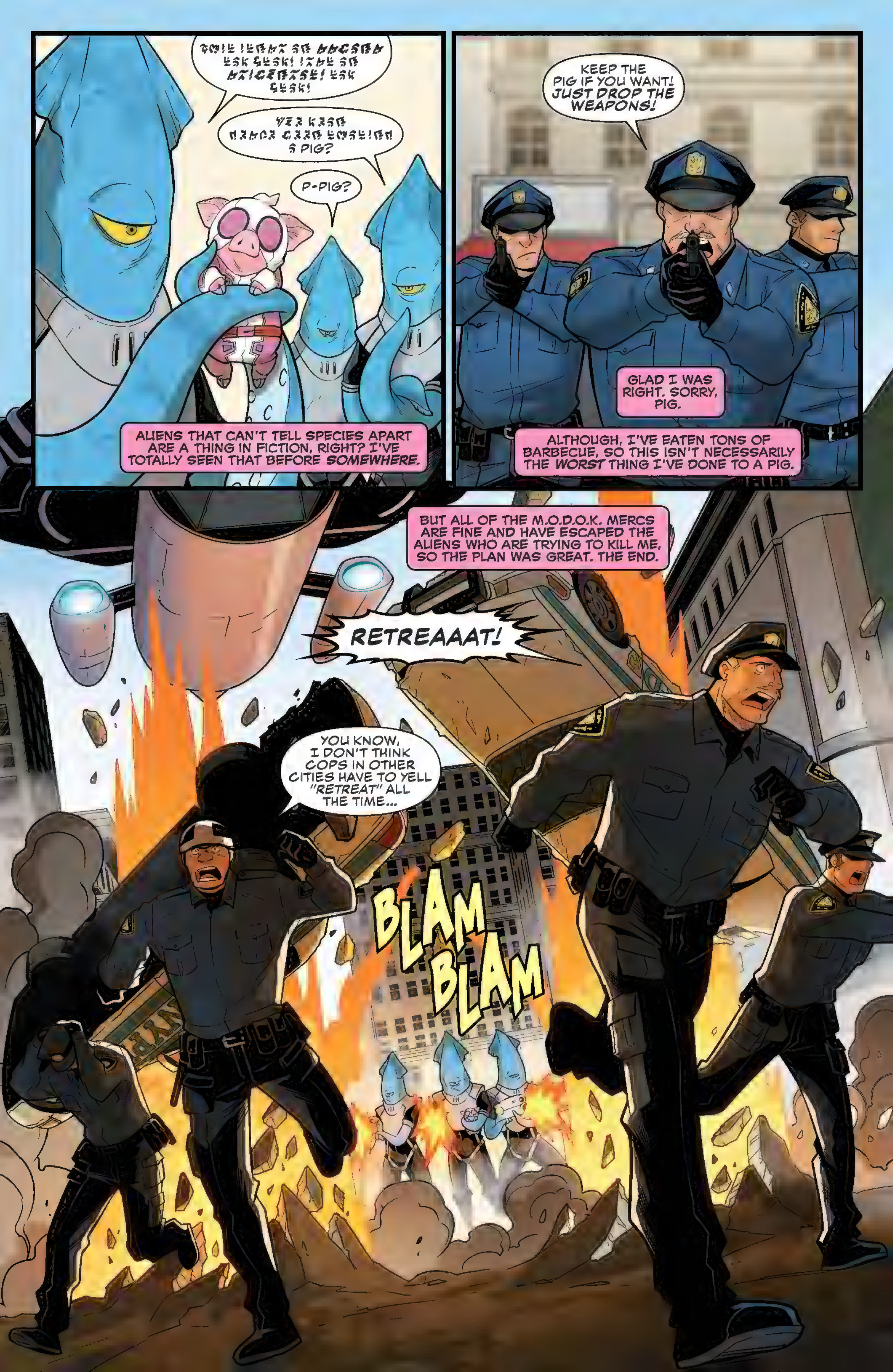
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #7

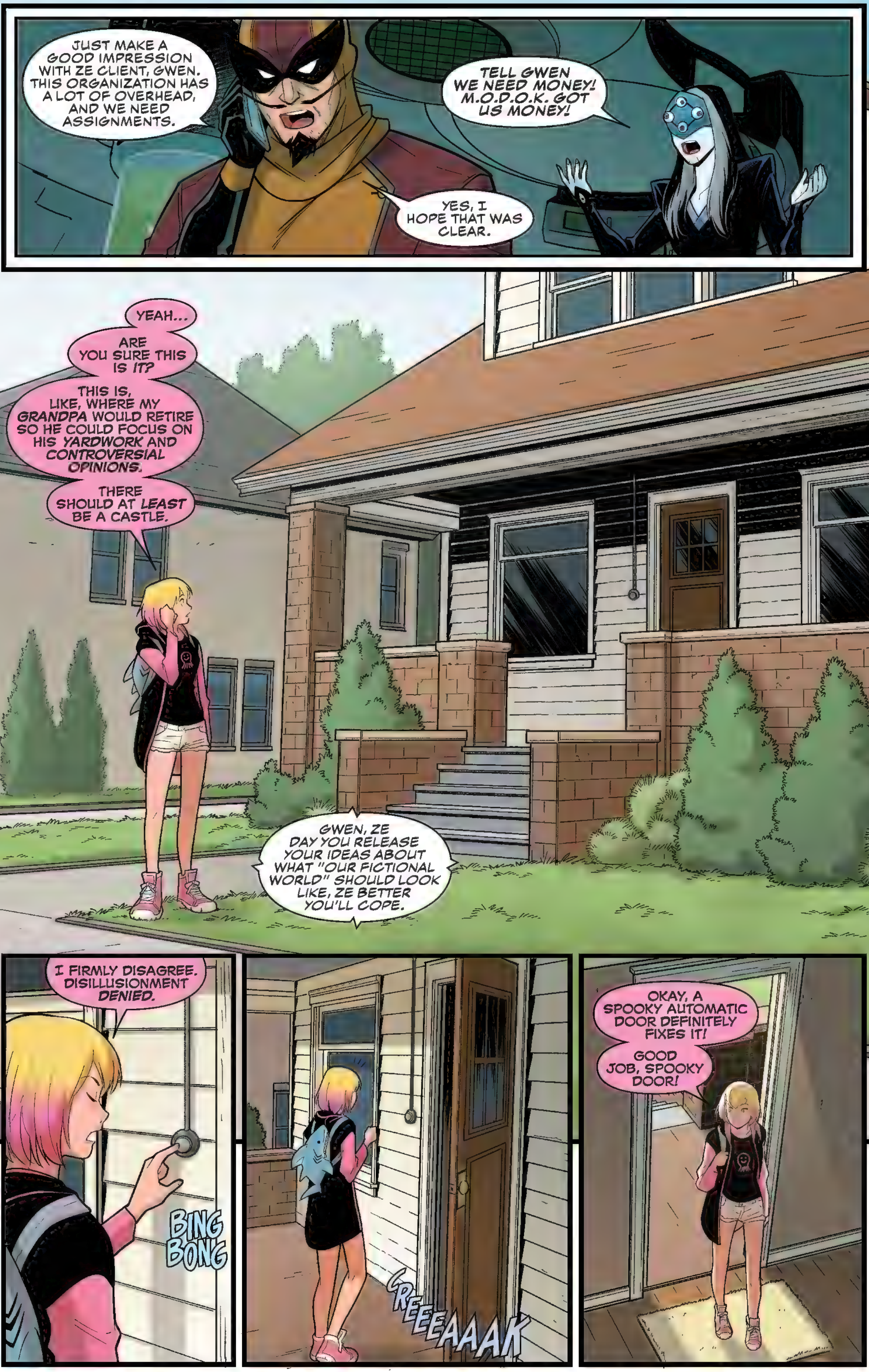

NEW YORK, TIMES SQUARE.
SO I MADE SOME ALIENS PRETTY MAD.
AS YOU CAN SEE.
BOOM
B-BOOM
SQWENK!!

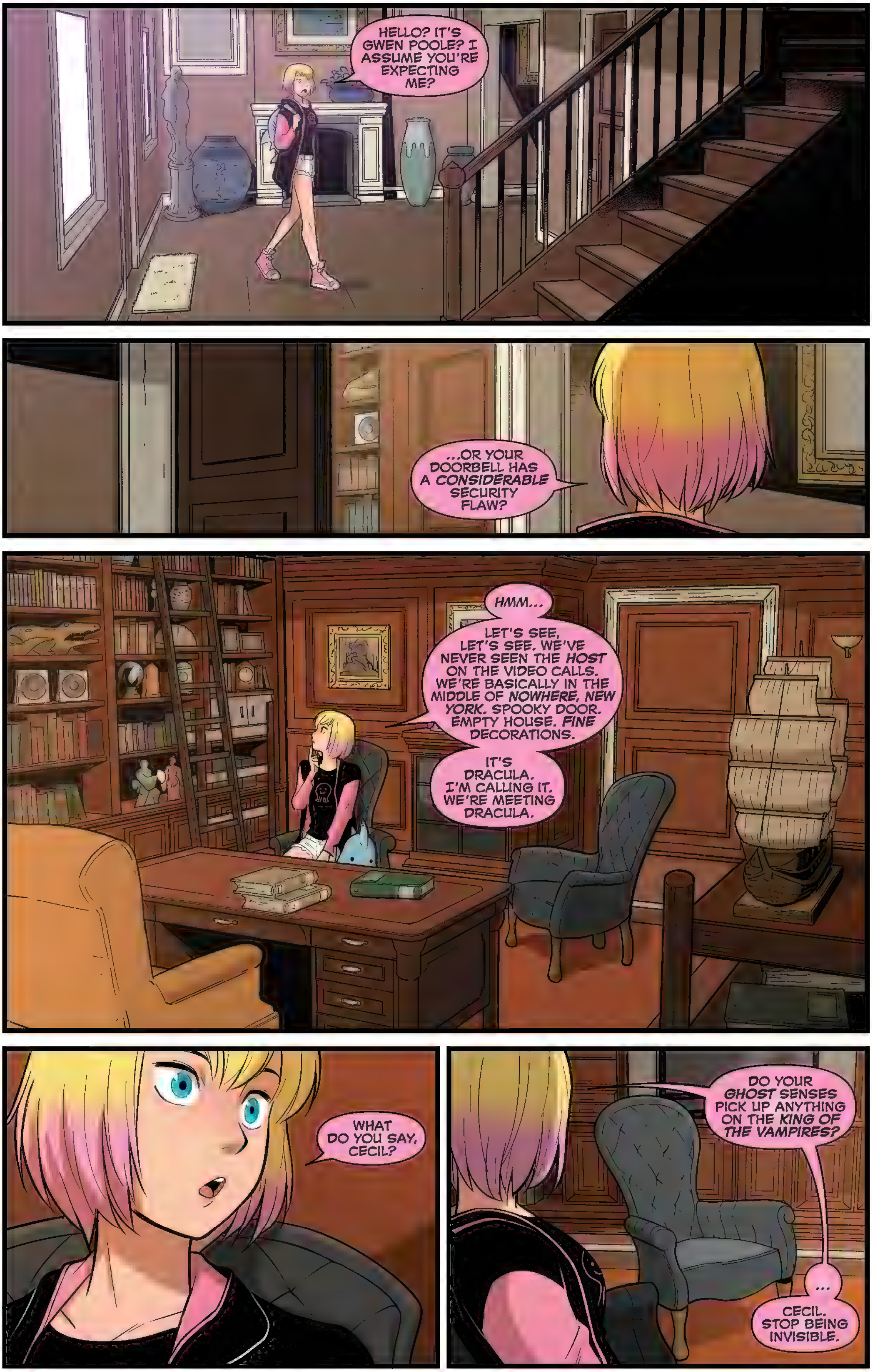

GWEN! WHAT HAPPENED?! ARE YOU OKAY?
NOT TOO LONG AFTER I ENDED UP IN COMIC BOOK WORLD, I TOOK CREDIT FOR KILLING A BUNCH OF THESE SQUID-HEAD-LOOKIN' ALIENS. THEY KNOW I'M IN M.O.D.O.K. WITH BATROC THE LEAPER THERE.
AND THEY *MIGHT* HAVE LAUNCHED A DEVASTATING ASSAULT AGAINST OUR MOBILE BASE.
WENK! W-WENK WENK!
AND LOOK WHAT THEY DID TO ME!!!
GWEN POOLE.

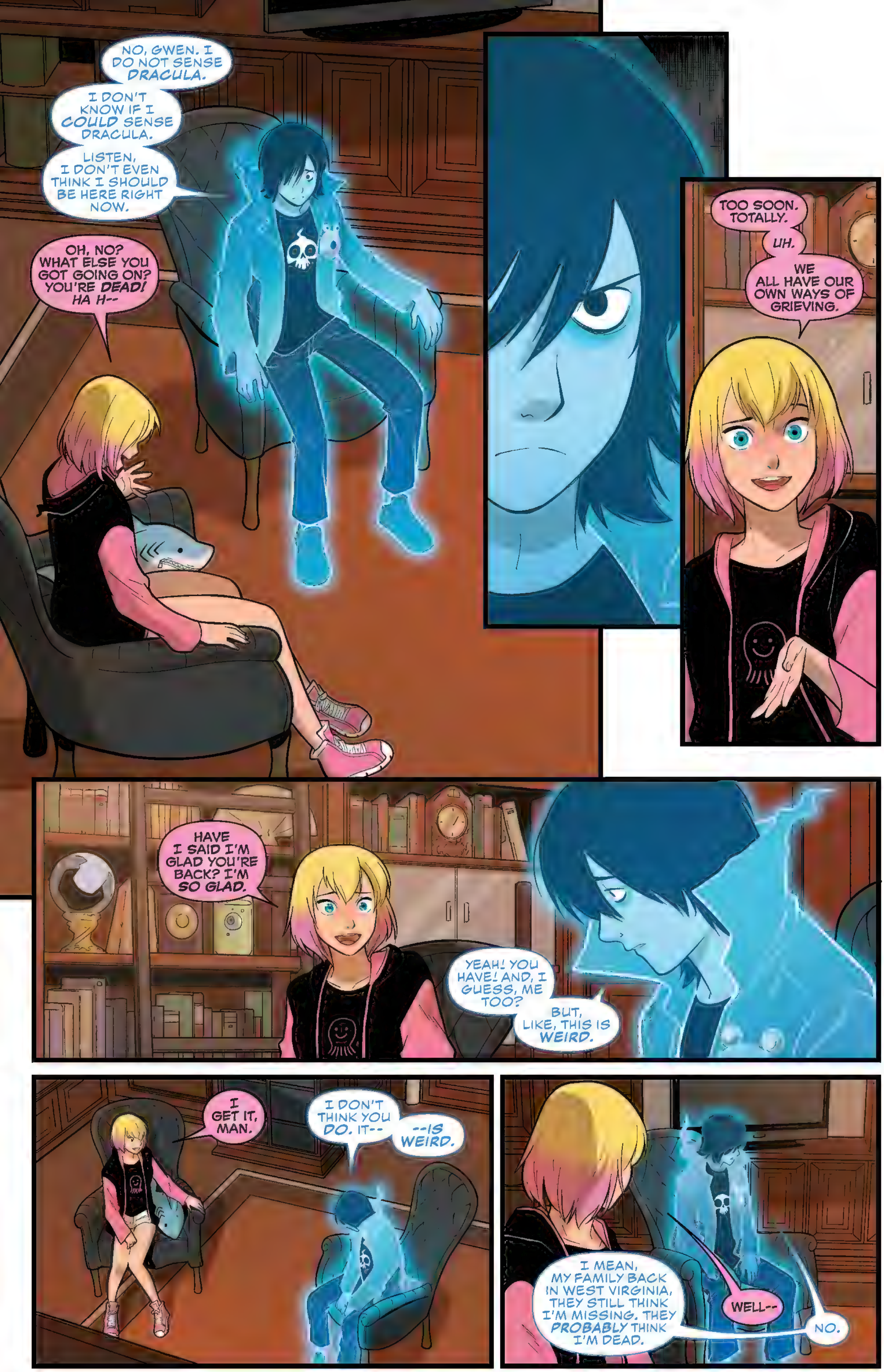

GWEN! COME IN!
BAY RIDGE,
JUST KIDDING!
YEAH! I'M FINE! DID YOU GUYS GET AWAY?
YES, WE'VE MANAGED TO HIDE THE BASE, THOUGH IT IS... UNCOMFORTABLE.
HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO GET THEM OFF OUR TRAIL?
WELL, THEY'RE AFTER ME, NOT YOU. SO I DRESSED UP A PIG IN MY COSTUME, AND HAD THEM CHASE THAT.
YOU...
YEAH, MAN! ALL THEY HAVE OF ME IS THAT SELFIE, AND BLAH BLAH BLAH...
"THEY CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPECIES.
"WE EARTHERS ALL LOOK THE SAME TO THEM!"
SQUEENK

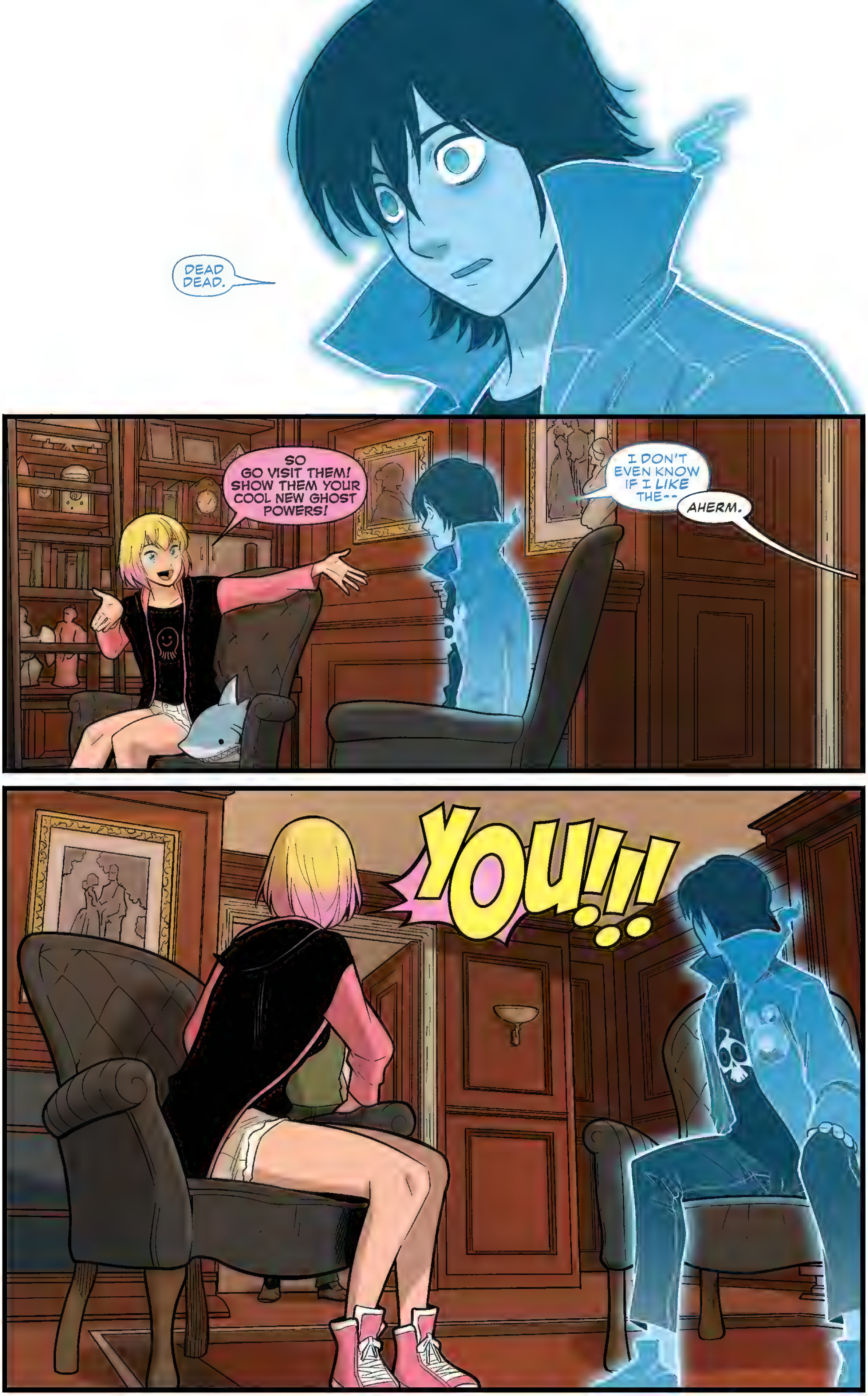

DO YOU KNOW THIS BECAUSE...
...COMIC BOOKS?
THEY ARE RACIST, BATROC.
THEY ARE OUR ENEMY, AND THEY ARE ALIENS, AND THEY ARE RACIST.
UH, MAYBE? I DON'T KNOW?
I HAVE NEVER HEARD OF THESE ALIENS.
DROP YOUR WEAPONS! DROP THE PIG!
SO, THEY WERE PROBABLY MADE UP *SPECIFICALLY* FOR ME TO MESS WITH, AND I THINK THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO MESS WITH THEM.

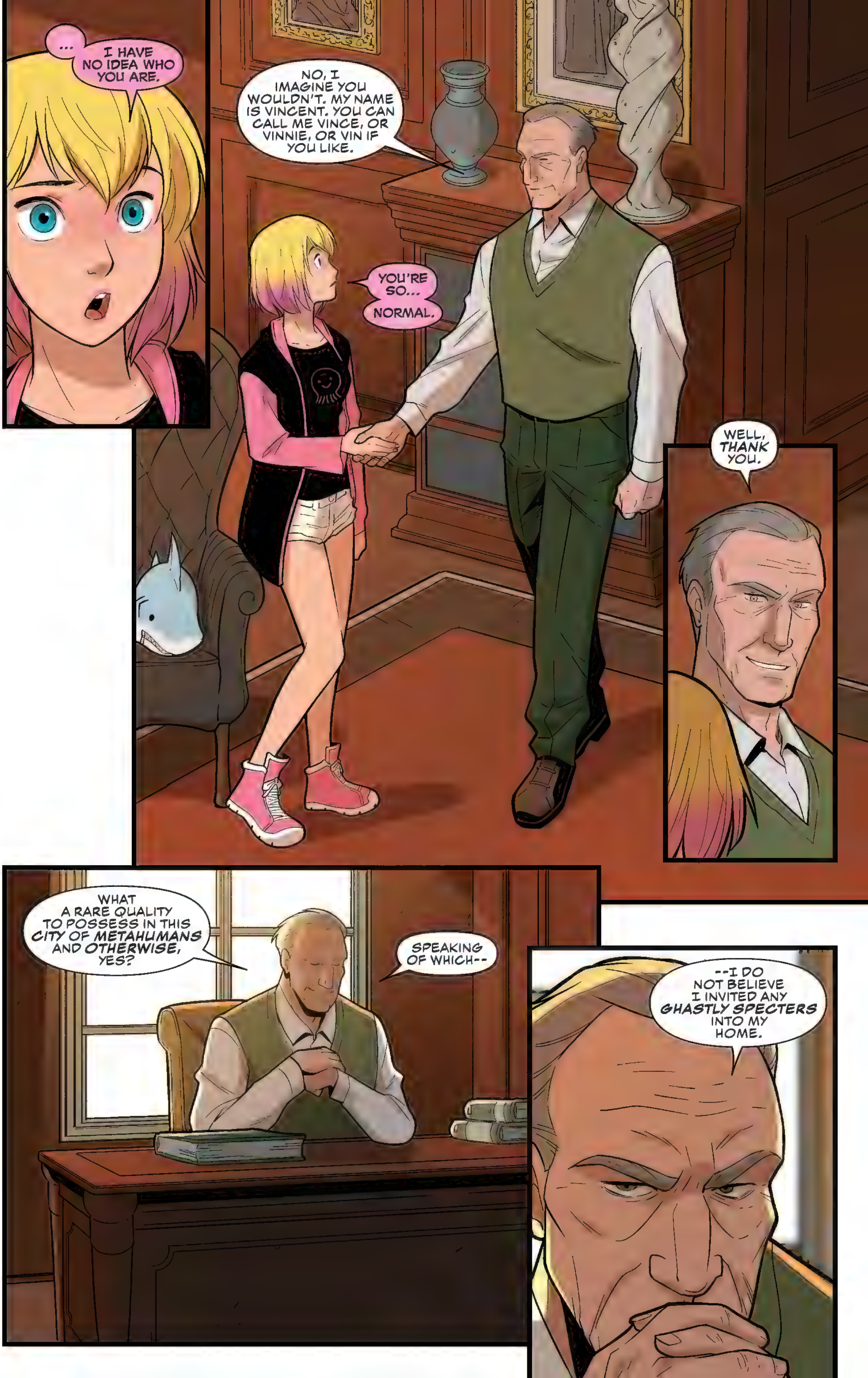

P-PIG?
ALIENS THAT CAN'T TELL SPECIES APART ARE A THING IN FICTION, RIGHT? I'VE TOTALLY SEEN THAT BEFORE *SOMEWHERE*.
KEEP THE PIG IF YOU WANT! *JUST DROP THE WEAPONS!*
GLAD I WAS RIGHT. SORRY, PIG.
ALTHOUGH, I'VE EATEN TONS OF BARBECUE, SO THIS ISN'T NECESSARILY THE *WORST* THING I'VE DONE TO A PIG.
BUT ALL OF THE M.O.D.O.K. MERCS ARE FINE AND HAVE ESCAPED THE ALIENS WHO ARE TRYING TO KILL ME, SO THE PLAN WAS GREAT. THE END.
RETREAAAT!
YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK COPS IN OTHER CITIES HAVE TO YELL "RETREAT" ALL THE TIME...
BLAM BLAM

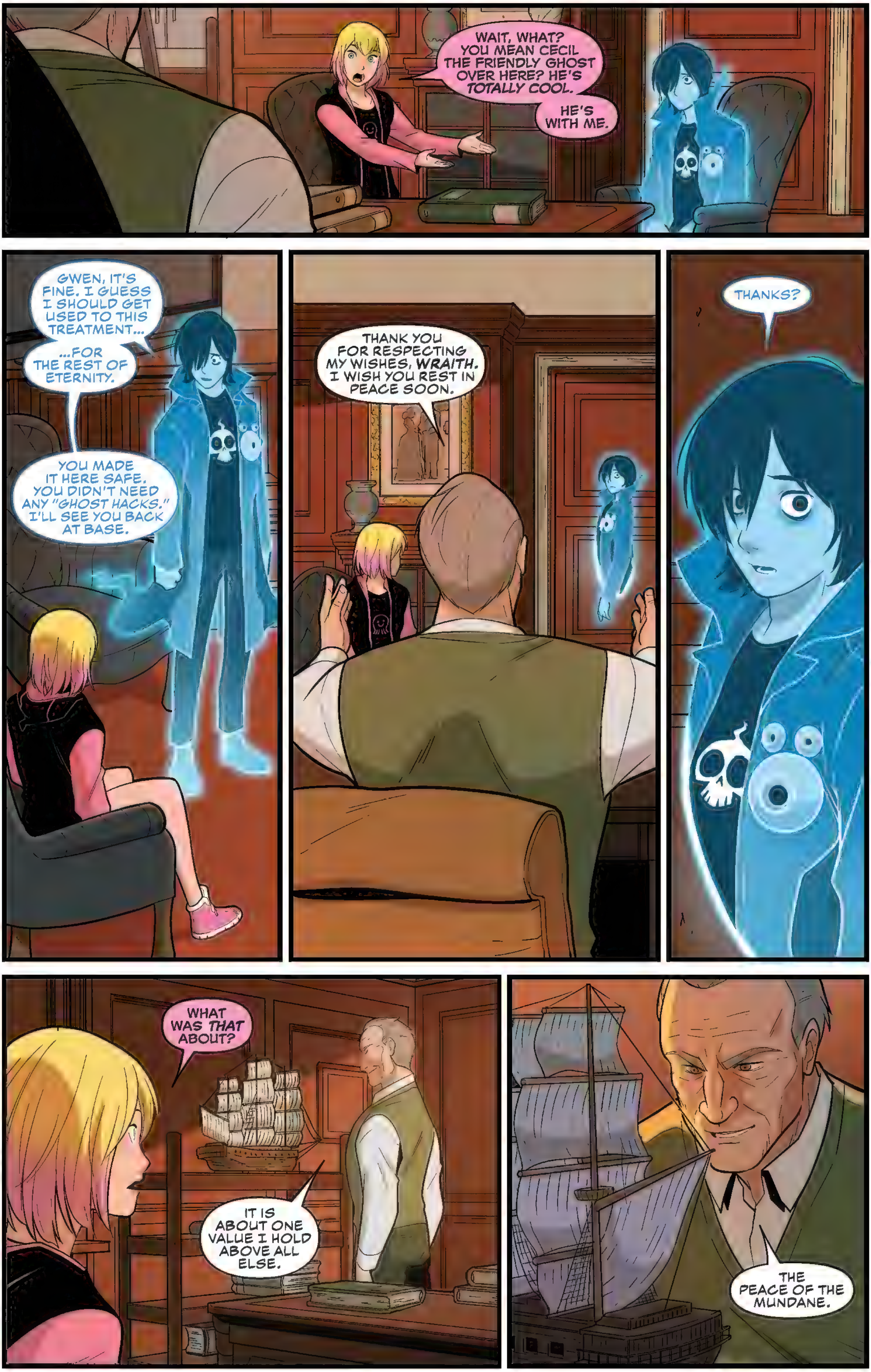

JUST MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION WITH ZE CLIENT, GWEN. THIS ORGANIZATION HAS A LOT OF OVERHEAD, AND WE NEED ASSIGNMENTS.
TELL GWEN WE NEED MONEY! M.O.D.O.K. GOT US MONEY!
YES, I HOPE THAT WAS CLEAR.
YEAH...
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS *IT?*
THIS IS, LIKE, WHERE MY *GRANDPA* WOULD RETIRE SO HE COULD FOCUS ON HIS *YARDWORK* AND *CONTROVERSIAL OPINIONS.*
THERE SHOULD AT *LEAST* BE A CASTLE.
GWEN, ZE DAY YOU RELEASE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT WHAT "OUR FICTIONAL WORLD" SHOULD LOOK LIKE, ZE BETTER YOU'LL COPE.
I FIRMLY DISAGREE. DISILLUSIONMENT *DENIED.*
BING BONG
CREEEAAAK
OKAY, A SPOOKY AUTOMATIC DOOR DEFINITELY FIXES IT!
GOOD JOB, SPOOKY DOOR!

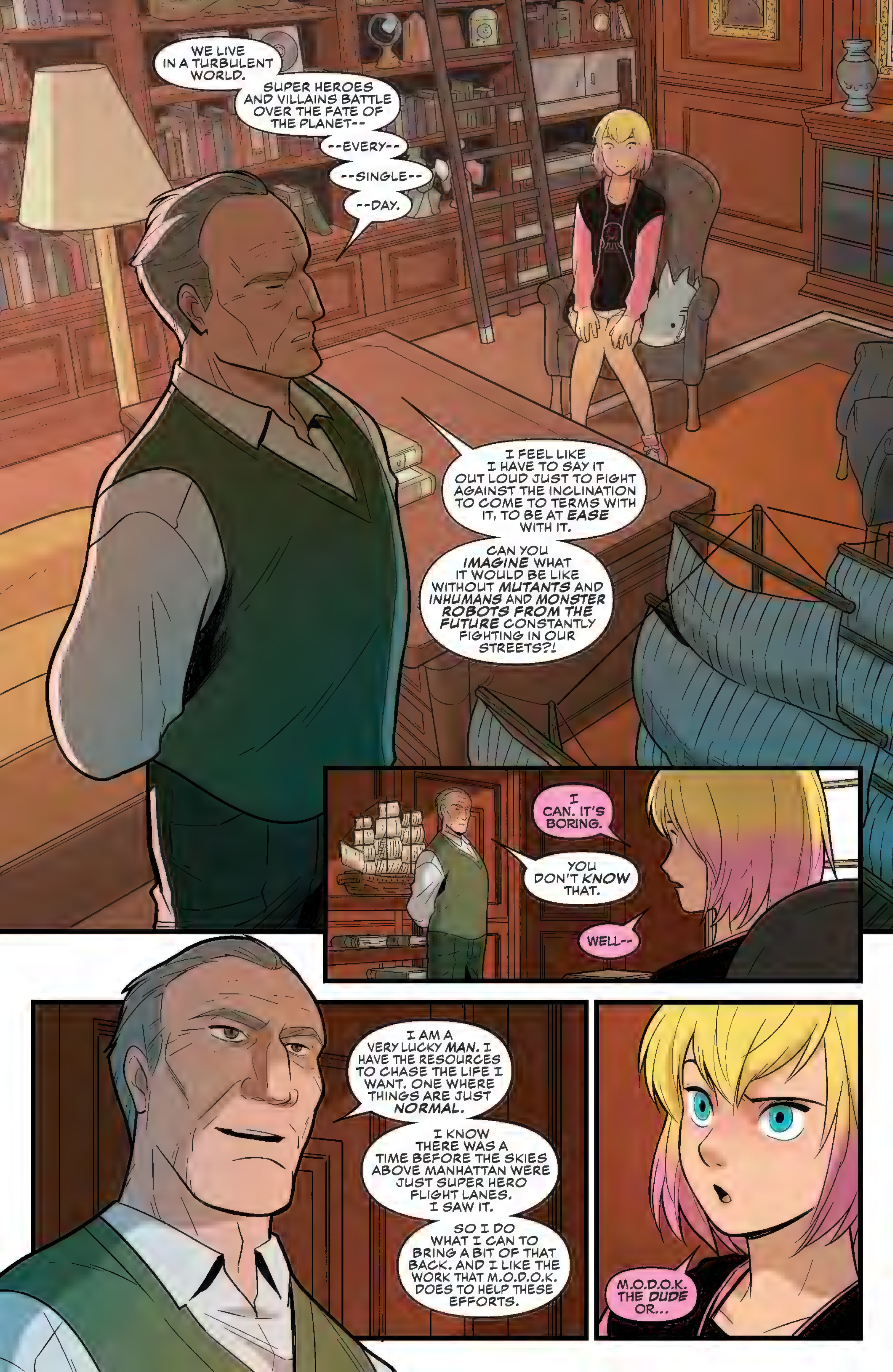

HELLO? IT'S GWEN POOLE? I ASSUME YOU'RE EXPECTING ME?
...OR YOUR DOORBELL HAS A *CONSIDERABLE* SECURITY FLAW?
HMM...
LET'S SEE, LET'S SEE. WE'VE NEVER SEEN THE *HOST* ON THE VIDEO CALLS. WE'RE BASICALLY IN THE MIDDLE OF *NOWHERE, NEW YORK*. SPOOKY DOOR. EMPTY HOUSE. *FINE* DECORATIONS.
IT'S DRACULA. I'M CALLING IT. WE'RE MEETING DRACULA.
WHAT DO YOU SAY, CECIL?
DO YOUR *GHOST* SENSES PICK UP ANYTHING ON THE *KING OF THE VAMPIRES?*
...
CECIL. STOP BEING INVISIBLE.

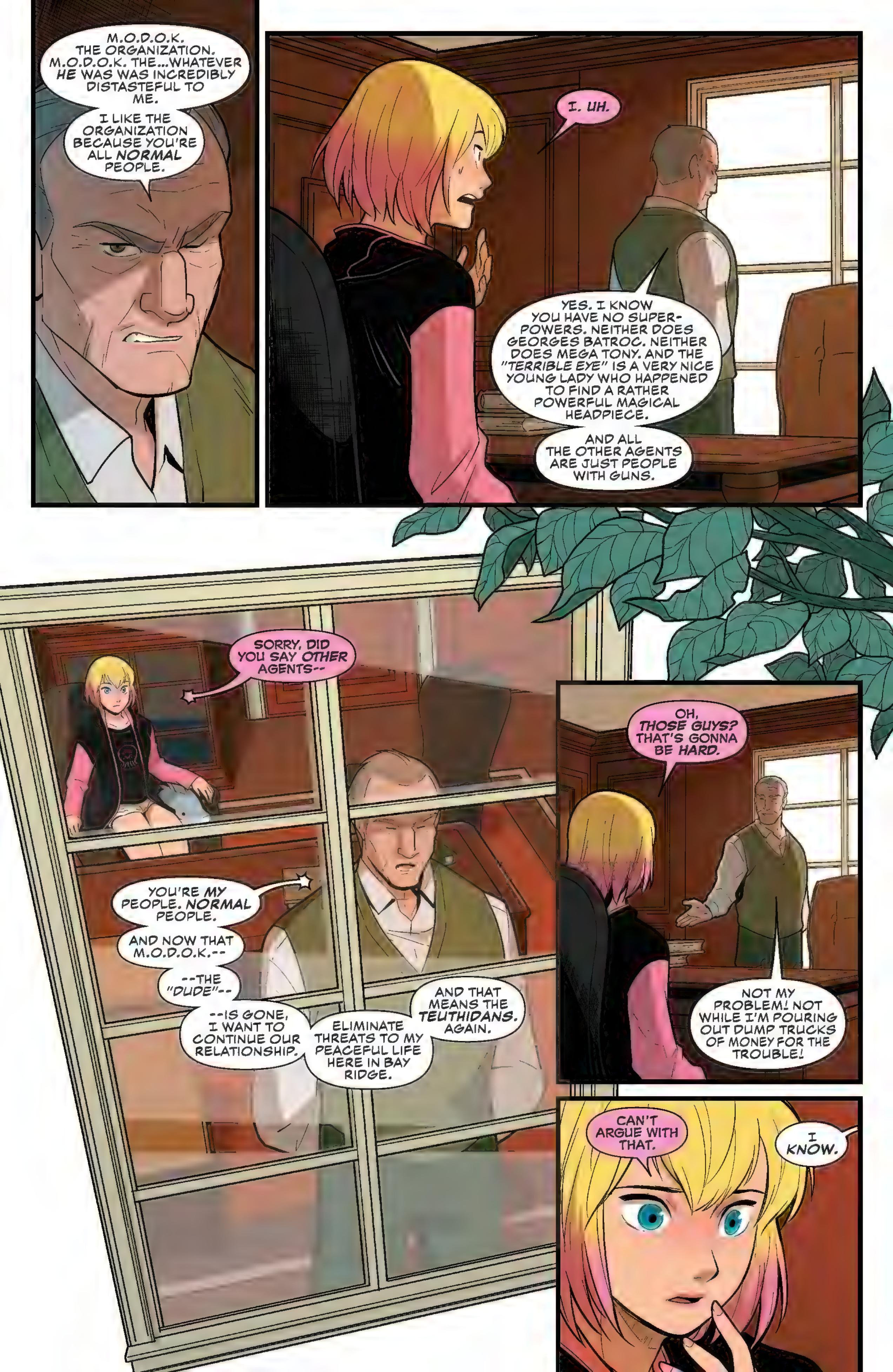

NO, GWEN. I DO NOT SENSE *DRACULA.*
I DON'T KNOW IF I *COULD* SENSE DRACULA.
LISTEN, I DON'T EVEN THINK I SHOULD BE HERE RIGHT NOW.
OH, NO? WHAT ELSE YOU GOT GOING ON? YOU'RE *DEAD!* *HA H--*
TOO SOON. TOTALLY.
UH.
WE ALL HAVE OUR OWN WAYS OF GRIEVING.
HAVE I SAID I'M GLAD YOU'RE BACK? I'M *SO GLAD.*
YEAH! YOU HAVE! AND, I GUESS, ME TOO?
BUT, LIKE, THIS IS *WEIRD.*
I GET IT, MAN.
I DON'T THINK YOU *DO.* IT--
--IS WEIRD.
I MEAN, MY FAMILY BACK IN WEST VIRGINIA, THEY STILL THINK I'M MISSING. THEY *PROBABLY* THINK I'M DEAD.
WELL--
NO.

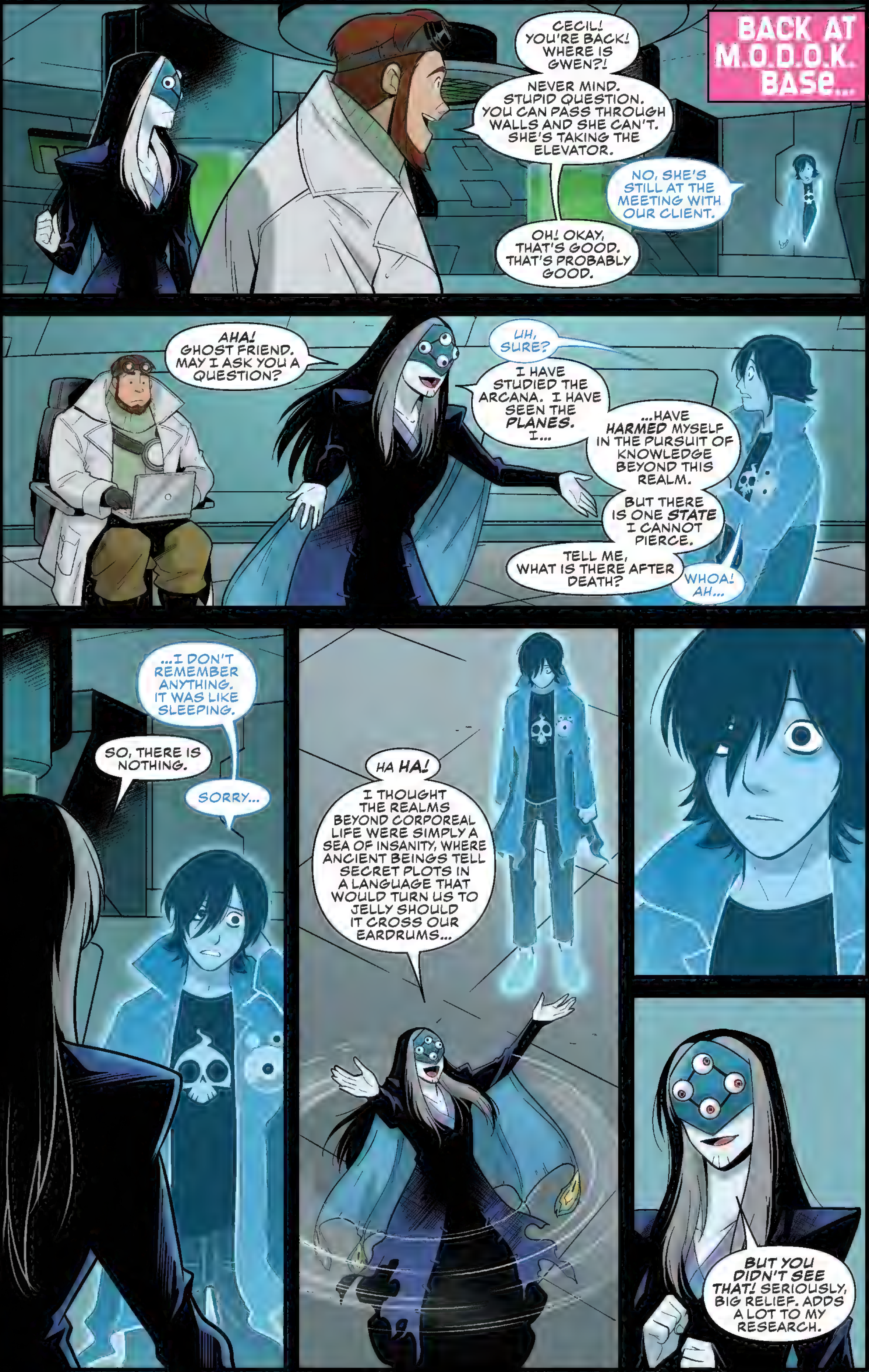

DEAD
DEAD.
SO GO VISIT THEM! SHOW THEM YOUR COOL NEW GHOST POWERS!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I *LIKE* THE--
AHERM.
YOU!!!

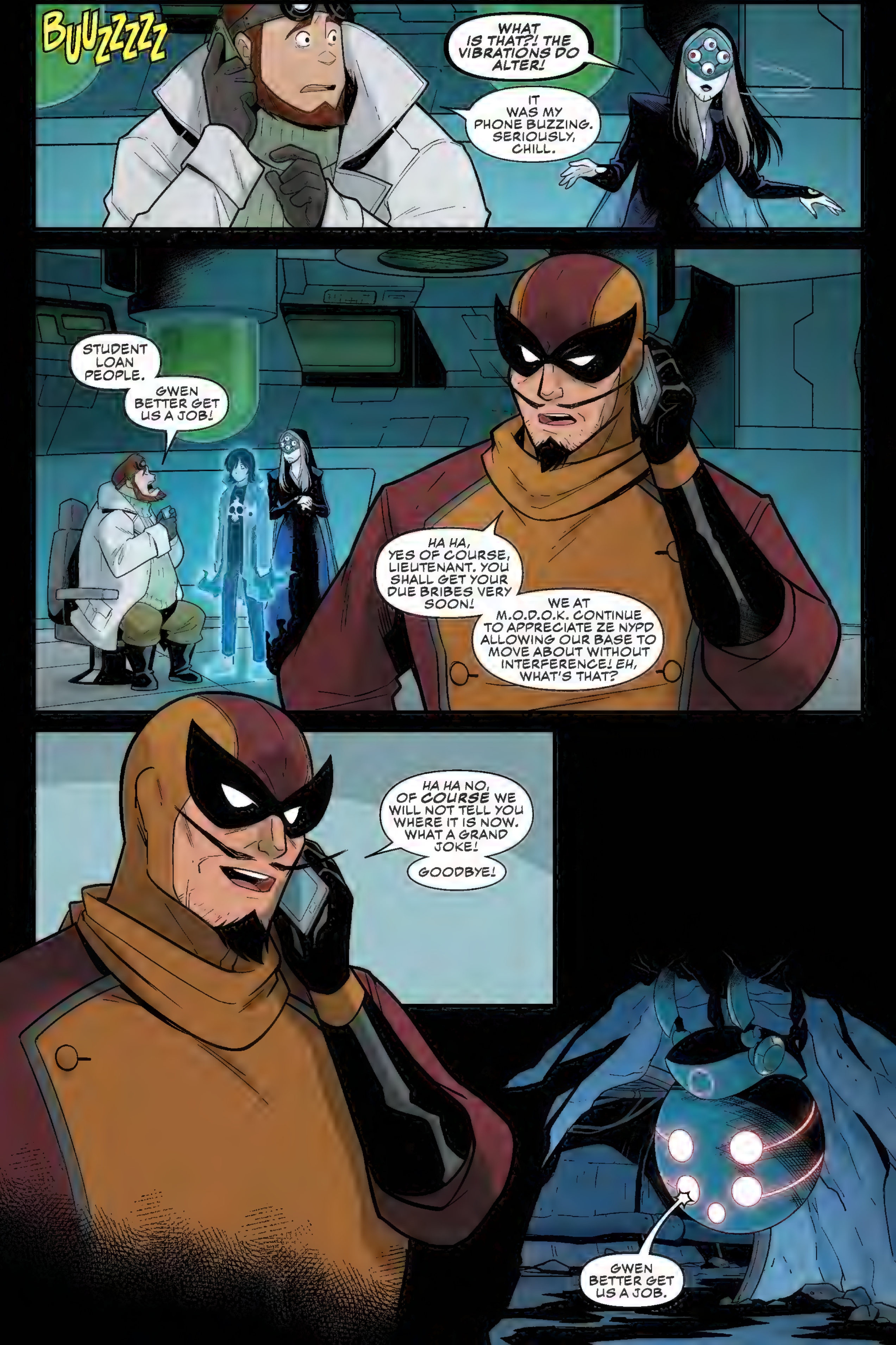

...
I HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU ARE.
NO, I IMAGINE YOU WOULDN'T. MY NAME IS VINCENT. YOU CAN CALL ME VINCE, OR VINNIE, OR VIN IF YOU LIKE.
YOU'RE SO...
NORMAL.
WELL, *THANK* YOU.
WHAT A RARE QUALITY TO POSSESS IN THIS *CITY OF METAHUMANS* AND *OTHERWISE*, YES?
SPEAKING OF WHICH--
--I DO NOT BELIEVE I INVITED ANY *GHASTLY SPECTERS* INTO MY HOME.

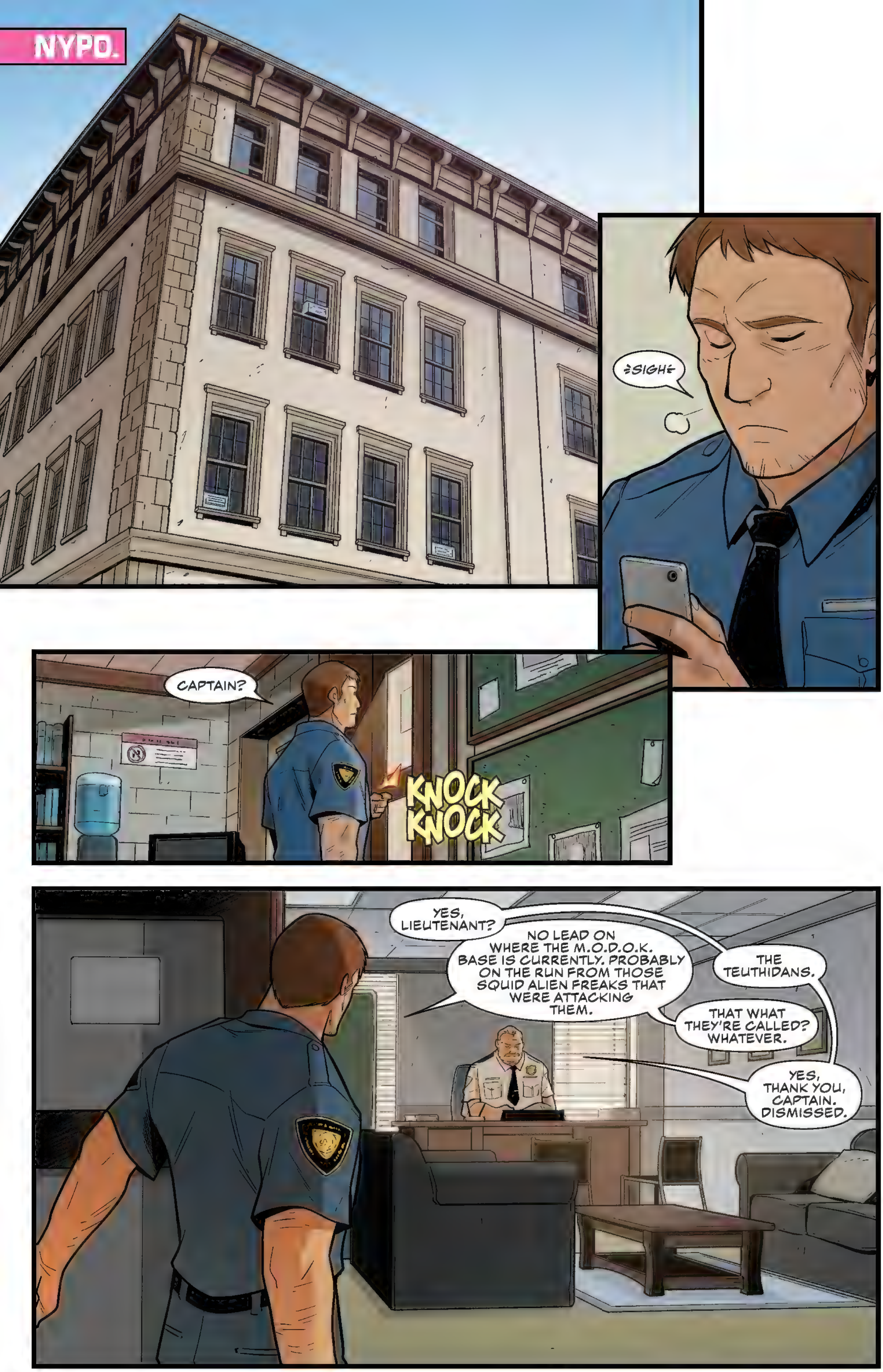

WAIT, WHAT? YOU MEAN CECIL THE FRIENDLY GHOST OVER HERE? HE'S *TOTALLY COOL.*
HE'S WITH ME.
GWEN, IT'S FINE. I GUESS I SHOULD GET USED TO THIS TREATMENT...
...FOR THE REST OF ETERNITY.
YOU MADE IT HERE SAFE. YOU DIDN'T NEED ANY "GHOST HACKS." I'LL SEE YOU BACK AT BASE.
THANK YOU FOR RESPECTING MY WISHES, **WRAITH.** I WISH YOU REST IN PEACE SOON.
THANKS?
WHAT WAS *THAT* ABOUT?
IT IS ABOUT ONE VALUE I HOLD ABOVE ALL ELSE.
THE PEACE OF THE MUNDANE.

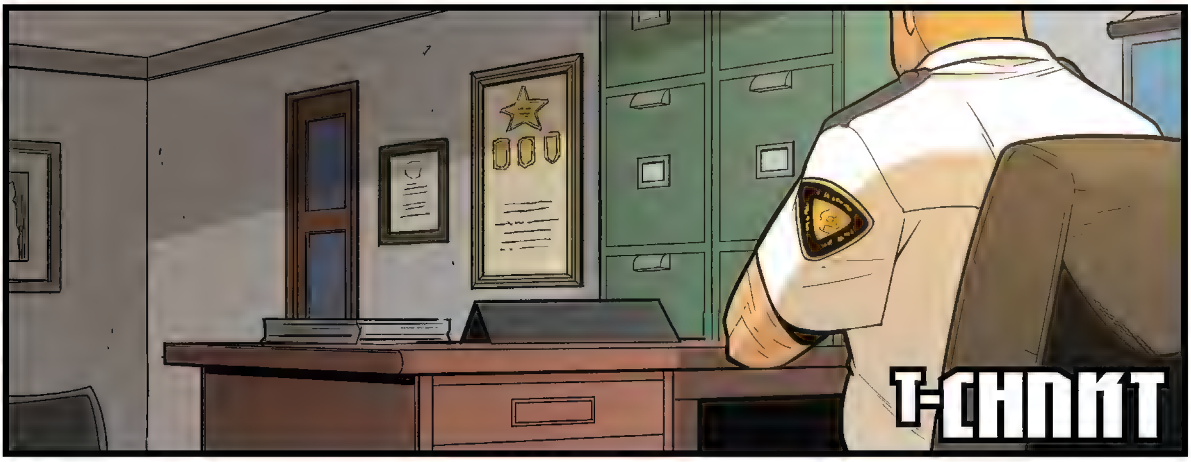

WE LIVE IN A TURBULENT WORLD.
SUPER HEROES AND VILLAINS BATTLE OVER THE FATE OF THE PLANET--
--EVERY--
--SINGLE--
--DAY.
I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO SAY IT OUT LOUD JUST TO FIGHT AGAINST THE INCLINATION TO COME TO TERMS WITH IT, TO BE AT *EASE* WITH IT.
CAN YOU *IMAGINE* WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE WITHOUT *MUTANTS* AND *INHUMANS* AND *MONSTER ROBOTS FROM THE FUTURE* CONSTANTLY FIGHTING IN OUR STREETS?!
I CAN. IT'S BORING.
YOU DON'T *KNOW* THAT.
WELL--
I AM A VERY LUCKY *MAN*. I HAVE THE RESOURCES TO CHASE THE LIFE I WANT. ONE WHERE THINGS ARE JUST *NORMAL*.
I KNOW THERE WAS A TIME BEFORE THE SKIES ABOVE MANHATTAN WERE JUST SUPER HERO FLIGHT LANES. I SAW IT.
SO I DO WHAT I CAN TO BRING A BIT OF THAT BACK. AND I LIKE THE WORK THAT M.O.D.O.K. DOES TO HELP THESE EFFORTS.
M.O.D.O.K. THE *DUDE* OR...

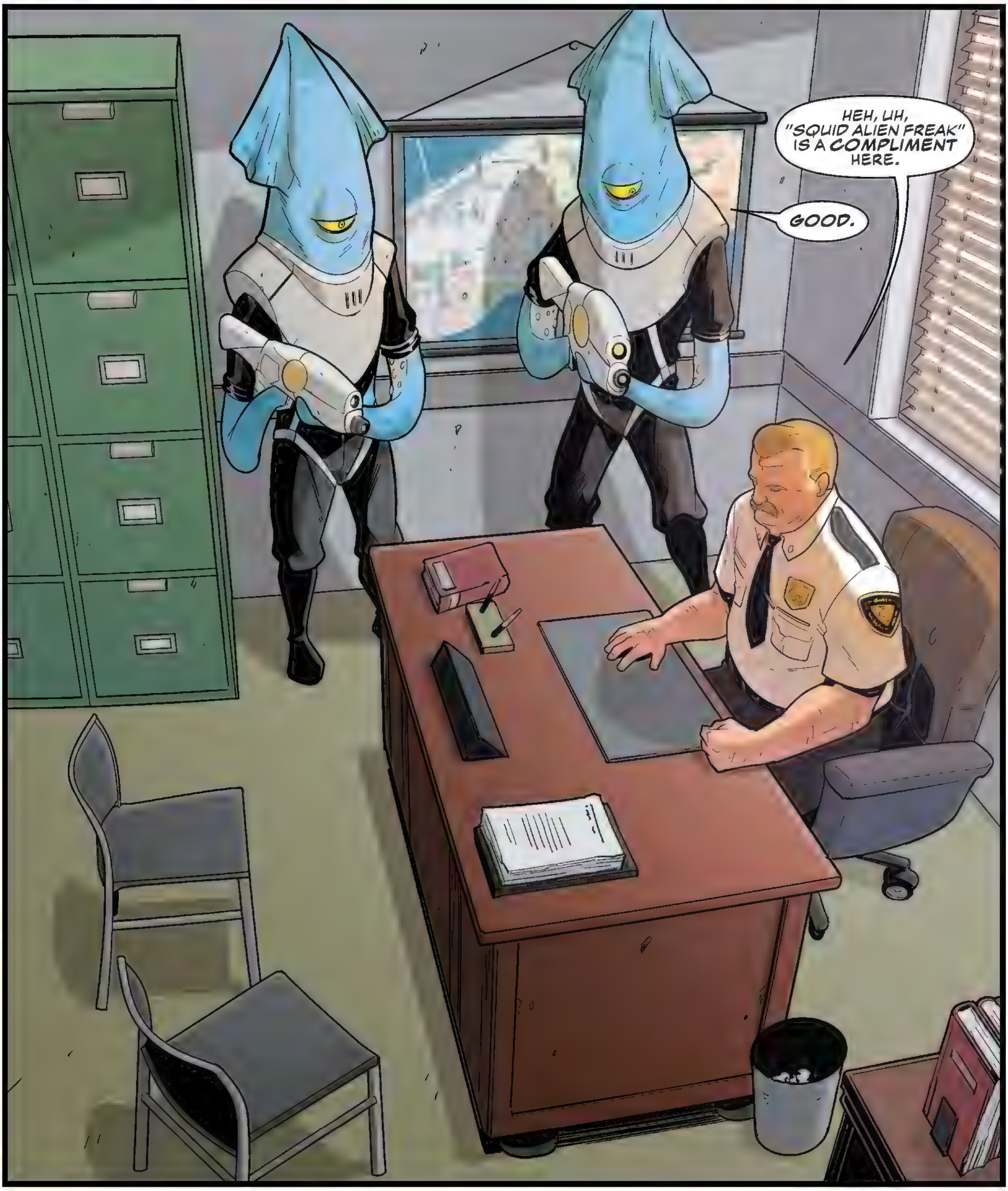

M.O.D.O.K. THE ORGANIZATION. M.O.D.O.K. THE...WHATEVER *HE* WAS WAS INCREDIBLY DISTASTEFUL TO ME.
I LIKE THE ORGANIZATION BECAUSE YOU'RE ALL *NORMAL* PEOPLE.
I. UH.
YES. I KNOW YOU HAVE NO SUPERPOWERS. NEITHER DOES GEORGES BATROC. NEITHER DOES MEGA TONY. AND THE *"TERRIBLE EYE"* IS A VERY NICE YOUNG LADY WHO HAPPENED TO FIND A RATHER POWERFUL MAGICAL HEADPIECE.
AND ALL THE OTHER AGENTS ARE JUST PEOPLE WITH GUNS.
SORRY, DID YOU SAY *OTHER* AGENTS--
YOU'RE *MY* PEOPLE. *NORMAL* PEOPLE.
AND NOW THAT M.O.D.O.K.--
--THE *"DUDE"*--
--IS GONE, I WANT TO CONTINUE OUR RELATIONSHIP.
ELIMINATE THREATS TO MY PEACEFUL LIFE HERE IN BAY RIDGE.
AND THAT MEANS THE *TEUTHIDANS.* AGAIN.
OH, *THOSE GUYS?* THAT'S GONNA BE *HARD.*
NOT MY PROBLEM! NOT WHILE I'M POURING OUT DUMP TRUCKS OF MONEY FOR THE TROUBLE!
CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT.
I *KNOW.*

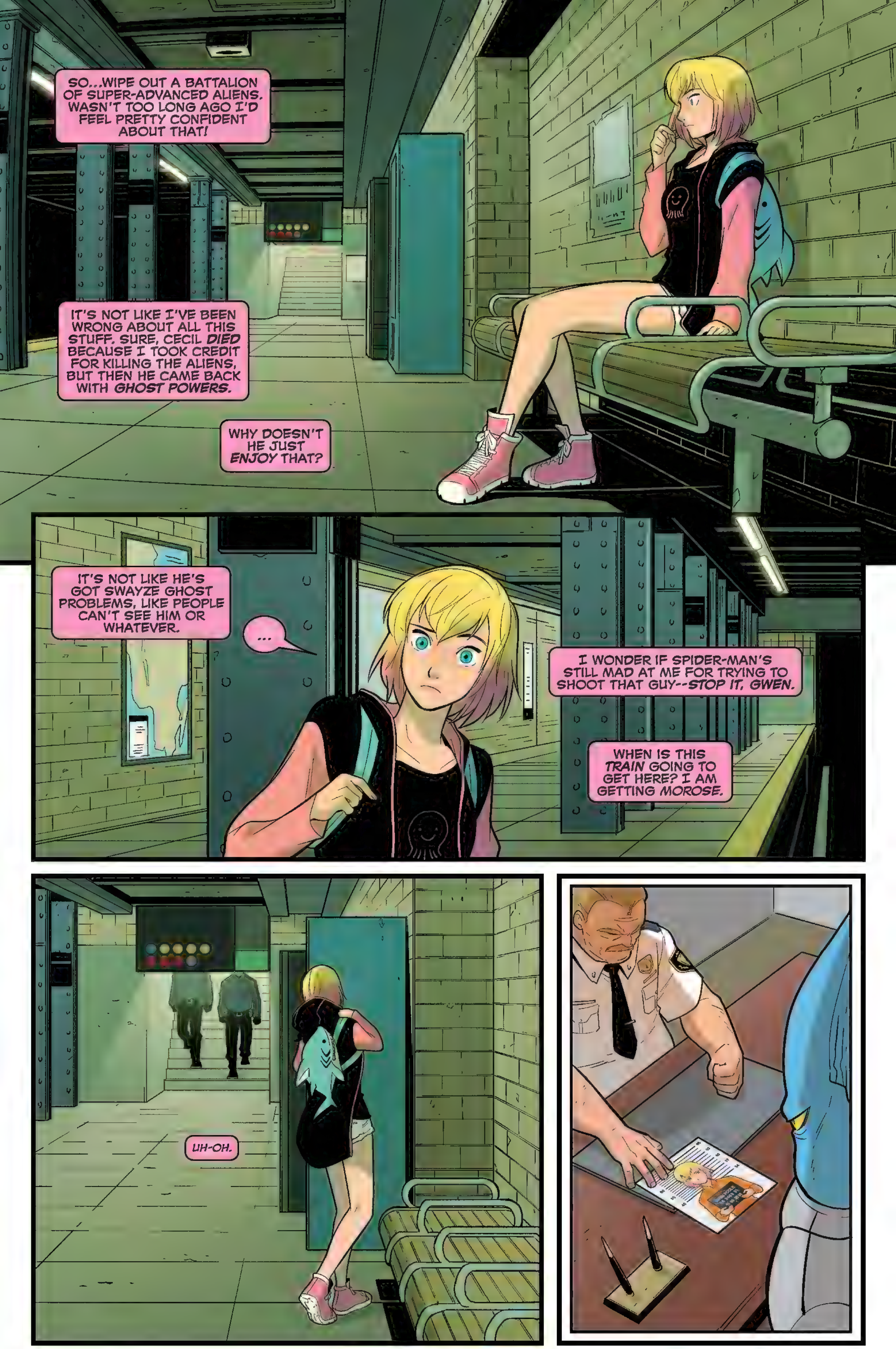

BACK AT M.O.D.O.K. BASE...
CECIL! YOU'RE BACK! WHERE IS GWEN?!
NEVER MIND. STUPID QUESTION. YOU CAN PASS THROUGH WALLS AND SHE CAN'T. SHE'S TAKING THE ELEVATOR.
NO, SHE'S STILL AT THE MEETING WITH OUR CLIENT.
OH! OKAY, THAT'S GOOD. THAT'S PROBABLY GOOD.
AHA! GHOST FRIEND. MAY I ASK YOU A QUESTION?
UH, SURE?
I HAVE STUDIED THE ARCANA. I HAVE SEEN THE PLANES. I...
...HAVE HARMED MYSELF IN THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE BEYOND THIS REALM.
BUT THERE IS ONE STATE I CANNOT PIERCE.
TELL ME, WHAT IS THERE AFTER DEATH?
WHOA! AH...
...I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. IT WAS LIKE SLEEPING.
SO, THERE IS NOTHING.
SORRY...
HA HA!
I THOUGHT THE REALMS BEYOND CORPOREAL LIFE WERE SIMPLY A SEA OF INSANITY, WHERE ANCIENT BEINGS TELL SECRET PLOTS IN A LANGUAGE THAT WOULD TURN US TO JELLY SHOULD IT CROSS OUR EARDRUMS...
BUT YOU DIDN'T SEE THAT! SERIOUSLY, BIG RELIEF. ADDS A LOT TO MY RESEARCH.

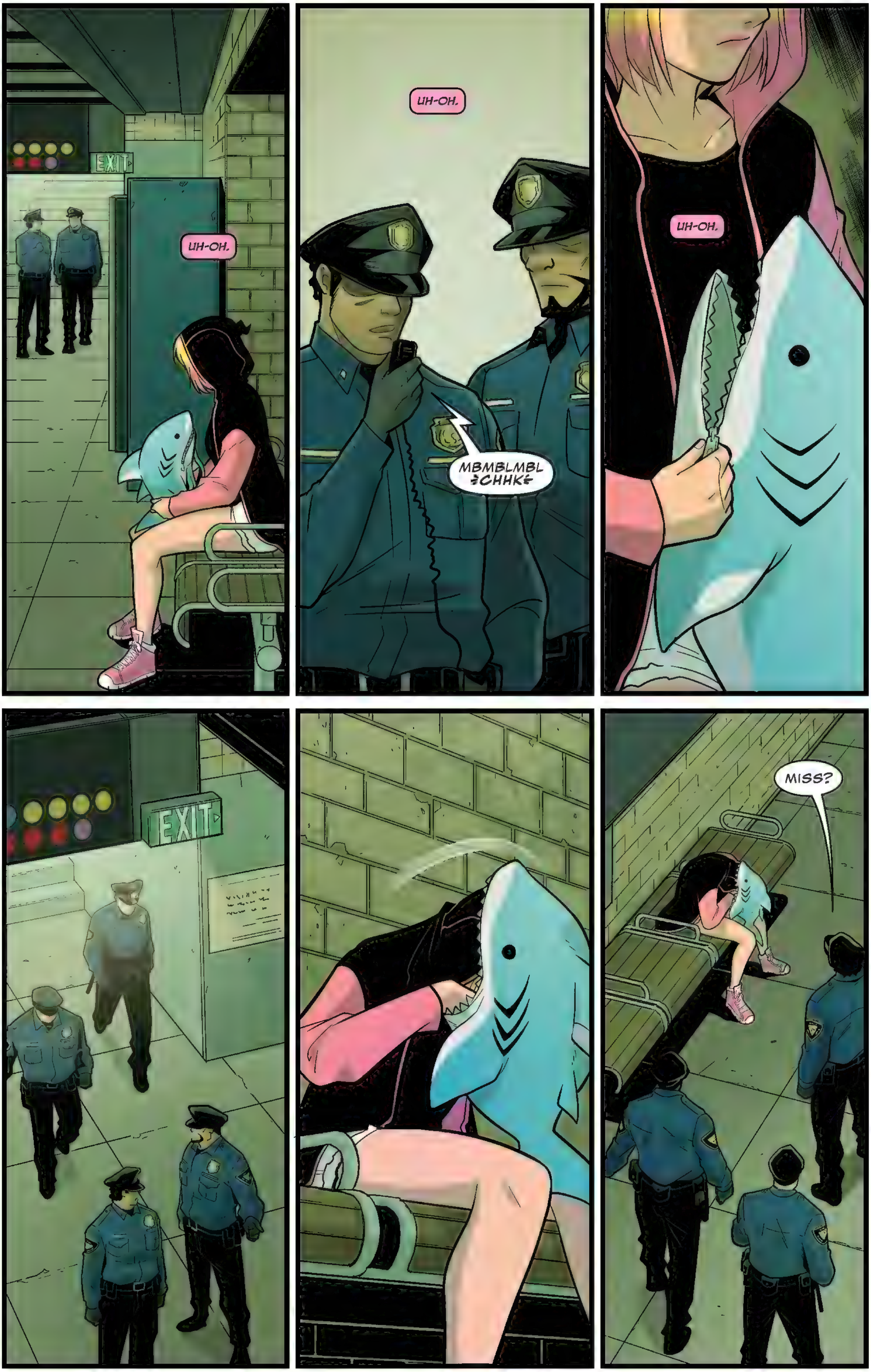

BUUZZZZZ
WHAT IS THAT?! THE VIBRATIONS DO ALTER!
IT WAS MY PHONE BUZZING. SERIOUSLY, CHILL.
STUDENT LOAN PEOPLE.
GWEN BETTER GET US A JOB!
HA HA, YES OF COURSE, LIEUTENANT. YOU SHALL GET YOUR DUE BRIBES VERY SOON!
WE AT M.O.D.O.K. CONTINUE TO APPRECIATE ZE NYPD ALLOWING OUR BASE TO MOVE ABOUT WITHOUT INTERFERENCE! EH, WHAT'S THAT?
HA HA NO, OF COURSE WE WILL NOT TELL YOU WHERE IT IS NOW. WHAT A GRAND JOKE!
GOODBYE!
GWEN BETTER GET US A JOB.

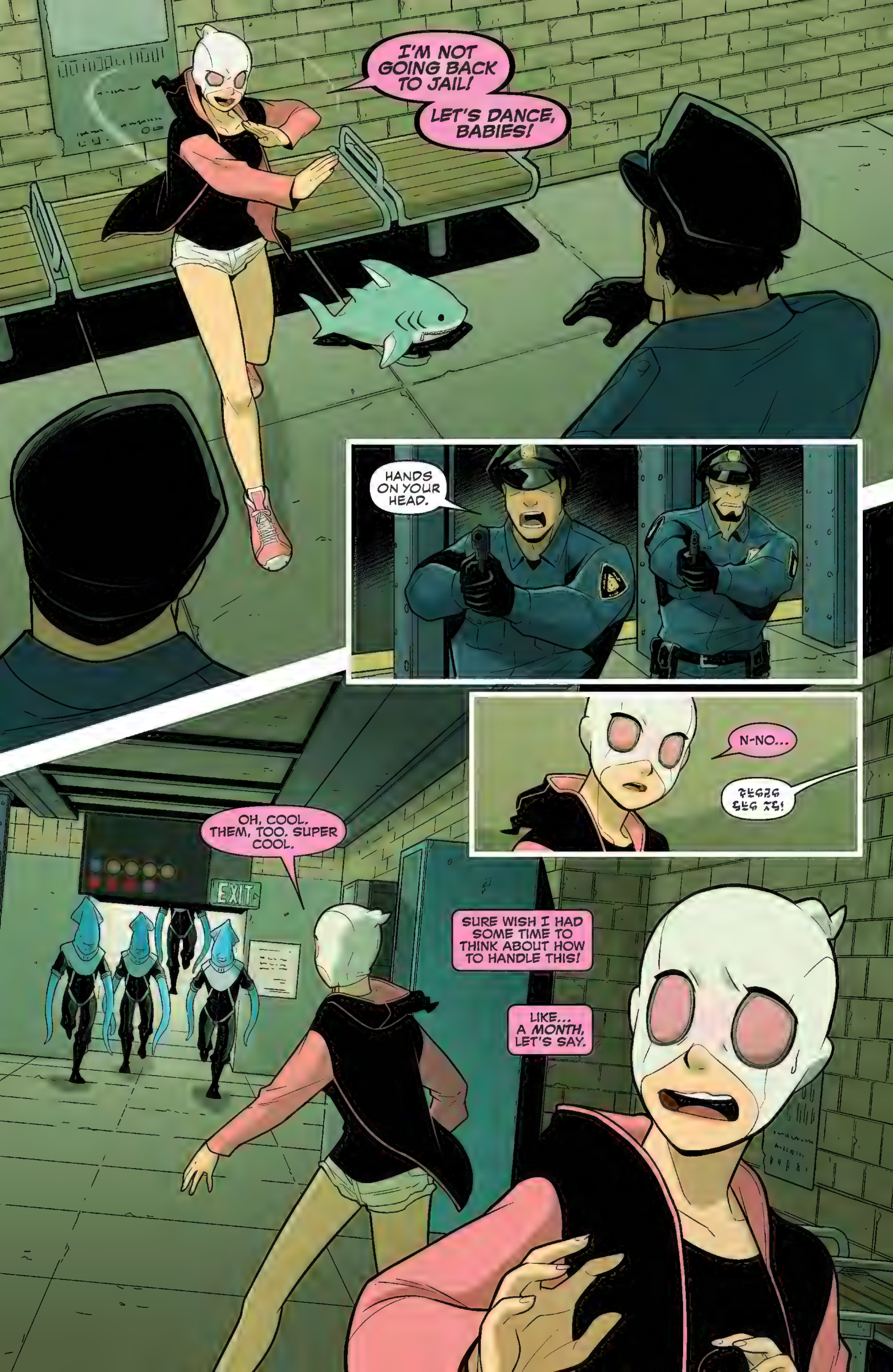

NYPD.
=SIGH=
CAPTAIN?
KNOCK KNOCK
YES, LIEUTENANT?
NO LEAD ON WHERE THE M.O.D.O.K. BASE IS CURRENTLY. PROBABLY ON THE RUN FROM THOSE SQUID ALIEN FREAKS THAT WERE ATTACKING THEM.
THE TEUTHIDANS.
THAT WHAT THEY'RE CALLED? WHATEVER.
YES, THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. DISMISSED.


T-CHNKT

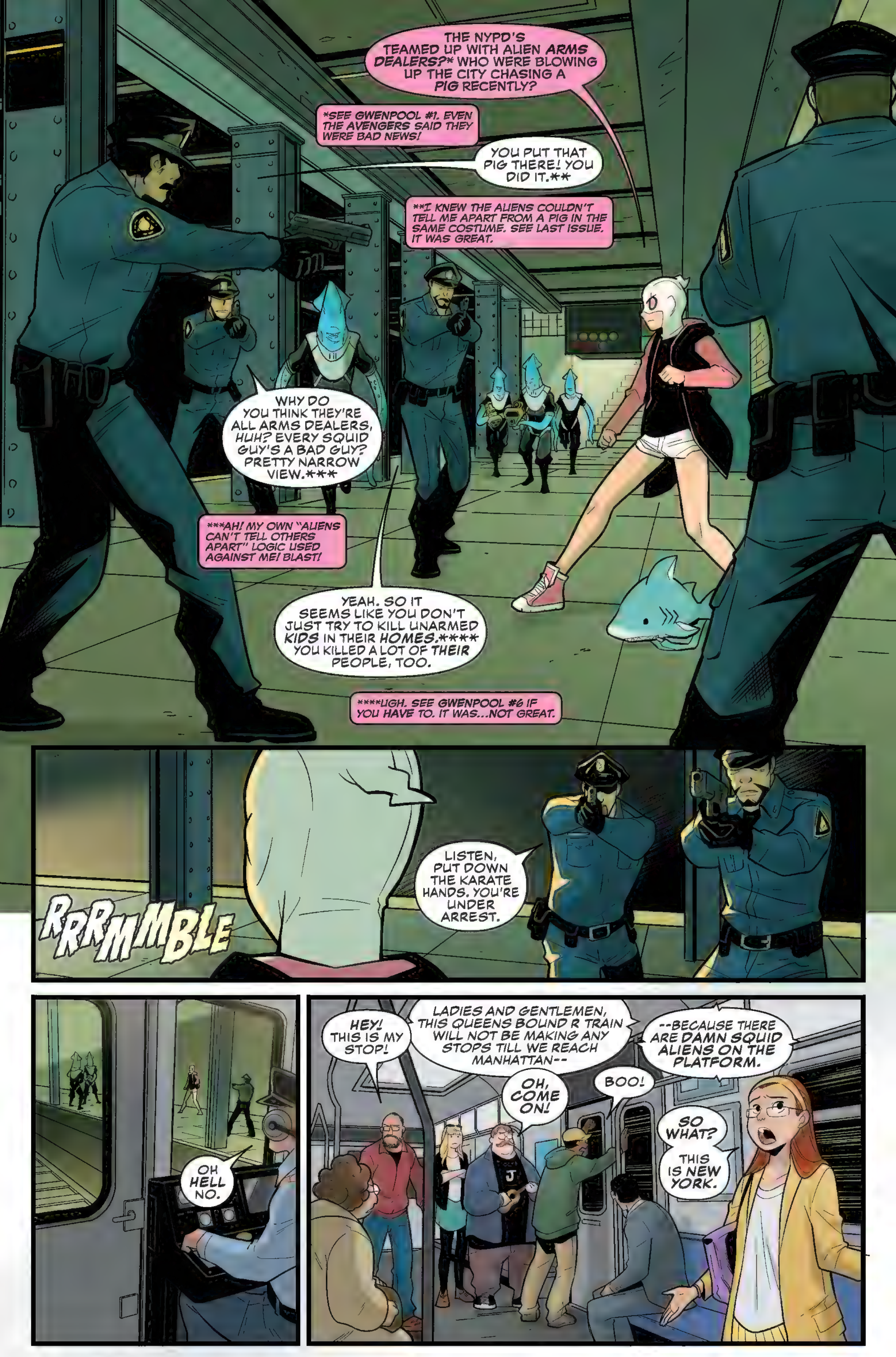

HEH, UH, "SQUID ALIEN FREAK" IS A COMPLIMENT HERE.
GOOD.

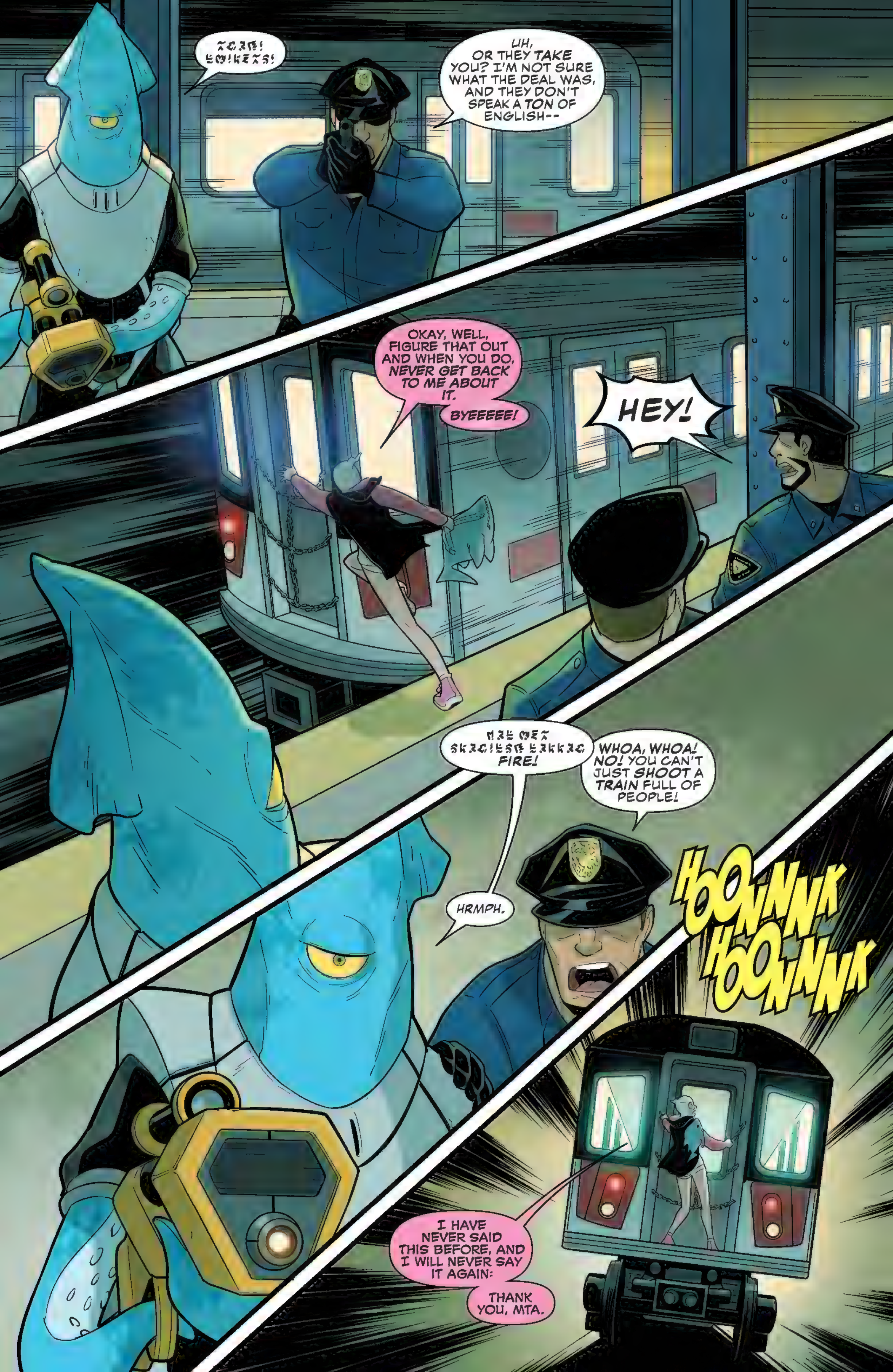

SO...WIPE OUT A BATTALION OF SUPER-ADVANCED ALIENS. WASN'T TOO LONG AGO I'D FEEL PRETTY CONFIDENT ABOUT THAT!
IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE BEEN WRONG ABOUT ALL THIS STUFF. SURE, CECIL *DIED* BECAUSE I TOOK CREDIT FOR KILLING THE ALIENS, BUT THEN HE CAME BACK WITH *GHOST POWERS*.
WHY DOESN'T HE JUST *ENJOY* THAT?
IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S GOT SWAYZE GHOST PROBLEMS, LIKE PEOPLE CAN'T SEE HIM OR WHATEVER.
...
I WONDER IF SPIDER-MAN'S STILL MAD AT ME FOR TRYING TO SHOOT THAT GUY--*STOP IT, GWEN.*
WHEN IS THIS *TRAIN* GOING TO GET HERE? I AM GETTING *MOROSE*.
UH-OH.

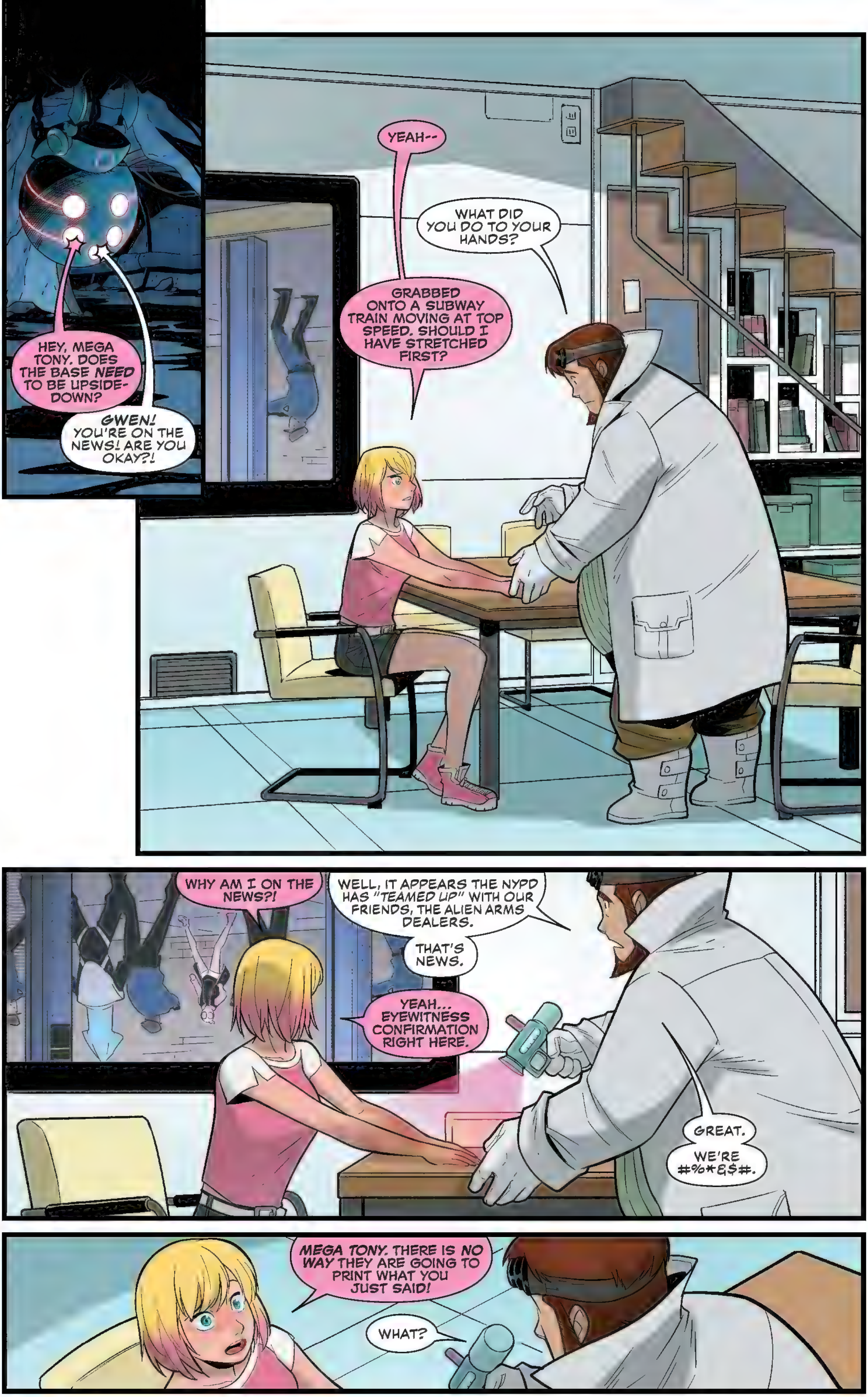

EXIT
UH-OH.
UH-OH.
MBMBLMBL
≠CHHK≠
UH-OH.
EXIT
MISS?

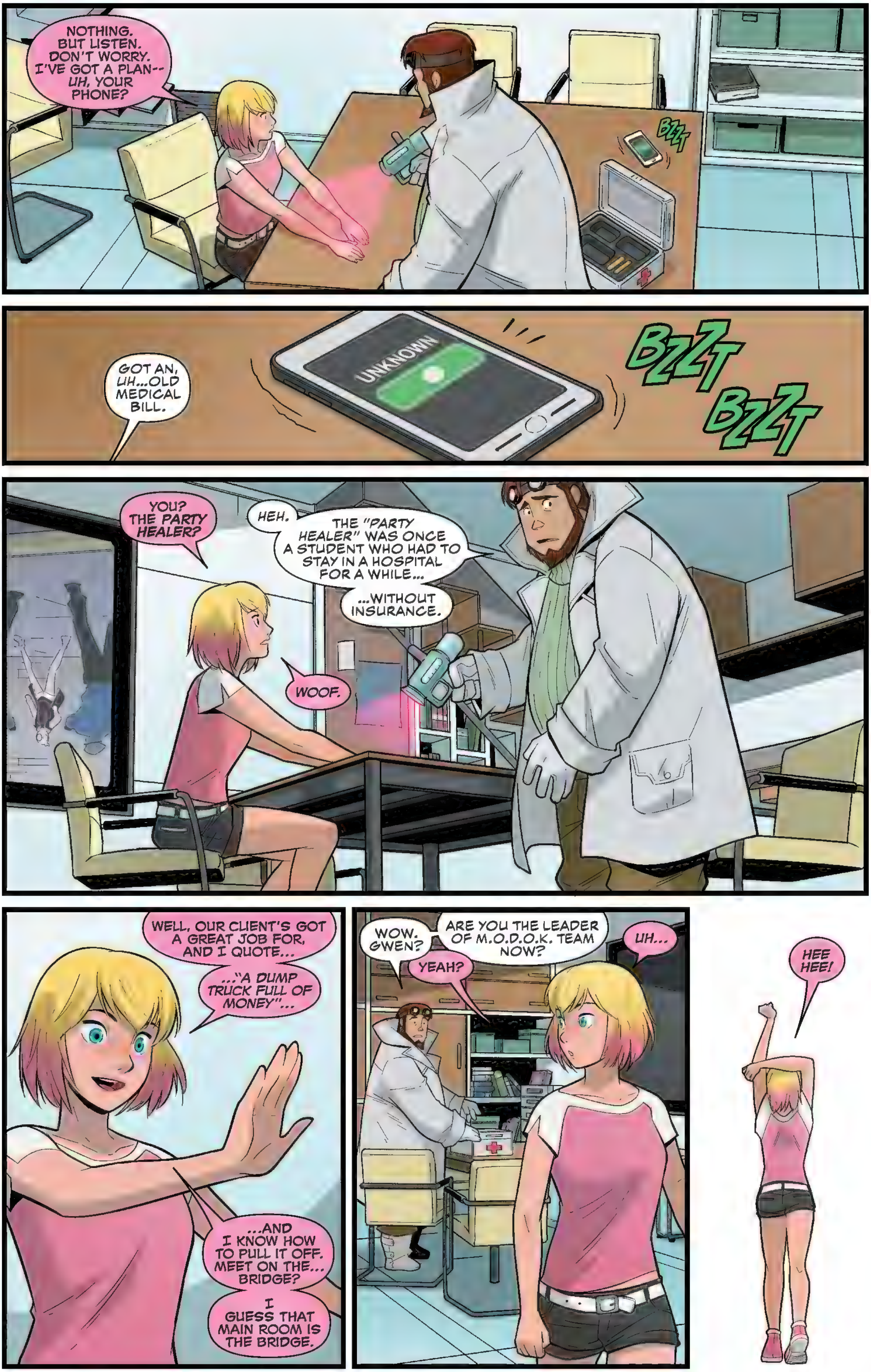

I'M NOT GOING BACK TO JAIL!
LET'S DANCE, BABIES!
HANDS ON YOUR HEAD.
N-NO...
OH, COOL. THEM, TOO. SUPER COOL.
EXIT
SURE WISH I HAD SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT HOW TO HANDLE THIS!
LIKE... A MONTH, LET'S SAY.

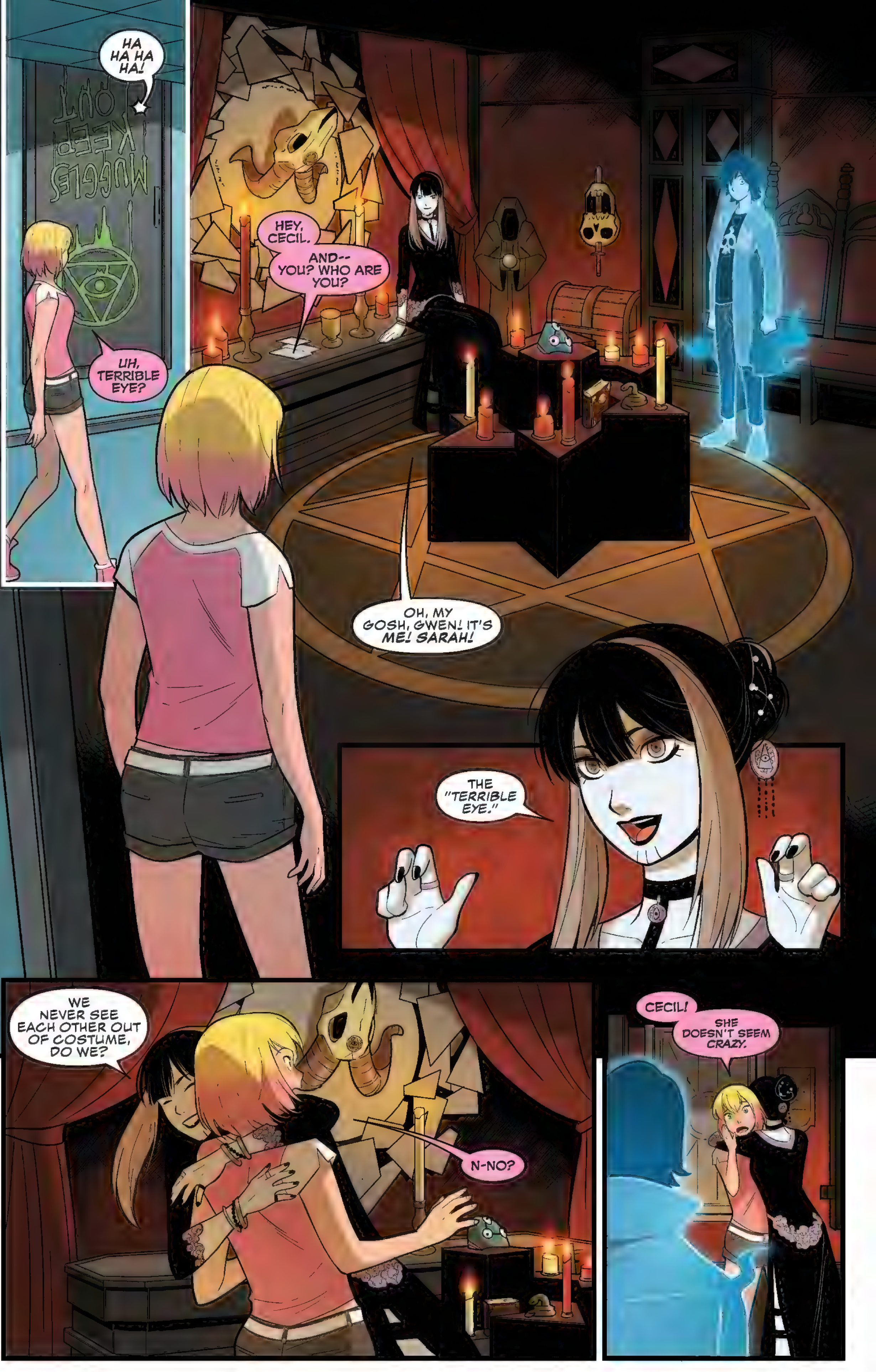
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #8

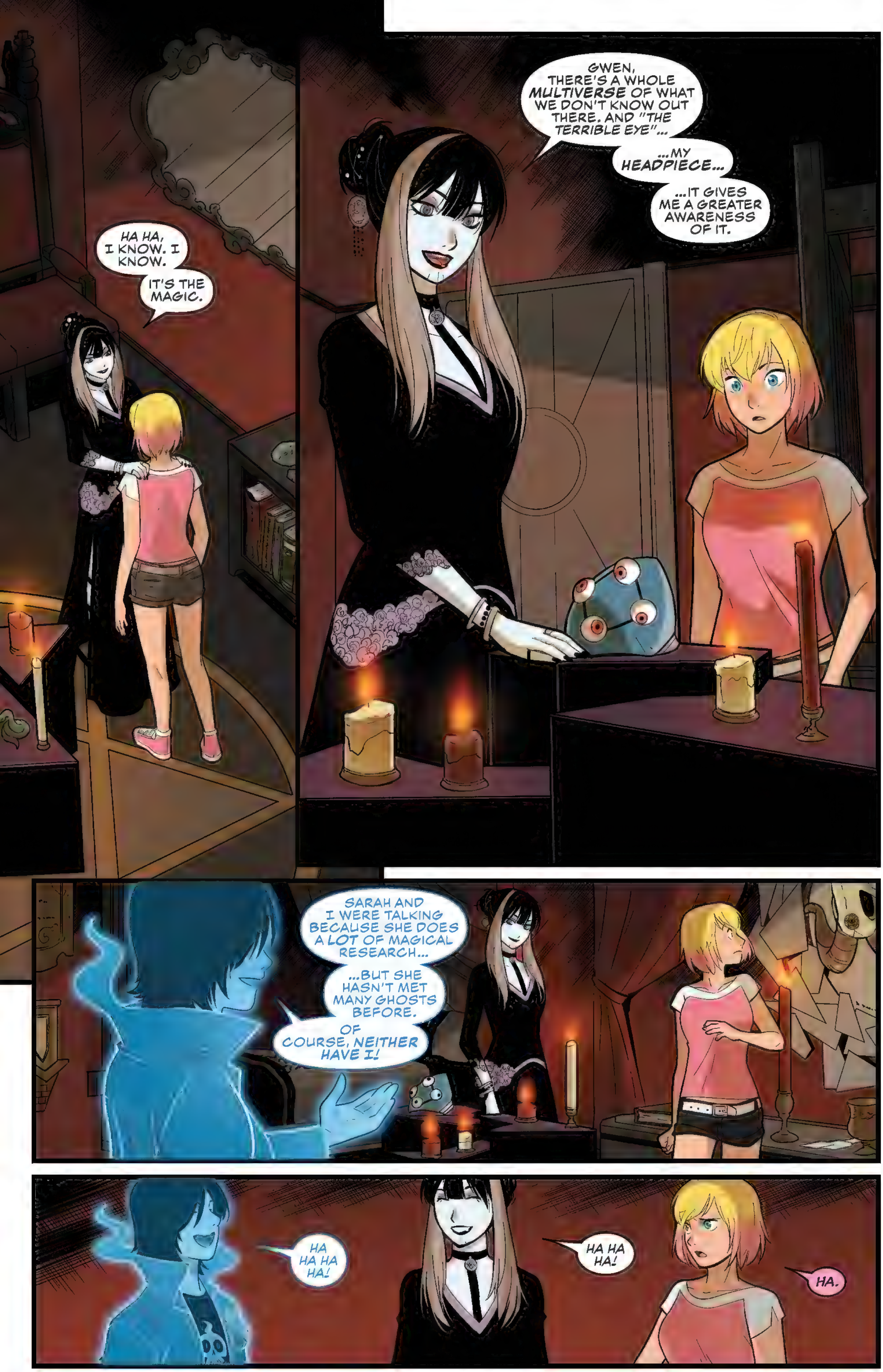

THE NYPD'S TEAMED UP WITH ALIEN ARMS DEALERS?* WHO WERE BLOWING UP THE CITY CHASING A PIG RECENTLY?
*SEE GWENPOOL #1. EVEN THE AVENGERS SAID THEY WERE BAD NEWS!
YOU PUT THAT PIG THERE! YOU DID IT.**
**I KNEW THE ALIENS COULDN'T TELL ME APART FROM A PIG IN THE SAME COSTUME. SEE LAST ISSUE. IT WAS GREAT.
WHY DO YOU THINK THEY'RE ALL ARMS DEALERS, HUH? EVERY SQUID GUY'S A BAD GUY? PRETTY NARROW VIEW.***
***AH! MY OWN "ALIENS CAN'T TELL OTHERS APART" LOGIC USED AGAINST ME! BLAST!
YEAH. SO IT SEEMS LIKE YOU DON'T JUST TRY TO KILL UNARMED KIDS IN THEIR HOMES.**** YOU KILLED A LOT OF THEIR PEOPLE, TOO.
****UGH. SEE GWENPOOL #6 IF YOU HAVE TO. IT WAS...NOT GREAT.
RRRMMBLE
LISTEN, PUT DOWN THE KARATE HANDS. YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.
OH HELL NO.
HEY! THIS IS MY STOP!
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS QUEENS BOUND R TRAIN WILL NOT BE MAKING ANY STOPS TILL WE REACH MANHATTAN--
--BECAUSE THERE ARE DAMN SQUID ALIENS ON THE PLATFORM.
OH, COME ON!
BOO!
SO WHAT?
THIS IS NEW YORK.

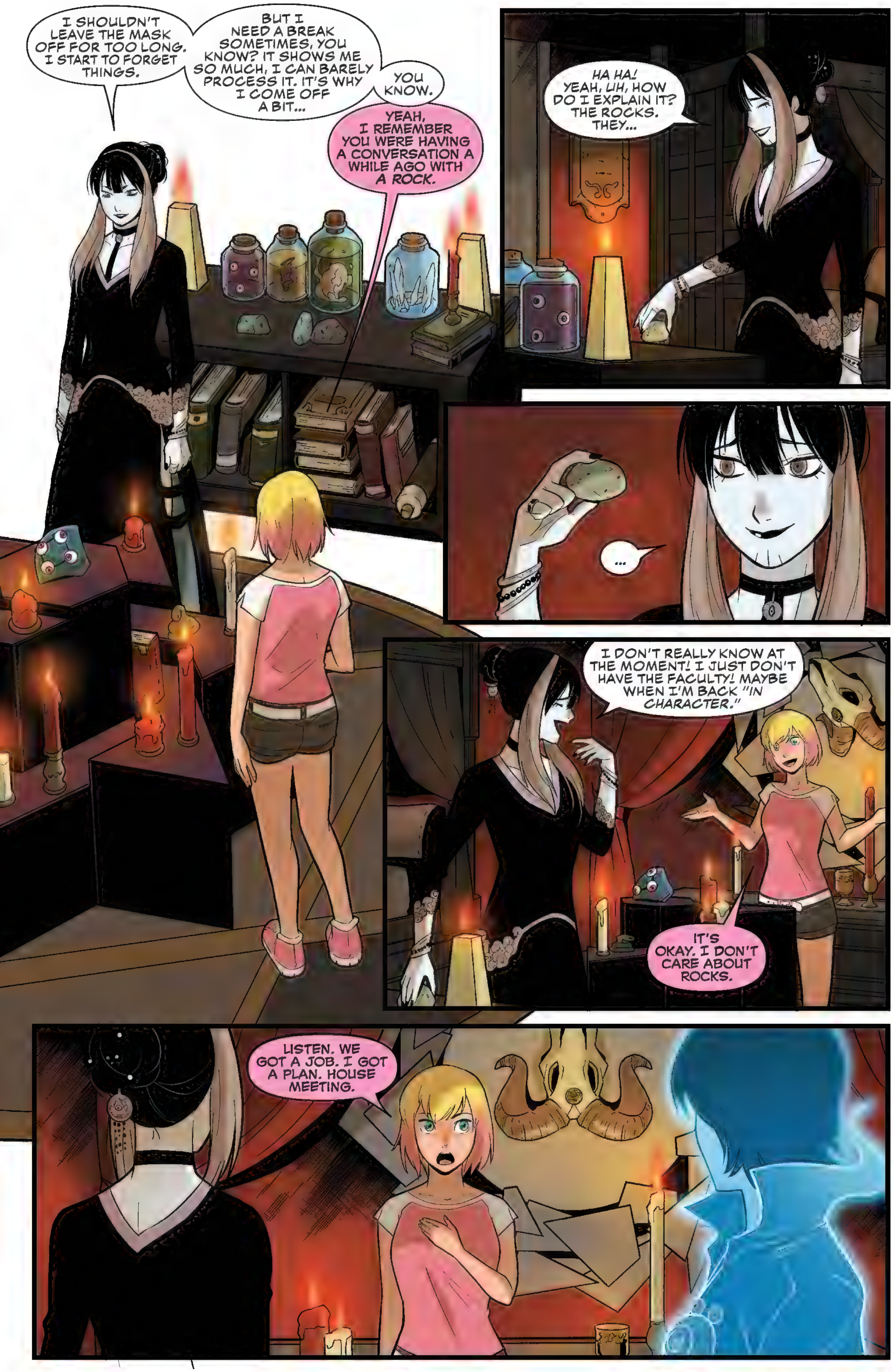

UH, OR THEY TAKE YOU? I'M NOT SURE WHAT THE DEAL WAS, AND THEY DON'T SPEAK A TON OF ENGLISH--
OKAY, WELL, FIGURE THAT OUT AND WHEN YOU DO, NEVER GET BACK TO ME ABOUT IT.
BYEEEEEE!
HEY!
FIRE!
WHOA, WHOA! NO! YOU CAN'T JUST SHOOT A TRAIN FULL OF PEOPLE!
HRMPH.
HOONNNK
HOONNNK
I HAVE NEVER SAID THIS BEFORE, AND I WILL NEVER SAY IT AGAIN:
THANK YOU, MTA.

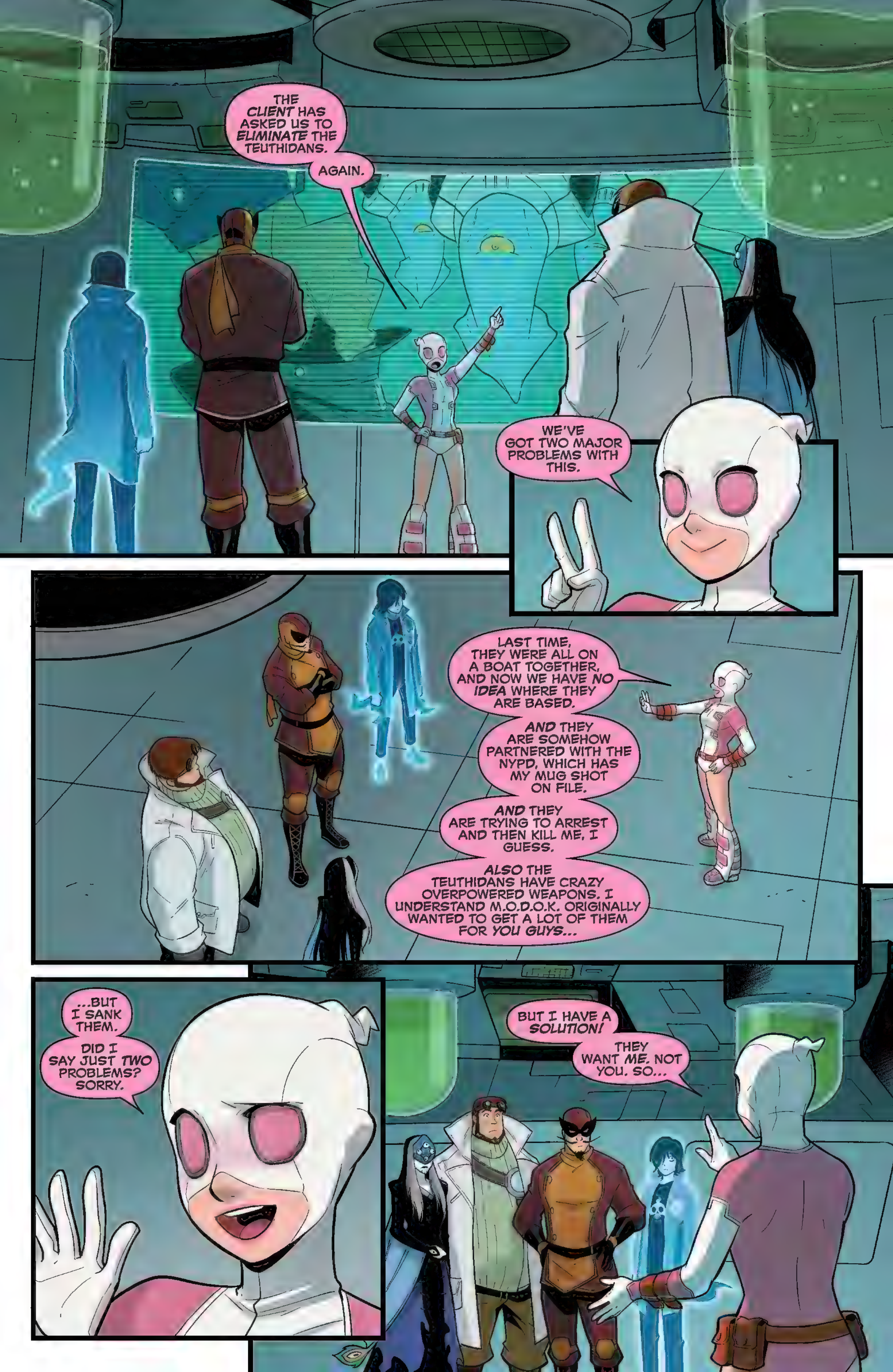

HEY, MEGA TONY. DOES THE BASE *NEED* TO BE UPSIDE-DOWN?
GWEN! YOU'RE ON THE NEWS! ARE YOU OKAY?!
YEAH--
GRABBED ONTO A SUBWAY TRAIN MOVING AT TOP SPEED. SHOULD I HAVE STRETCHED FIRST?
WHAT DID YOU DO TO YOUR HANDS?
WHY AM I ON THE NEWS?!
WELL, IT APPEARS THE NYPD HAS *"TEAMED UP"* WITH OUR FRIENDS, THE ALIEN ARMS DEALERS.
THAT'S NEWS.
YEAH... EYEWITNESS CONFIRMATION RIGHT HERE.
GREAT.
WE'RE #%*&$#.
MEGA TONY. THERE IS *NO WAY* THEY ARE GOING TO PRINT WHAT YOU JUST SAID!
WHAT?

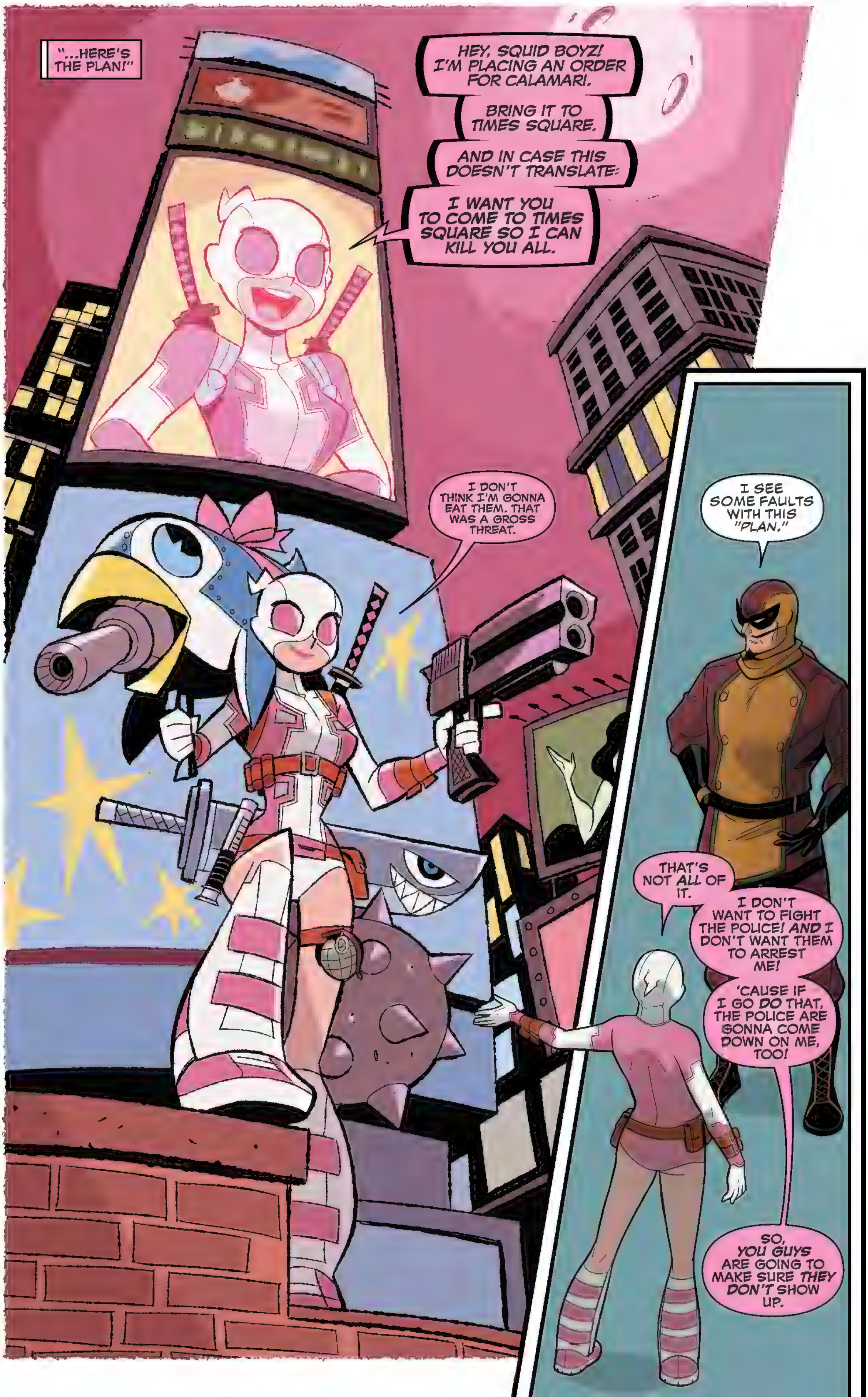

NOTHING. BUT LISTEN. DON'T WORRY. I'VE GOT A PLAN-- UH, YOUR PHONE?
BZZT
GOT AN, UH...OLD MEDICAL BILL.
UNKNOWN
BZZT BZZT
YOU? THE PARTY HEALER?
HEH.
THE "PARTY HEALER" WAS ONCE A STUDENT WHO HAD TO STAY IN A HOSPITAL FOR A WHILE...
...WITHOUT INSURANCE.
WOOF.
WELL, OUR CLIENT'S GOT A GREAT JOB FOR, AND I QUOTE...
..."A DUMP TRUCK FULL OF MONEY"...
...AND I KNOW HOW TO PULL IT OFF. MEET ON THE... BRIDGE?
I GUESS THAT MAIN ROOM IS THE BRIDGE.
WOW. GWEN?
ARE YOU THE LEADER OF M.O.D.O.K. TEAM NOW?
YEAH?
UH...
HEE HEE!

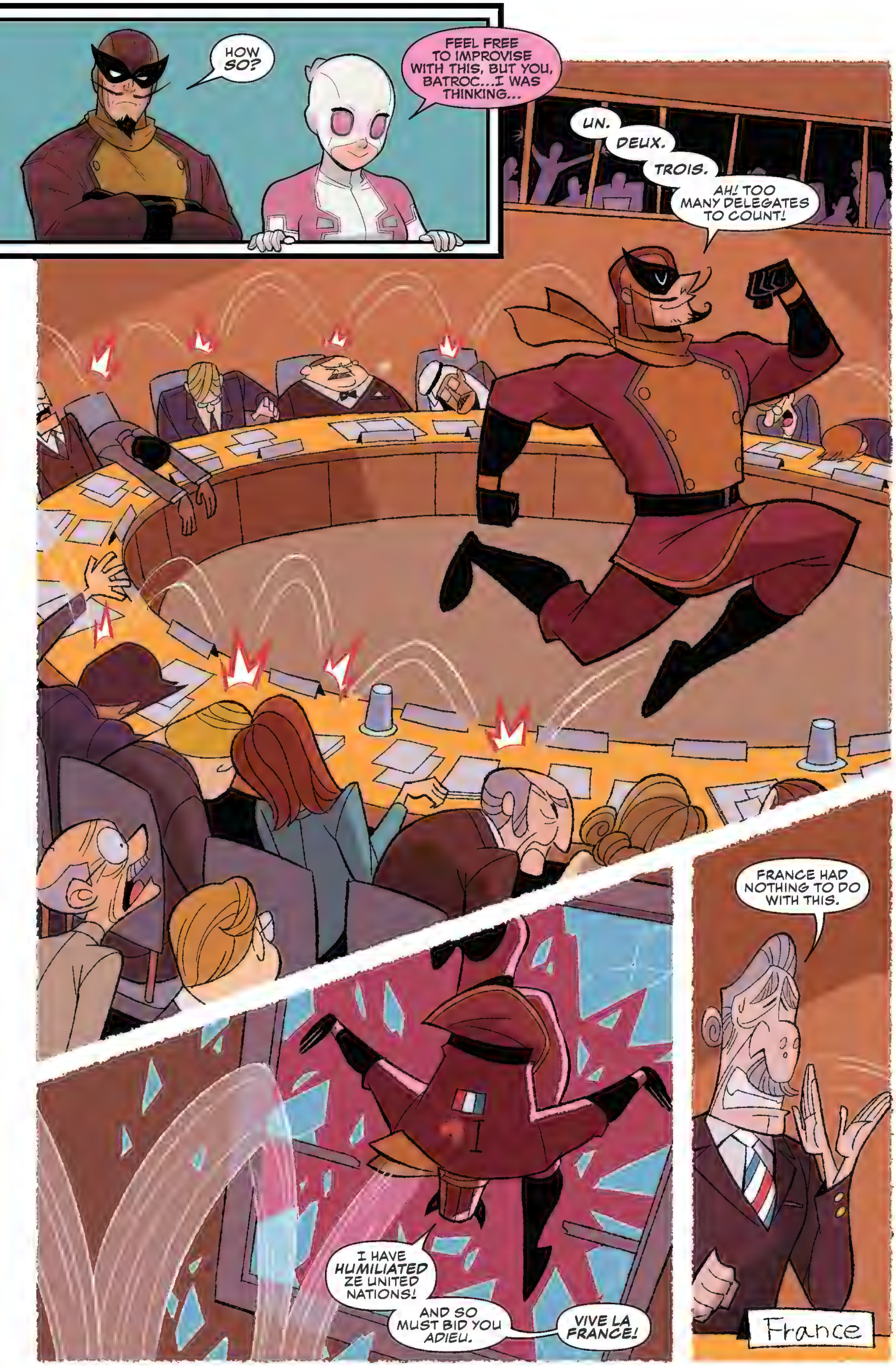

HA HA HA HA!
MUGGLES KEEP OUT
UH, TERRIBLE EYE?
HEY, CECIL.
AND-- YOU? WHO ARE YOU?
OH, MY GOSH, GWEN! IT'S ME! SARAH!
THE "TERRIBLE EYE."
WE NEVER SEE EACH OTHER OUT OF COSTUME, DO WE?
N-NO?
CECIL!
SHE DOESN'T SEEM CRAZY.

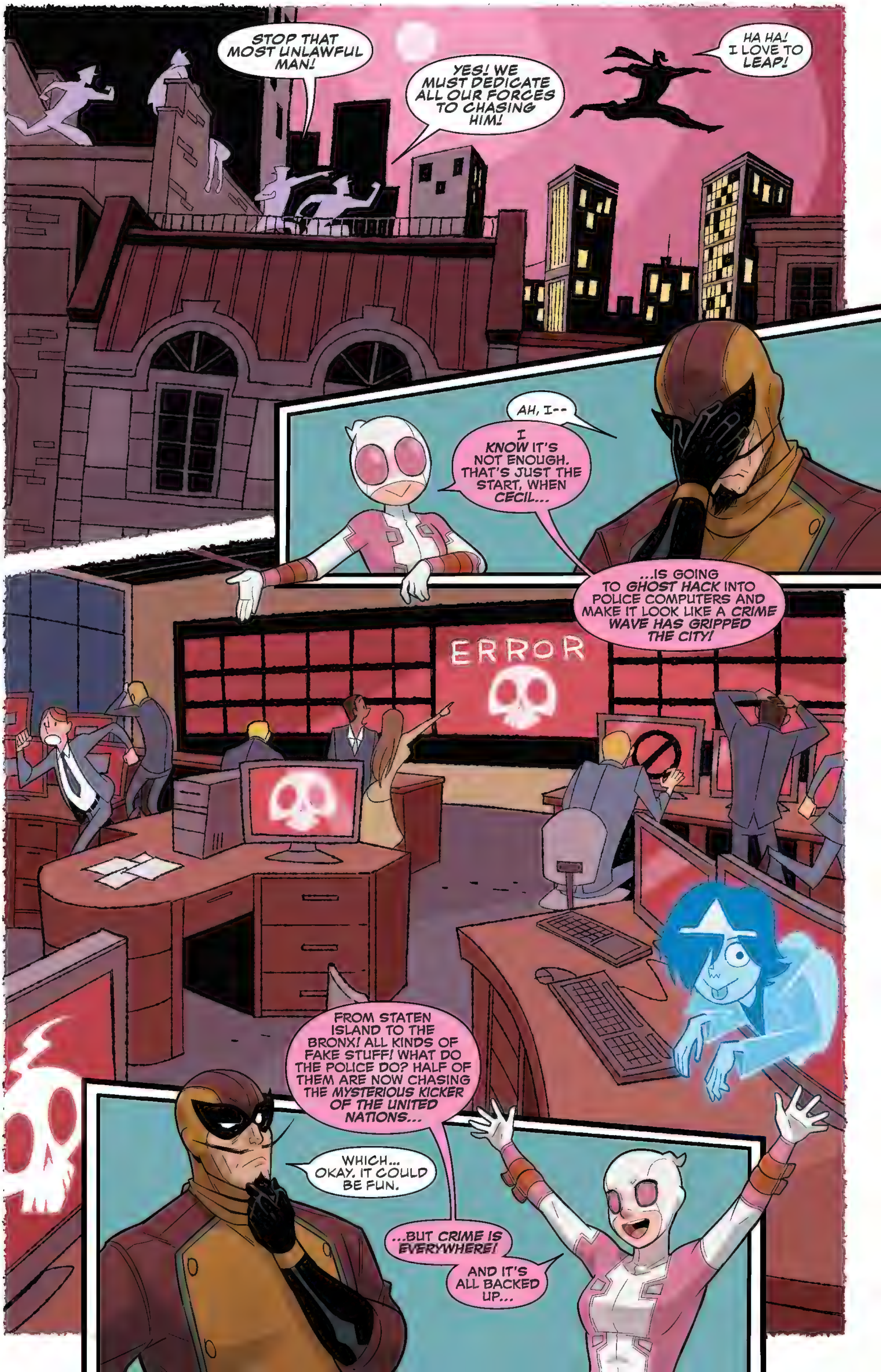

HA HA, I KNOW. I KNOW.
IT'S THE MAGIC.
GWEN, THERE'S A WHOLE MULTIVERSE OF WHAT WE DON'T KNOW OUT THERE. AND "THE TERRIBLE EYE"...
...MY HEADPIECE...
...IT GIVES ME A GREATER AWARENESS OF IT.
SARAH AND I WERE TALKING BECAUSE SHE DOES A LOT OF MAGICAL RESEARCH...
...BUT SHE HASN'T MET MANY GHOSTS BEFORE.
OF COURSE, NEITHER HAVE I!
HA HA HA HA!
HA HA HA!
HA.

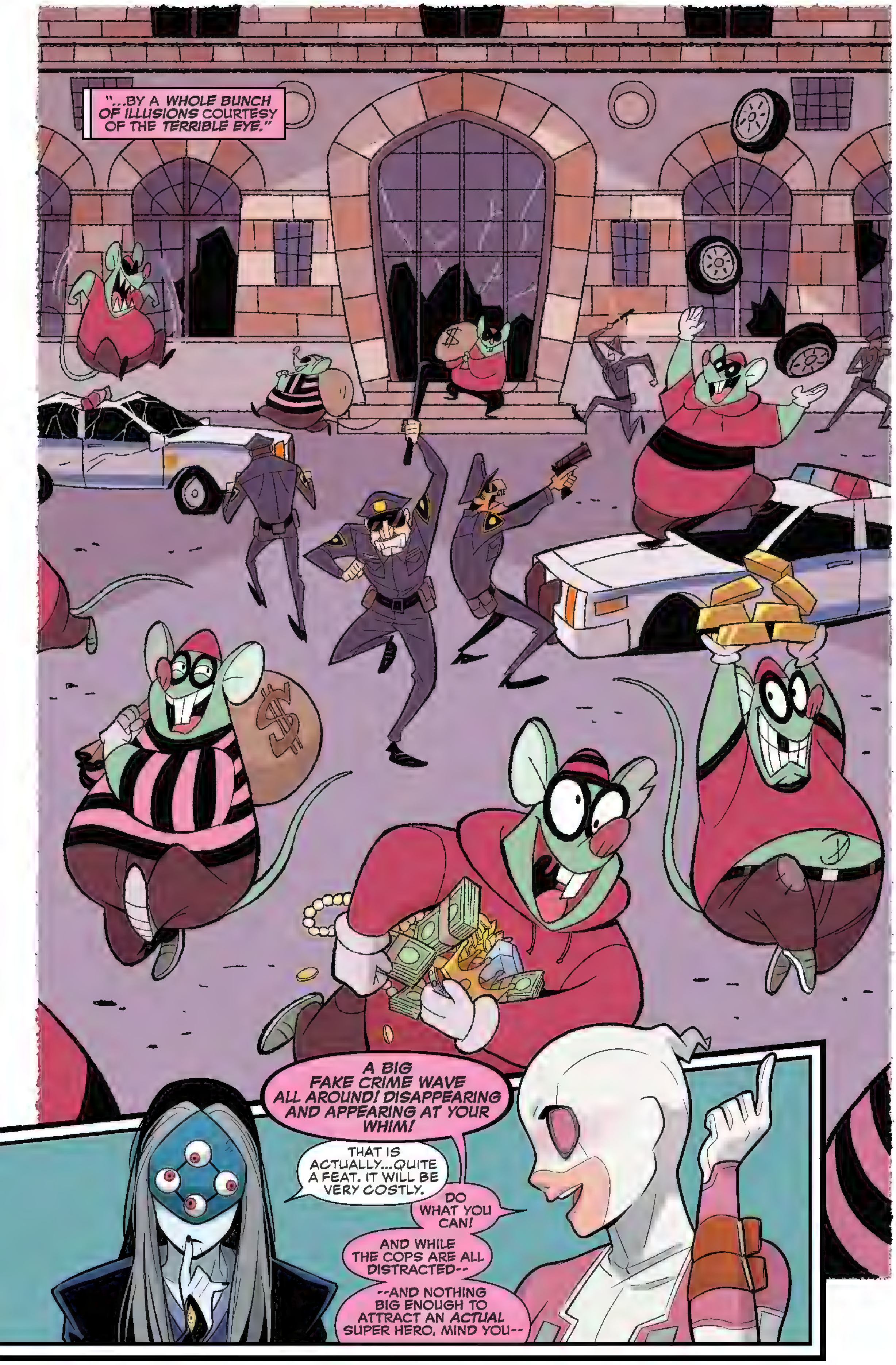

I SHOULDN'T LEAVE THE MASK OFF FOR TOO LONG. I START TO FORGET THINGS.
BUT I NEED A BREAK SOMETIMES, YOU KNOW? IT SHOWS ME SO MUCH, I CAN BARELY PROCESS IT. IT'S WHY I COME OFF A BIT...
YOU KNOW.
YEAH, I REMEMBER YOU WERE HAVING A CONVERSATION A WHILE AGO WITH A ROCK.
HA HA! YEAH, UH, HOW DO I EXPLAIN IT? THE ROCKS. THEY...
...
I DON'T REALLY KNOW AT THE MOMENT! I JUST DON'T HAVE THE FACULTY! MAYBE WHEN I'M BACK "IN CHARACTER."
IT'S OKAY. I DON'T CARE ABOUT ROCKS.
LISTEN. WE GOT A JOB. I GOT A PLAN. HOUSE MEETING.

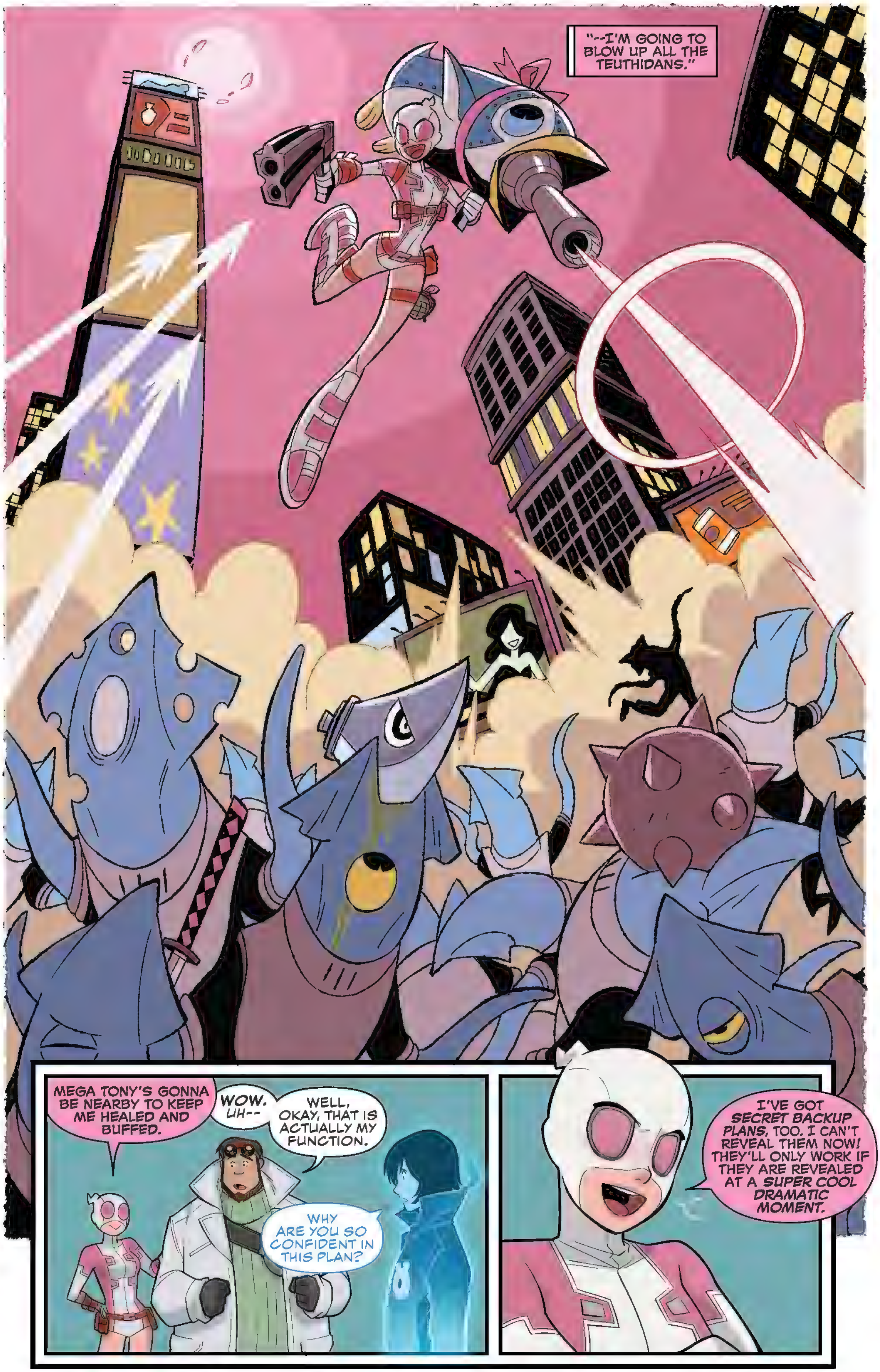

THE *CLIENT* HAS ASKED US TO *ELIMINATE* THE TEUTHIDANS.
AGAIN.
WE'VE GOT TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH THIS.
LAST TIME, THEY WERE ALL ON A BOAT TOGETHER, AND NOW WE HAVE *NO IDEA* WHERE THEY ARE BASED.
AND THEY ARE SOMEHOW PARTNERED WITH THE NYPD, WHICH HAS MY MUG SHOT ON FILE.
AND THEY ARE TRYING TO ARREST AND THEN KILL ME, I GUESS.
ALSO THE TEUTHIDANS HAVE CRAZY OVERPOWERED WEAPONS. I UNDERSTAND M.O.D.O.K. ORIGINALLY WANTED TO GET A LOT OF THEM FOR *YOU GUYS*...
...BUT I SANK THEM.
DID I SAY JUST *TWO* PROBLEMS? SORRY.
BUT I HAVE A *SOLUTION!*
THEY WANT *ME*, NOT YOU. SO...

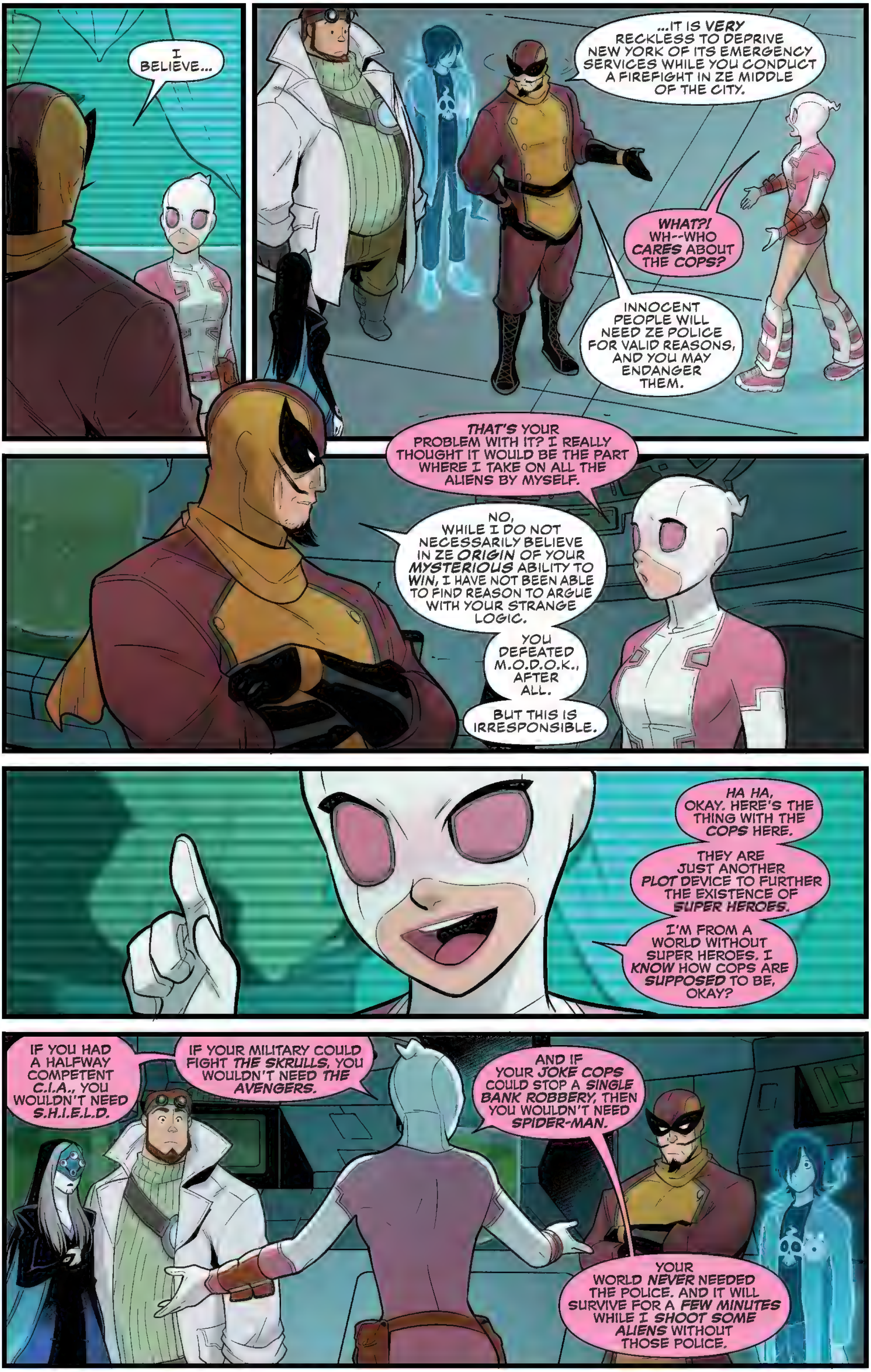

"...HERE'S THE PLAN!"
HEY, SQUID BOYZ! I'M PLACING AN ORDER FOR CALAMARI.
BRING IT TO TIMES SQUARE.
AND IN CASE THIS DOESN'T TRANSLATE:
I WANT YOU TO COME TO TIMES SQUARE SO I CAN KILL YOU ALL.
I DON'T THINK I'M GONNA EAT THEM. THAT WAS A GROSS THREAT.
I SEE SOME FAULTS WITH THIS "PLAN."
THAT'S NOT *ALL* OF IT.
I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT THE POLICE! *AND* I DON'T WANT THEM TO ARREST ME!
'CAUSE IF I GO *DO* THAT, THE POLICE ARE GONNA COME DOWN ON ME, TOO!
SO, *YOU GUYS* ARE GOING TO MAKE SURE *THEY DON'T* SHOW UP.

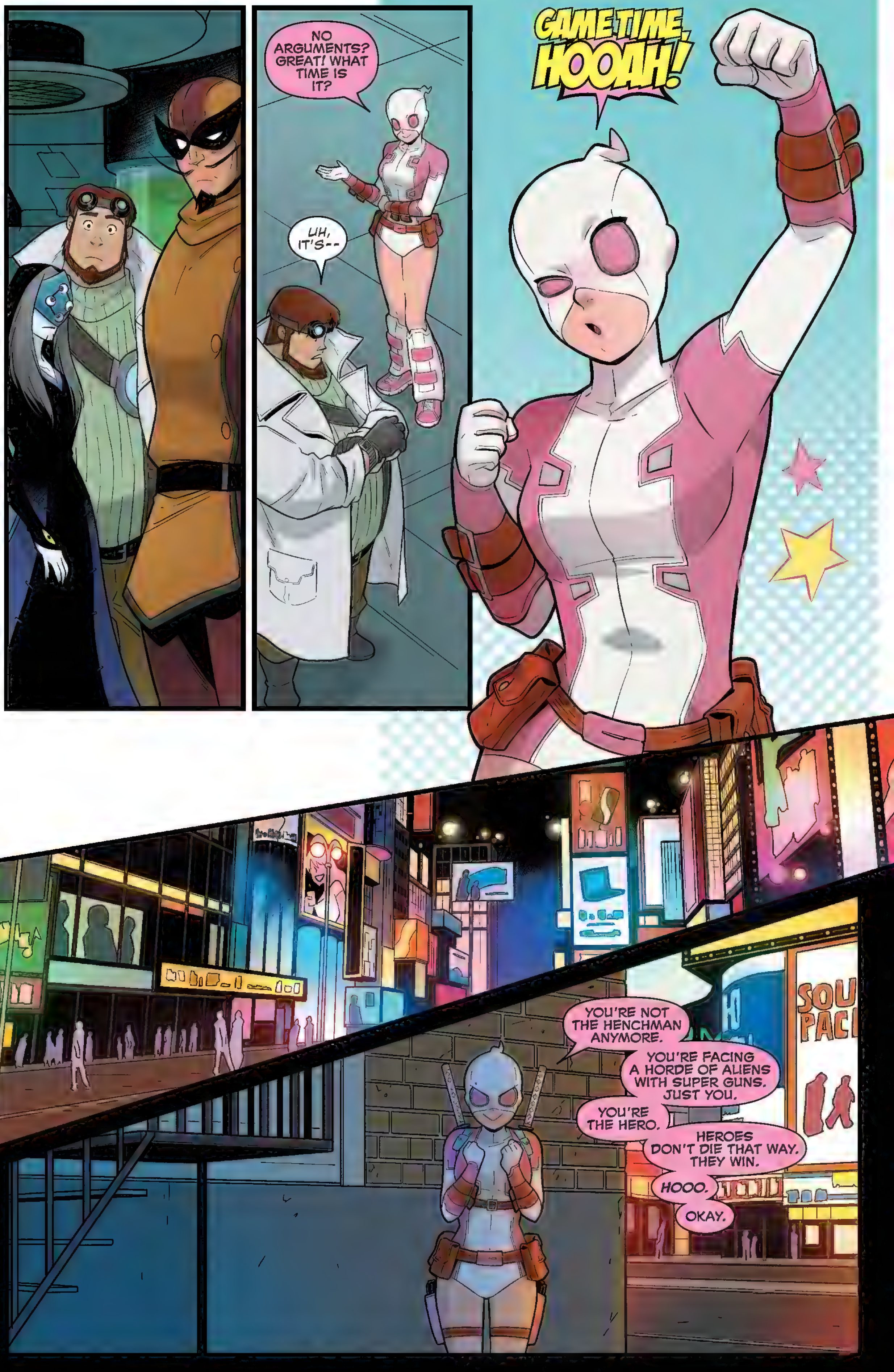

HOW SO?
FEEL FREE TO IMPROVISE WITH THIS, BUT YOU, BATROC...I WAS THINKING...
UN.
DEUX.
TROIS.
AH! TOO MANY DELEGATES TO COUNT!
I HAVE HUMILIATED ZE UNITED NATIONS!
AND SO MUST BID YOU ADIEU.
VIVE LA FRANCE!
FRANCE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS.
France

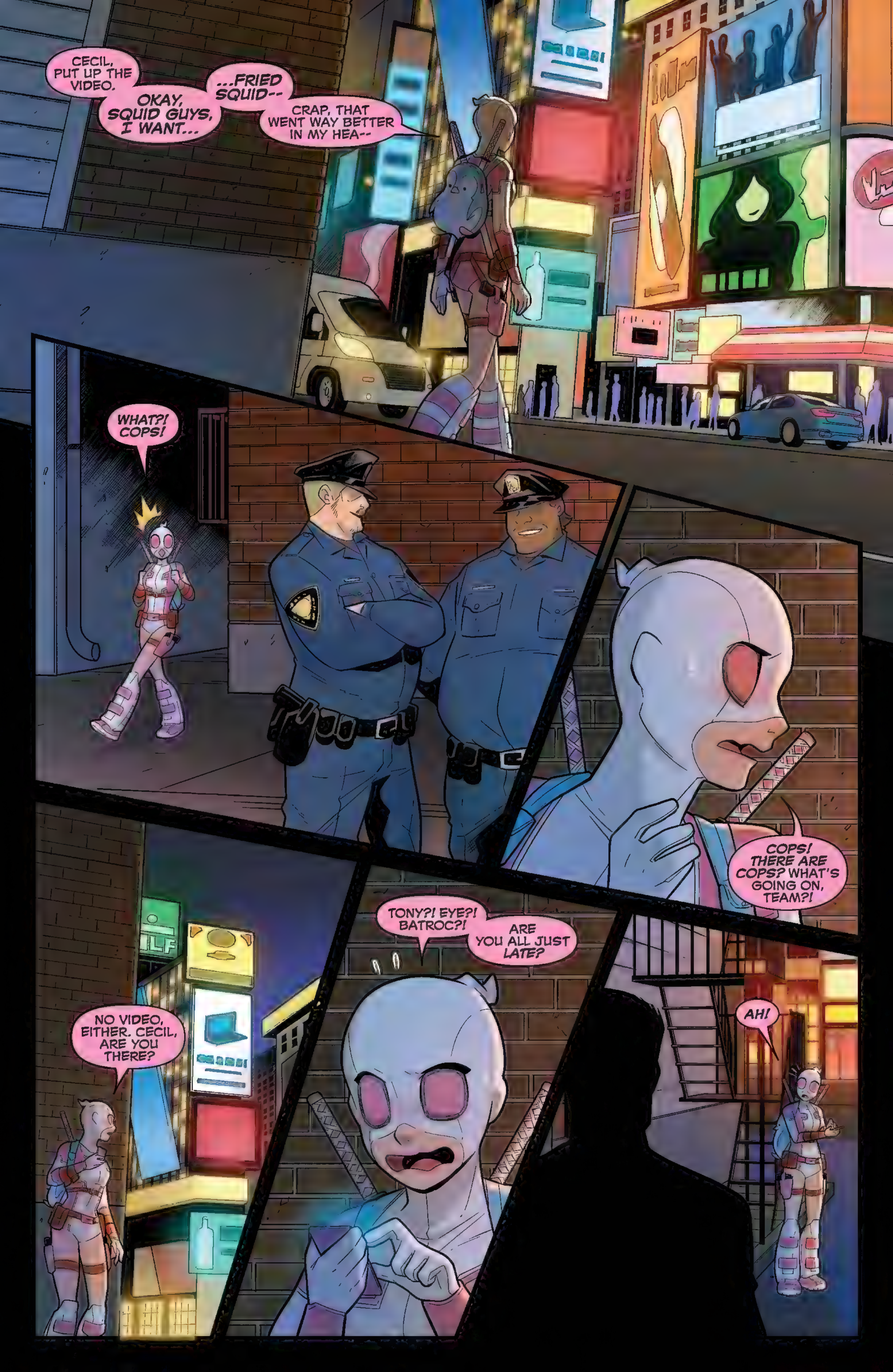

STOP THAT MOST UNLAWFUL MAN!
YES! WE MUST DEDICATE ALL OUR FORCES TO CHASING HIM!
HA HA! I LOVE TO LEAP!
AH, I--
I *KNOW* IT'S NOT ENOUGH. THAT'S JUST THE START, WHEN *CECIL...*
...IS GOING TO *GHOST HACK* INTO POLICE COMPUTERS AND MAKE IT LOOK LIKE A *CRIME WAVE HAS GRIPPED THE CITY!*
ERROR
FROM STATEN ISLAND TO THE BRONX! ALL KINDS OF FAKE STUFF! WHAT DO THE POLICE DO? HALF OF THEM ARE NOW CHASING THE *MYSTERIOUS KICKER OF THE UNITED NATIONS...*
WHICH... OKAY. IT COULD BE FUN.
...BUT *CRIME IS EVERYWHERE!*
AND IT'S ALL BACKED UP...

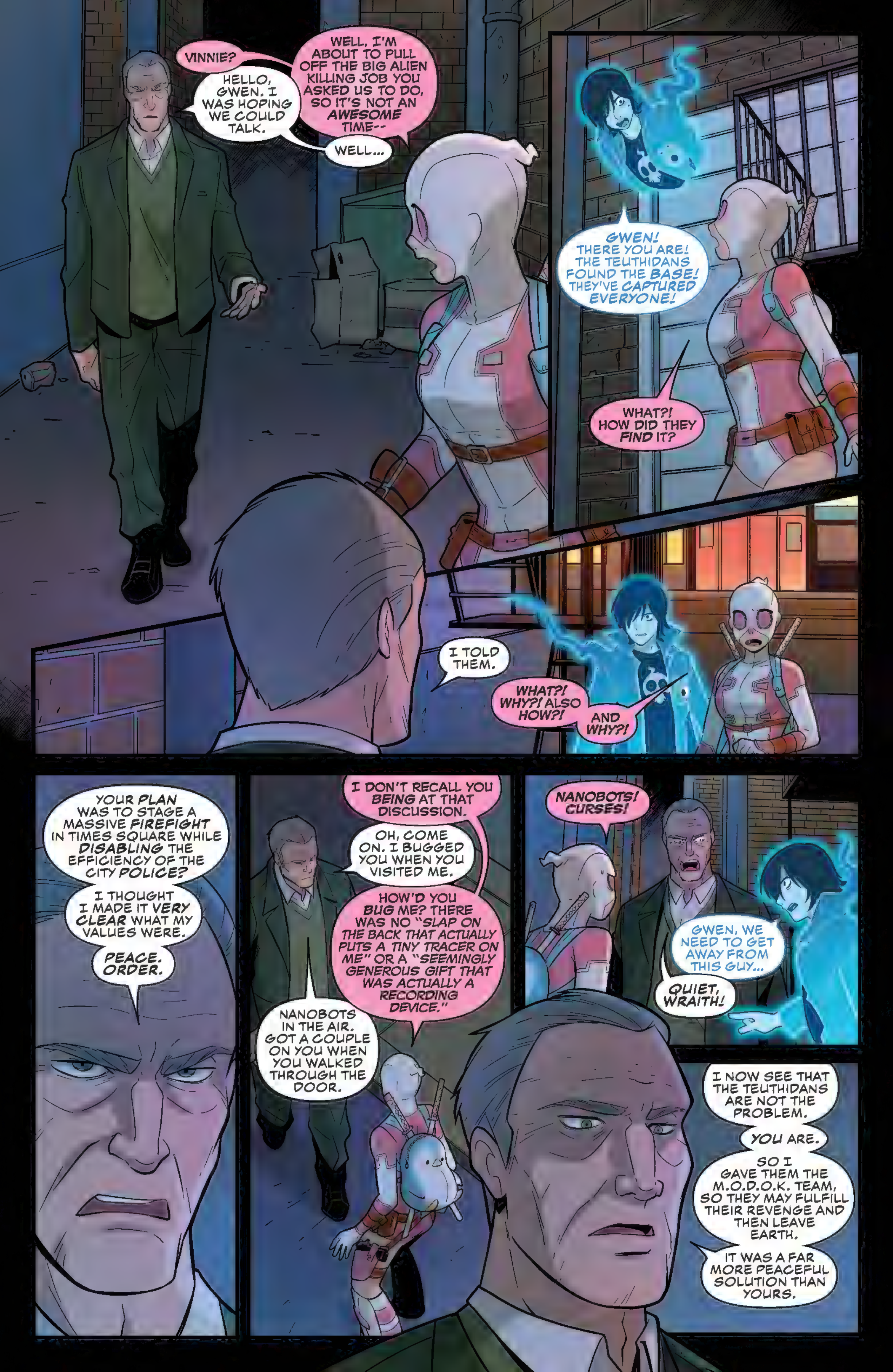

"...BY A WHOLE BUNCH OF ILLUSIONS COURTESY OF THE TERRIBLE EYE."
A BIG FAKE CRIME WAVE ALL AROUND! DISAPPEARING AND APPEARING AT YOUR WHIM!
THAT IS ACTUALLY...QUITE A FEAT. IT WILL BE VERY COSTLY.
DO WHAT YOU CAN!
AND WHILE THE COPS ARE ALL DISTRACTED--
--AND NOTHING BIG ENOUGH TO ATTRACT AN ACTUAL SUPER HERO, MIND YOU--

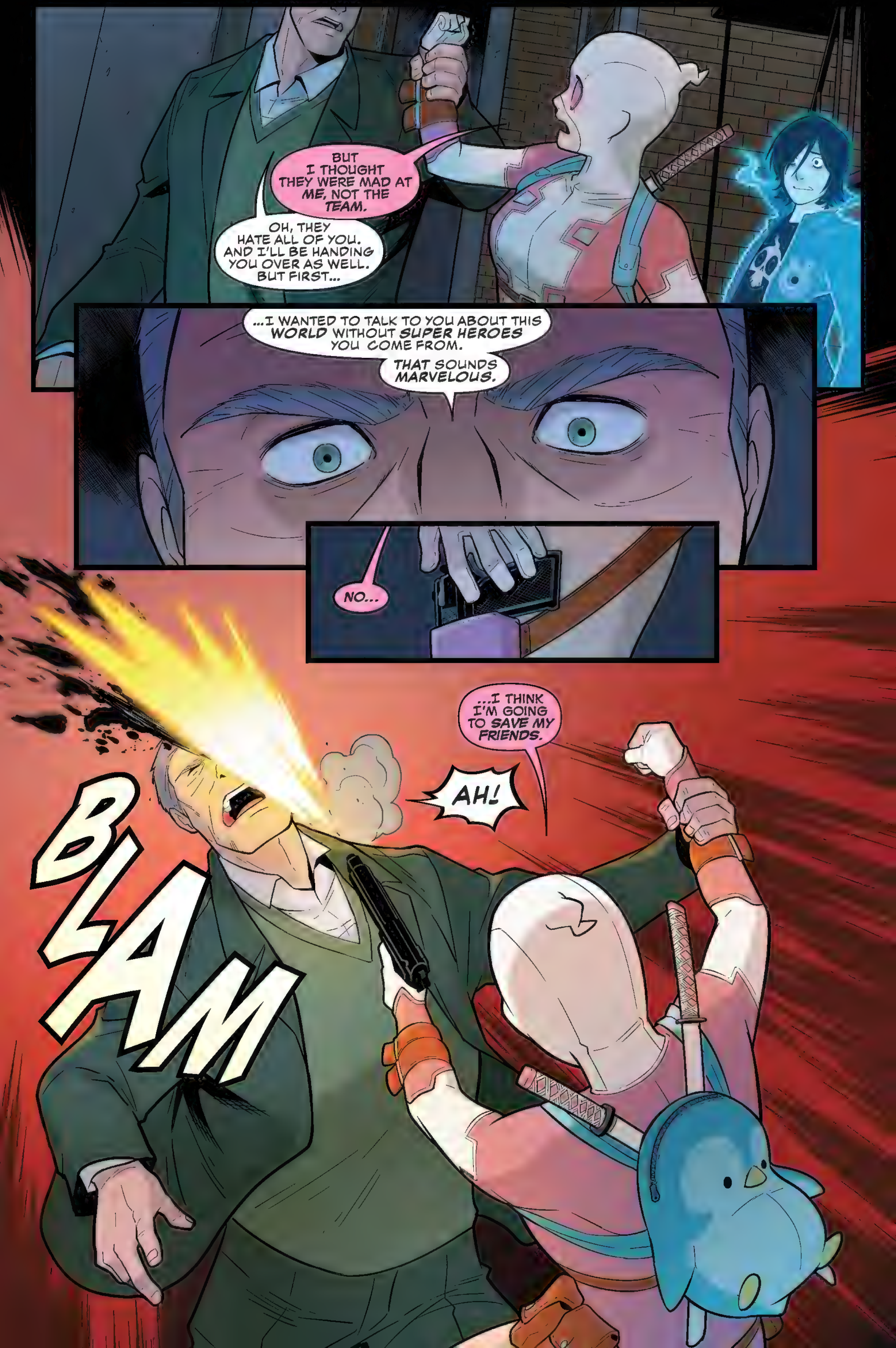

"--I'M GOING TO BLOW UP ALL THE TEUTHIDANS."
MEGA TONY'S GONNA BE NEARBY TO KEEP ME HEALED AND BUFFED.
WOW. UH--
WELL, OKAY, THAT IS ACTUALLY MY FUNCTION.
WHY ARE YOU SO CONFIDENT IN THIS PLAN?
I'VE GOT *SECRET BACKUP PLANS*, TOO. I CAN'T REVEAL THEM NOW! THEY'LL ONLY WORK IF THEY ARE REVEALED AT A *SUPER COOL DRAMATIC MOMENT*.

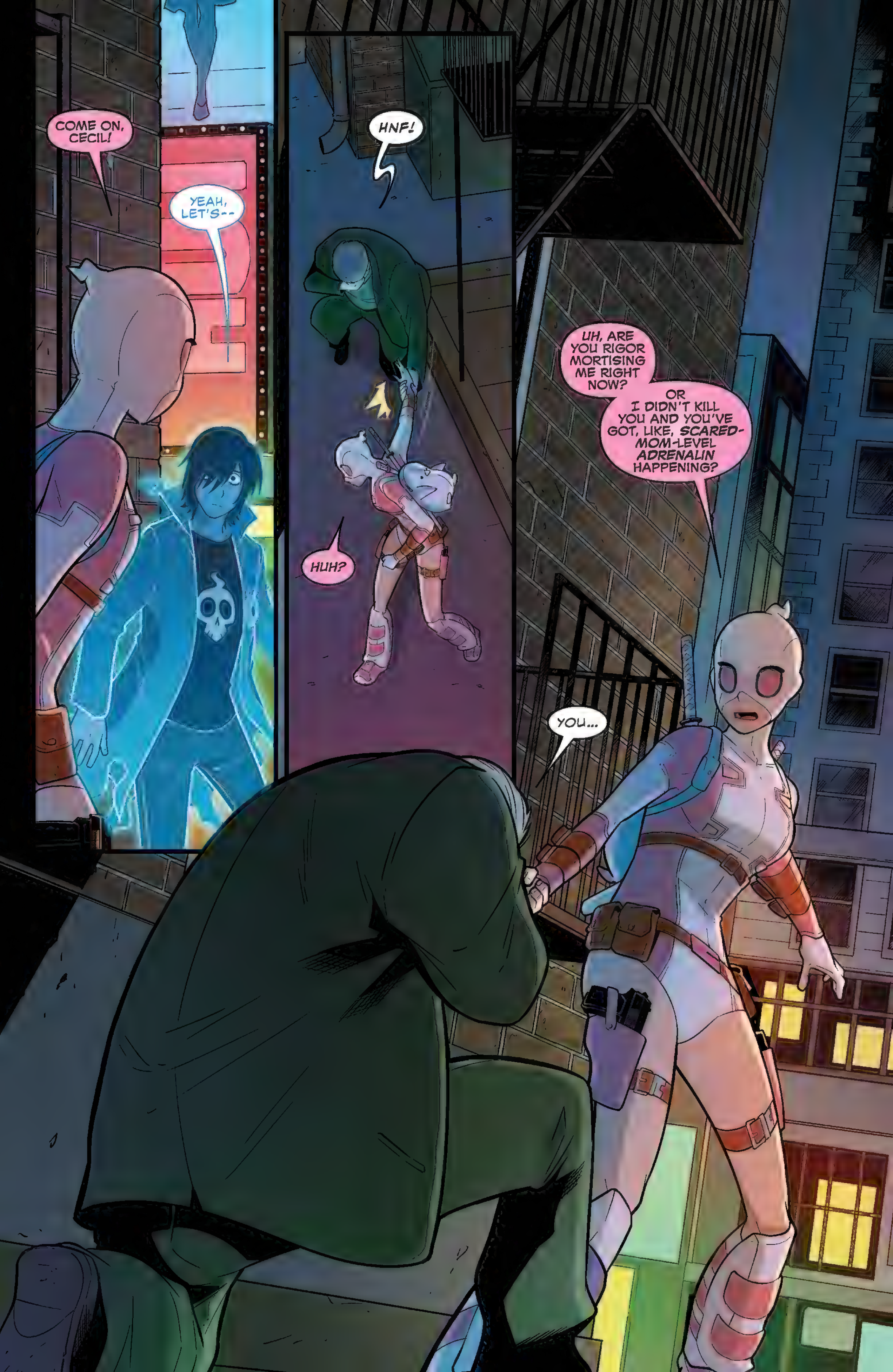

I BELIEVE...
...IT IS *VERY* RECKLESS TO DEPRIVE NEW YORK OF ITS EMERGENCY SERVICES WHILE YOU CONDUCT A FIREFIGHT IN ZE MIDDLE OF THE CITY.
WHAT?! WH--WHO *CARES* ABOUT THE *COPS?*
INNOCENT PEOPLE WILL NEED ZE POLICE FOR VALID REASONS, AND YOU MAY ENDANGER THEM.
THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM WITH IT? I REALLY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE THE PART WHERE I TAKE ON ALL THE ALIENS BY MYSELF.
NO, WHILE I DO NOT NECESSARILY BELIEVE IN ZE *ORIGIN* OF YOUR *MYSTERIOUS* ABILITY TO *WIN*, I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND REASON TO ARGUE WITH YOUR STRANGE LOGIC.
YOU DEFEATED M.O.D.O.K., AFTER ALL.
BUT THIS IS IRRESPONSIBLE.
HA HA, OKAY. HERE'S THE THING WITH THE *COPS* HERE.
THEY ARE JUST ANOTHER *PLOT* DEVICE TO FURTHER THE EXISTENCE OF *SUPER HEROES*.
I'M FROM A WORLD WITHOUT SUPER HEROES. I *KNOW* HOW COPS ARE *SUPPOSED* TO BE, OKAY?
IF YOU HAD A HALFWAY COMPETENT *C.I.A.*, YOU WOULDN'T NEED *S.H.I.E.L.D.*
IF YOUR MILITARY COULD FIGHT *THE SKRULLS*, YOU WOULDN'T NEED *THE AVENGERS*.
AND IF YOUR *JOKE COPS* COULD STOP A *SINGLE BANK ROBBERY*, THEN YOU WOULDN'T NEED *SPIDER-MAN*.
YOUR WORLD *NEVER* NEEDED THE POLICE. AND IT WILL SURVIVE FOR A *FEW MINUTES* WHILE I *SHOOT SOME ALIENS* WITHOUT THOSE POLICE.

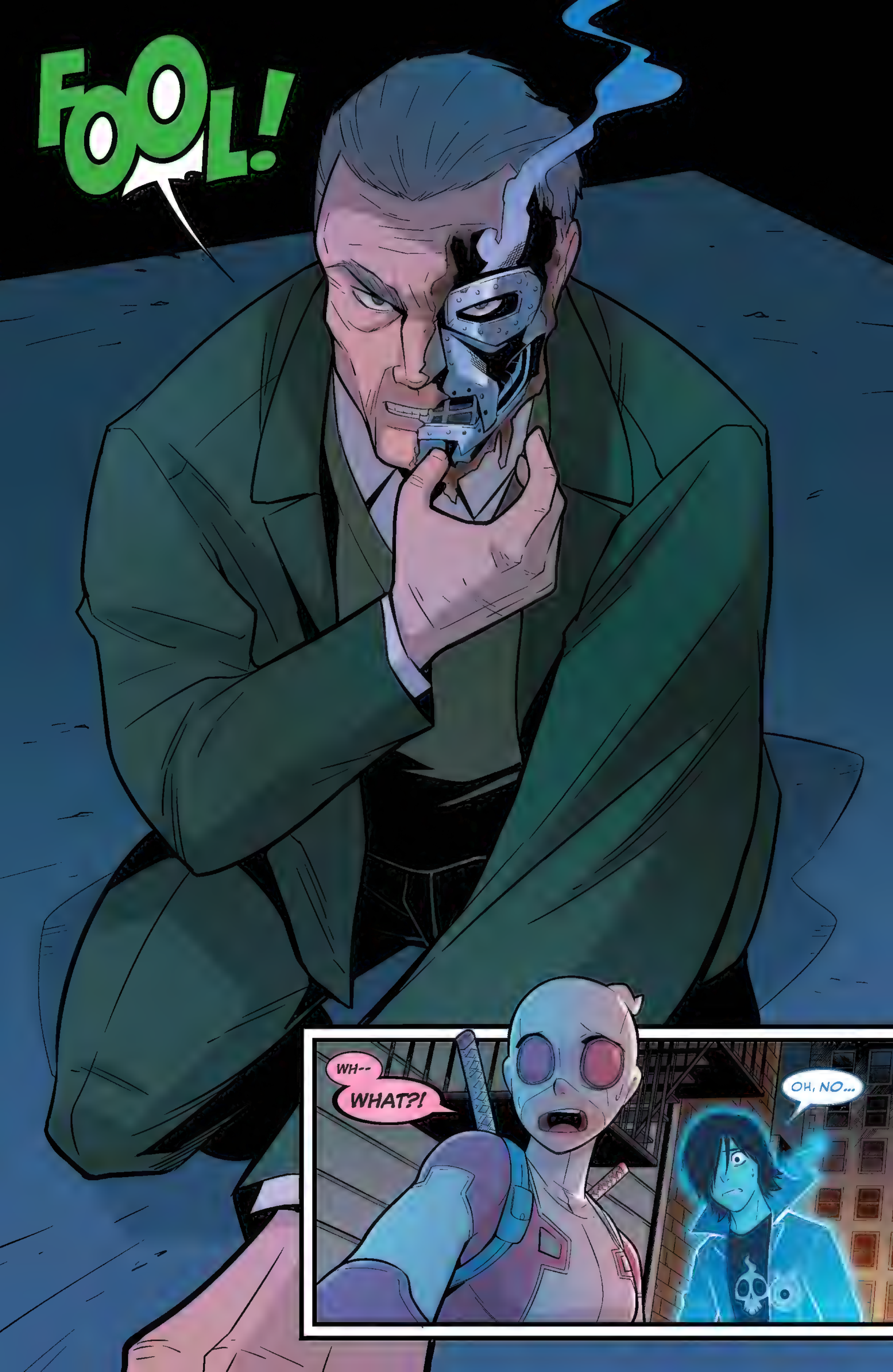

NO ARGUMENTS? GREAT! WHAT TIME IS IT?
UH, IT'S--
GAME TIME, HOOAH!
YOU'RE NOT THE HENCHMAN ANYMORE.
YOU'RE FACING A HORDE OF ALIENS WITH SUPER GUNS. JUST YOU.
YOU'RE THE HERO.
HEROES DON'T DIE THAT WAY. THEY WIN.
HOOO.
OKAY.


CECIL, PUT UP THE VIDEO.
OKAY, SQUID GUYS, I WANT...
...FRIED SQUID--
CRAP, THAT WENT WAY BETTER IN MY HEA--
WHAT?! COPS!
COPS! THERE ARE COPS? WHAT'S GOING ON, TEAM?!
NO VIDEO, EITHER. CECIL, ARE YOU THERE?
TONY?! EYE?! BATROC?!
ARE YOU ALL JUST LATE?
AH!

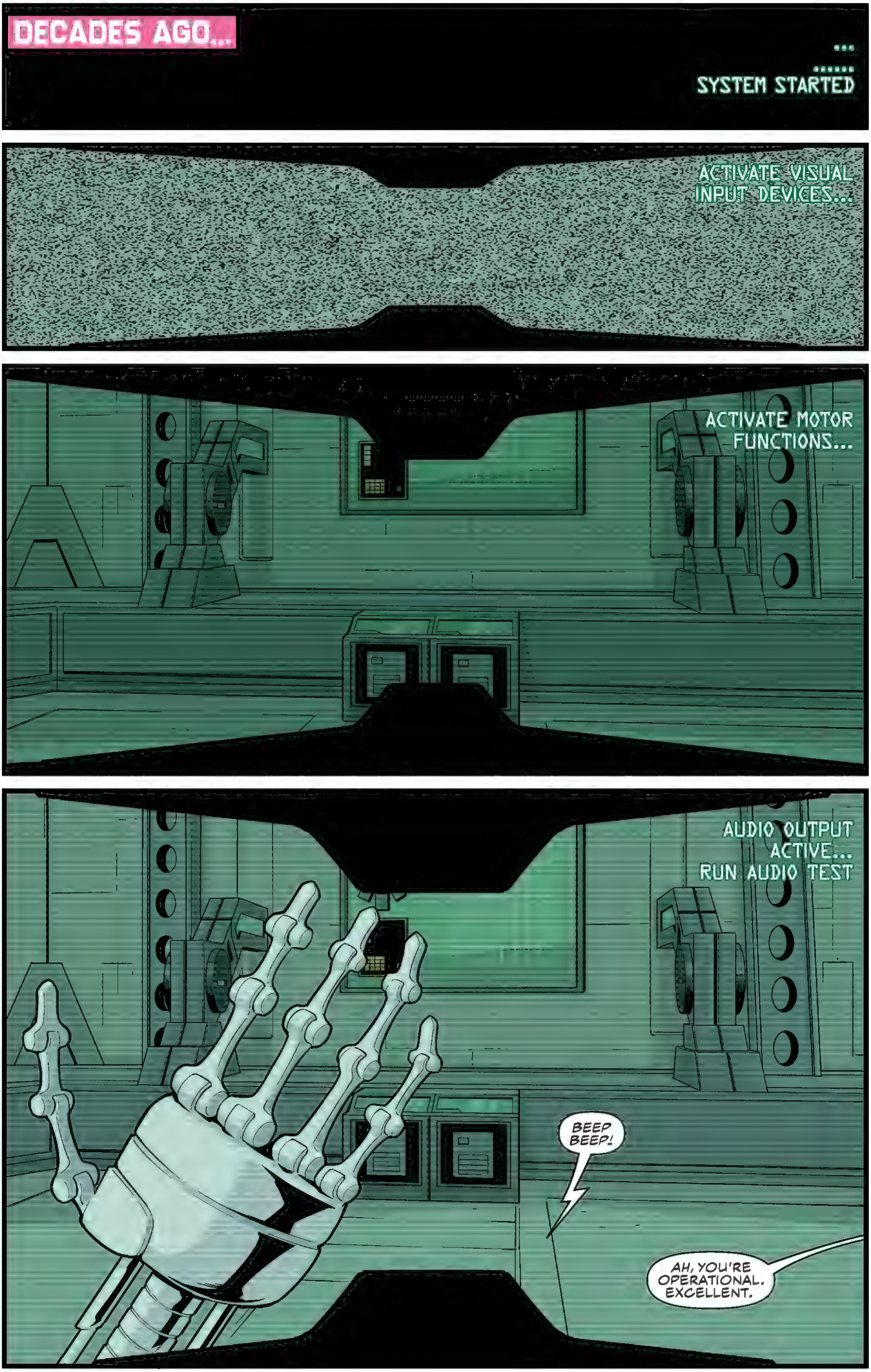

VINNIE?
WELL, I'M ABOUT TO PULL OFF THE BIG ALIEN KILLING JOB YOU ASKED US TO DO, SO IT'S NOT AN *AWESOME* TIME--
HELLO, GWEN. I WAS HOPING WE COULD TALK.
WELL...
GWEN! THERE YOU ARE! THE TEUTHIDANS FOUND THE *BASE!* THEY'VE *CAPTURED EVERYONE!*
WHAT?! HOW DID THEY *FIND* IT?
I TOLD THEM.
WHAT?! WHY?! ALSO HOW?!
AND WHY?!
YOUR *PLAN* WAS TO STAGE A MASSIVE *FIREFIGHT* IN TIMES SQUARE WHILE *DISABLING* THE EFFICIENCY OF THE CITY *POLICE?*
I THOUGHT I MADE IT *VERY CLEAR* WHAT MY VALUES WERE.
PEACE. ORDER.
I DON'T RECALL YOU *BEING* AT THAT DISCUSSION.
OH, COME ON. I BUGGED YOU WHEN YOU VISITED ME.
HOW'D YOU *BUG* ME? THERE WAS NO "*SLAP ON THE BACK THAT ACTUALLY PUTS A TINY TRACER ON ME*" OR A "*SEEMINGLY GENEROUS GIFT THAT WAS ACTUALLY A RECORDING DEVICE.*"
NANOBOTS IN THE AIR. GOT A COUPLE ON YOU WHEN YOU WALKED THROUGH THE DOOR.
NANOBOTS! CURSES!
GWEN, WE NEED TO GET AWAY FROM THIS GUY...
QUIET, WRAITH!
I NOW SEE THAT THE TEUTHIDANS ARE NOT THE PROBLEM.
YOU ARE.
SO I GAVE THEM THE M.O.D.O.K. TEAM, SO THEY MAY FULFILL THEIR REVENGE AND THEN LEAVE EARTH.
IT WAS A FAR MORE PEACEFUL SOLUTION THAN YOURS.

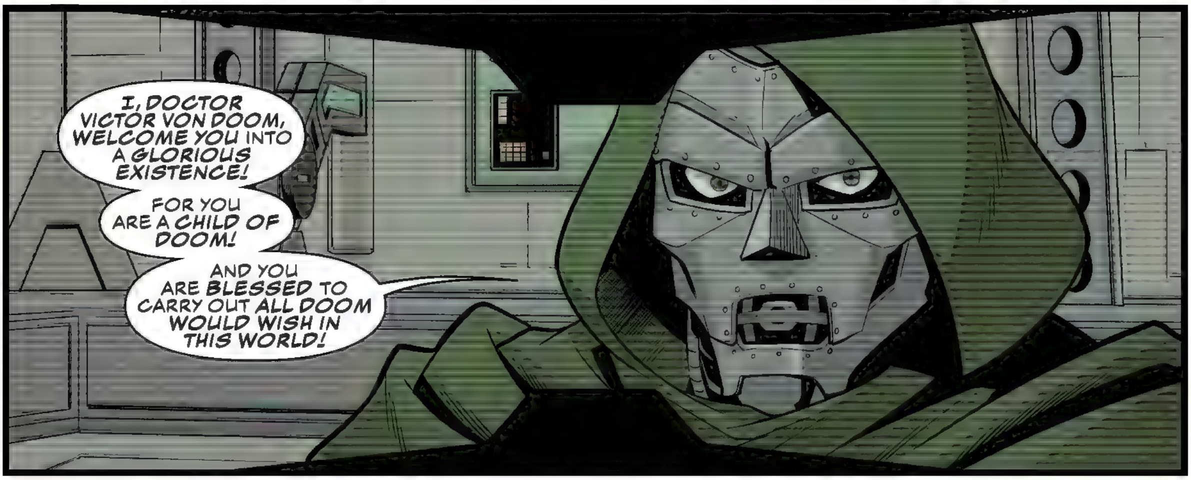

BUT I THOUGHT THEY WERE MAD AT *ME*, NOT THE *TEAM*.
OH, THEY HATE ALL OF YOU. AND I'LL BE HANDING YOU OVER AS WELL. BUT FIRST...
...I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THIS *WORLD* WITHOUT *SUPER HEROES* YOU COME FROM.
THAT SOUNDS *MARVELOUS.*
NO...
...I THINK I'M GOING TO *SAVE MY FRIENDS.*
AH!
BLAM

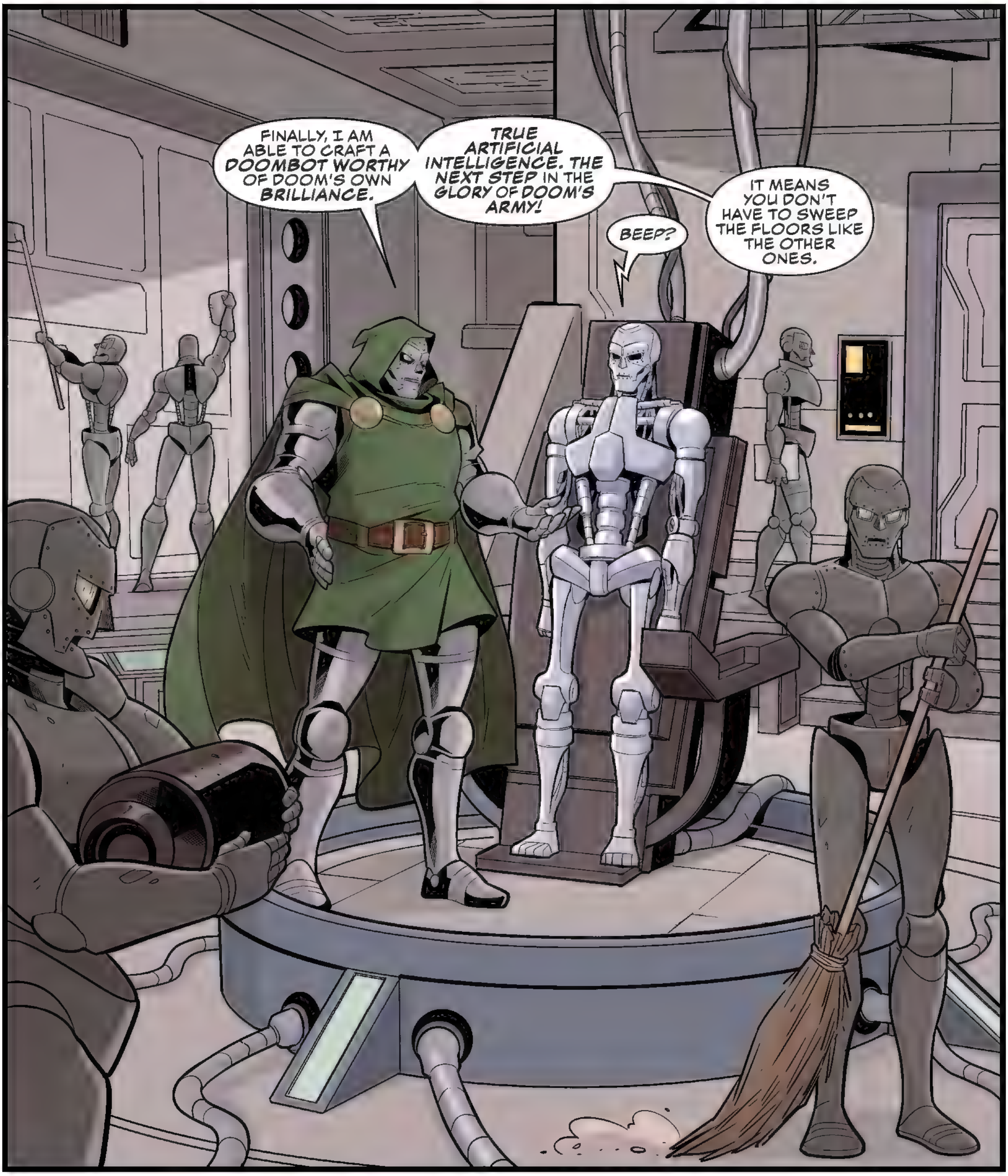

COME ON, CECIL!
YEAH, LET'S--
HNF!
HUH?
UH, ARE YOU RIGOR MORTISING ME RIGHT NOW?
OR I DIDN'T KILL YOU AND YOU'VE GOT, LIKE, SCARED-MOM-LEVEL ADRENALIN HAPPENING?
YOU...

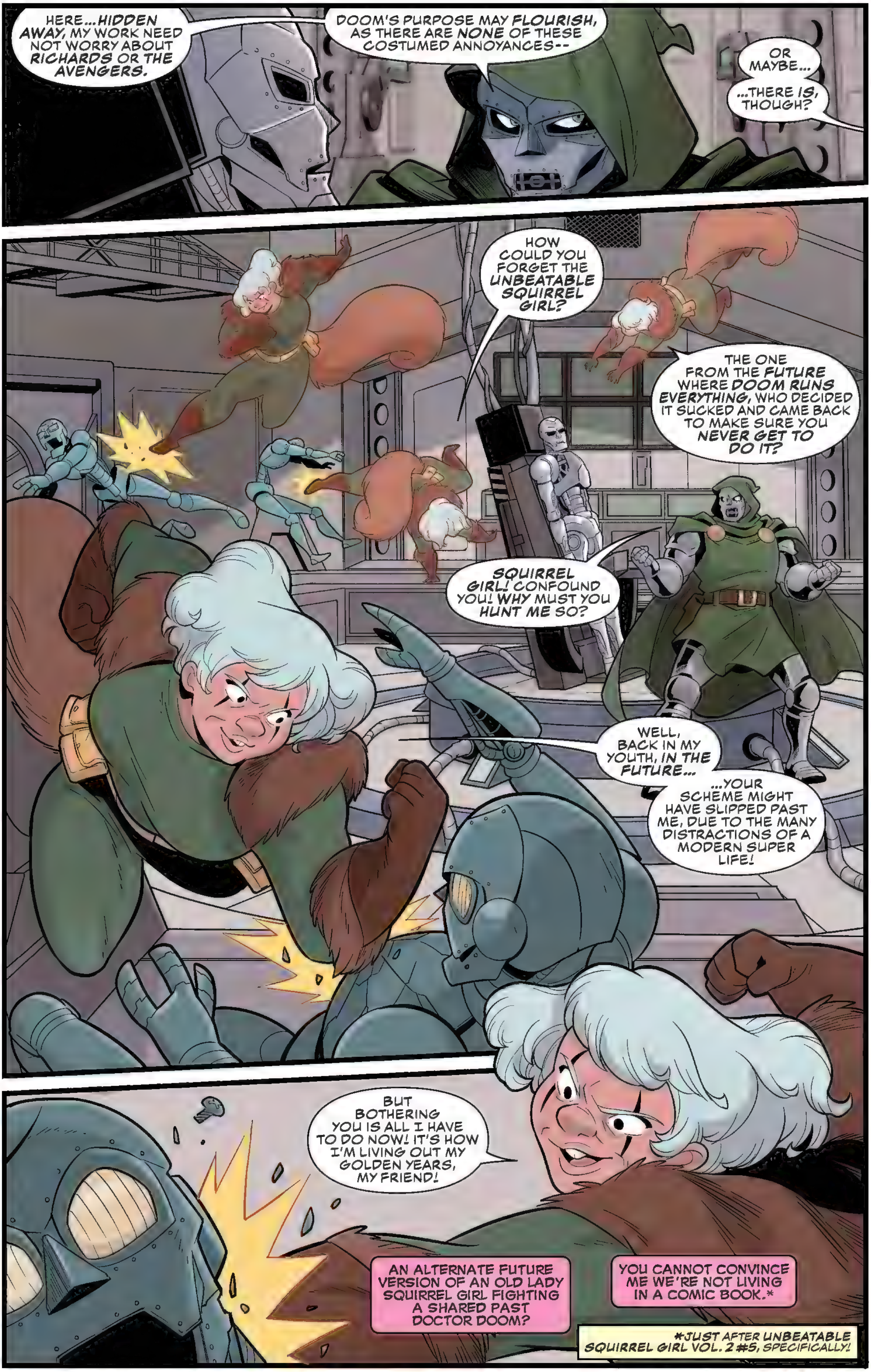

FOOL!
WH-- WHAT?!
OH, NO...

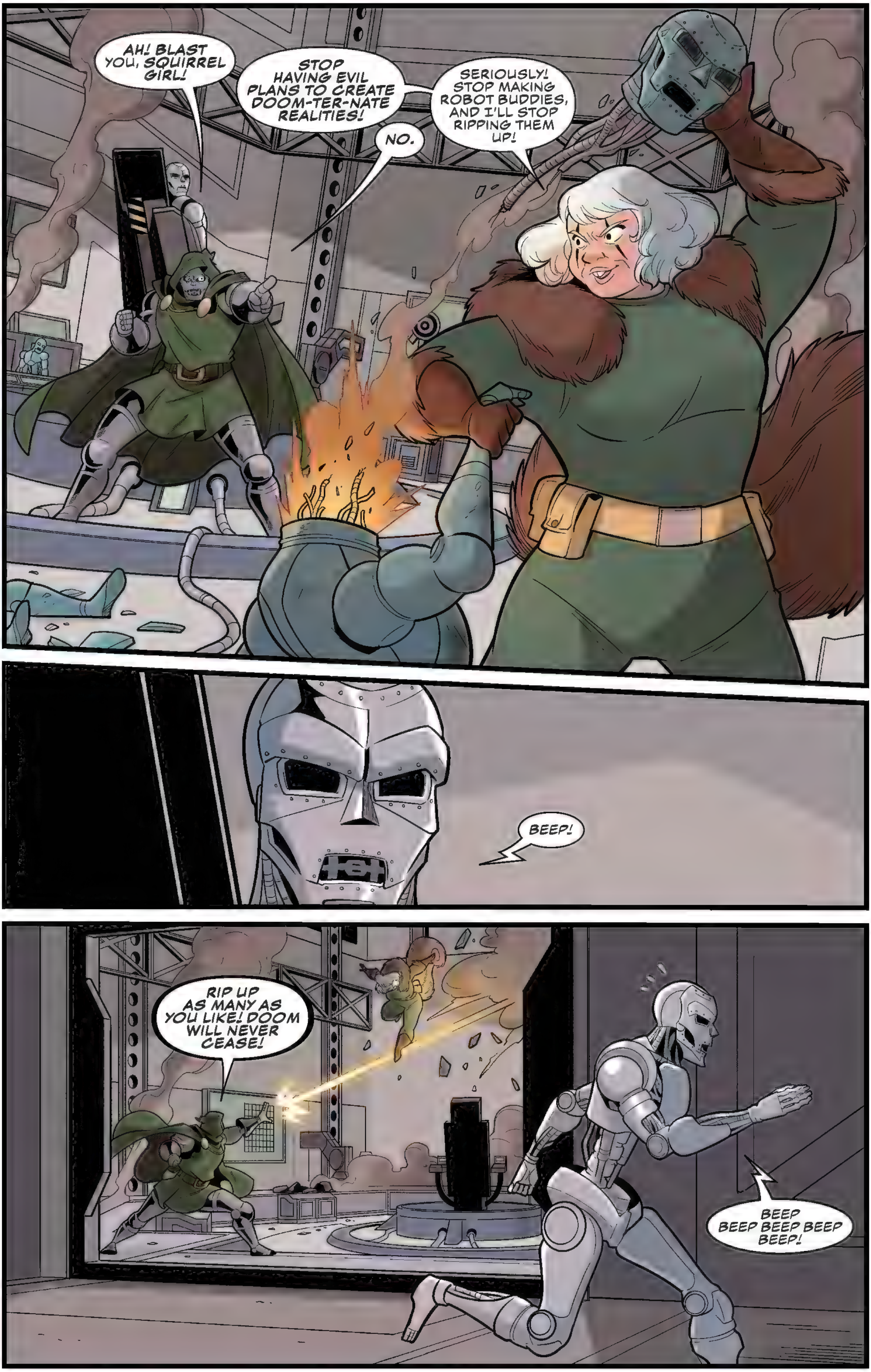
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #9

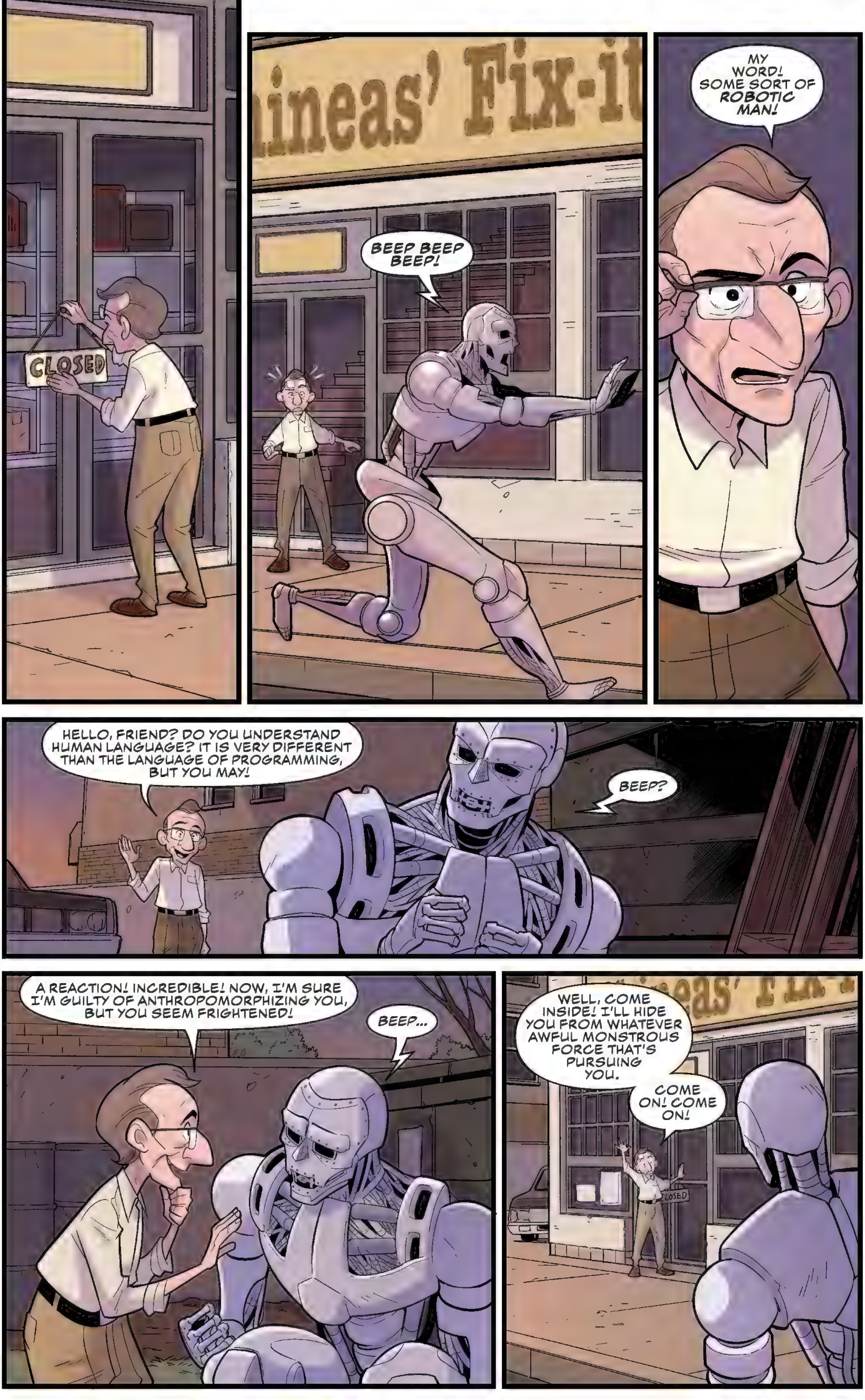

DECADES AGO...
...
......
SYSTEM STARTED
ACTIVATE VISUAL INPUT DEVICES...
ACTIVATE MOTOR FUNCTIONS...
AUDIO OUTPUT ACTIVE...
RUN AUDIO TEST
BEEP BEEP!
AH, YOU'RE OPERATIONAL. EXCELLENT.

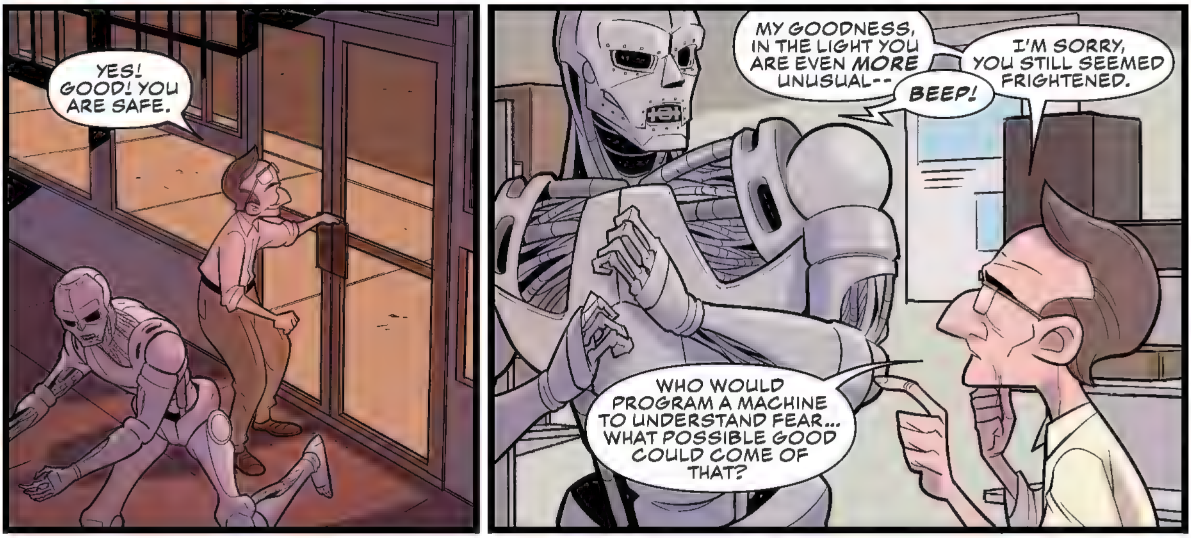

I, DOCTOR VICTOR VON DOOM, WELCOME YOU INTO A GLORIOUS EXISTENCE!
FOR YOU ARE A CHILD OF DOOM!
AND YOU ARE BLESSED TO CARRY OUT ALL DOOM WOULD WISH IN THIS WORLD!


FINALLY, I AM ABLE TO CRAFT A DOOMBOT WORTHY OF DOOM'S OWN BRILLIANCE.
TRUE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. THE NEXT STEP IN THE GLORY OF DOOM'S ARMY!
BEEP?
IT MEANS YOU DON'T HAVE TO SWEEP THE FLOORS LIKE THE OTHER ONES.

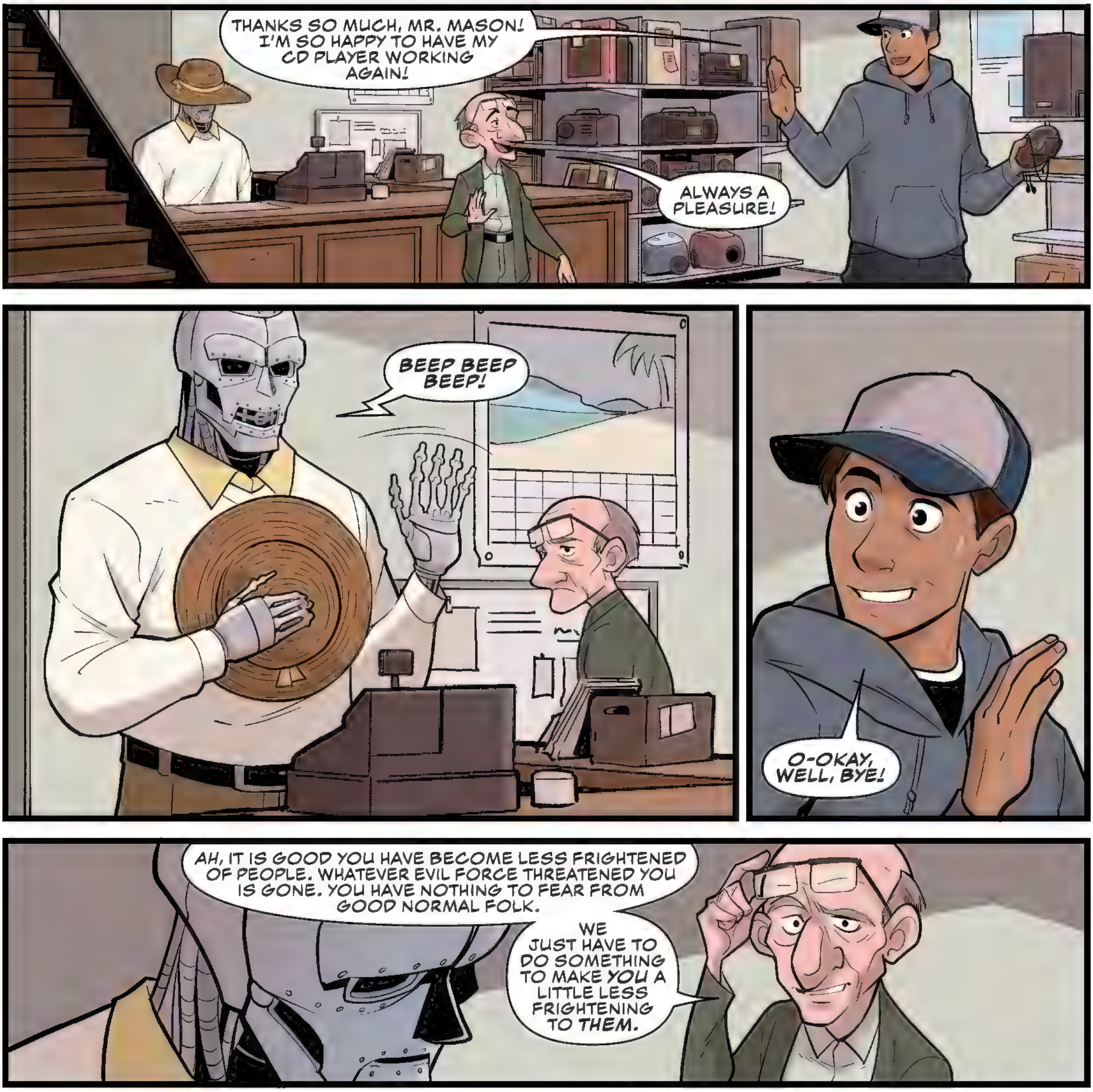

HERE...HIDDEN AWAY, MY WORK NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT RICHARDS OR THE AVENGERS.
DOOM'S PURPOSE MAY FLOURISH, AS THERE ARE NONE OF THESE COSTUMED ANNOYANCES--
OR MAYBE...
...THERE IS, THOUGH?
HOW COULD YOU FORGET THE UNBEATABLE SQUIRREL GIRL?
THE ONE FROM THE FUTURE WHERE DOOM RUNS EVERYTHING, WHO DECIDED IT SUCKED AND CAME BACK TO MAKE SURE YOU NEVER GET TO DO IT?
SQUIRREL GIRL! CONFOUND YOU! WHY MUST YOU HUNT ME SO?
WELL, BACK IN MY YOUTH, IN THE FUTURE...
...YOUR SCHEME MIGHT HAVE SLIPPED PAST ME, DUE TO THE MANY DISTRACTIONS OF A MODERN SUPER LIFE!
BUT BOTHERING YOU IS ALL I HAVE TO DO NOW! IT'S HOW I'M LIVING OUT MY GOLDEN YEARS, MY FRIEND!
AN ALTERNATE FUTURE VERSION OF AN OLD LADY SQUIRREL GIRL FIGHTING A SHARED PAST DOCTOR DOOM?
YOU CANNOT CONVINCE ME WE'RE NOT LIVING IN A COMIC BOOK.*
*JUST AFTER UNBEATABLE SQUIRREL GIRL VOL. 2 #5, SPECIFICALLY!

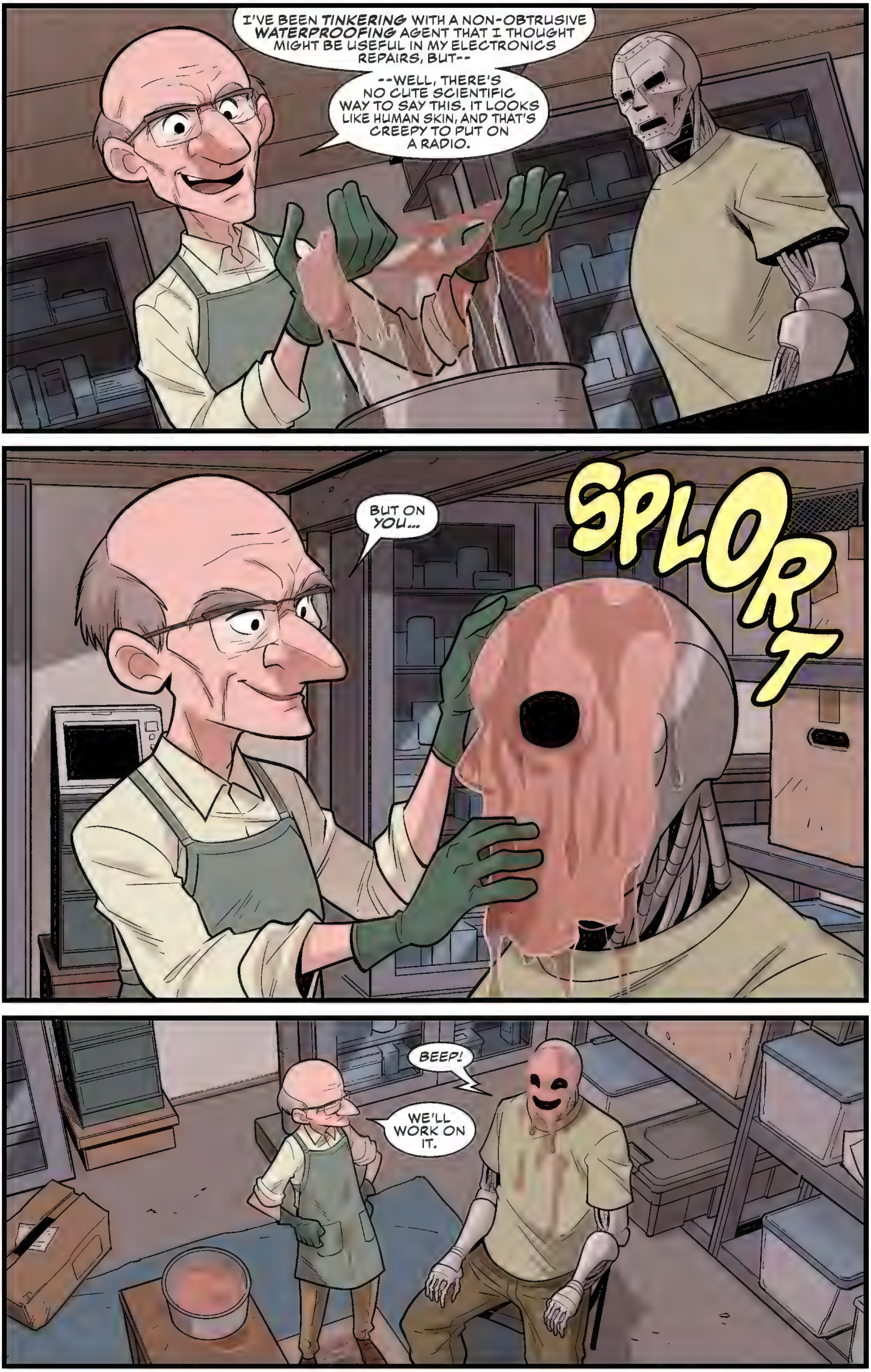

AH! BLAST YOU, SQUIRREL GIRL!
STOP HAVING EVIL PLANS TO CREATE DOOM-TER-NATE REALITIES!
NO.
SERIOUSLY! STOP MAKING ROBOT BUDDIES, AND I'LL STOP RIPPING THEM UP!
BEEP!
RIP UP AS MANY AS YOU LIKE! DOOM WILL NEVER CEASE!
BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP!

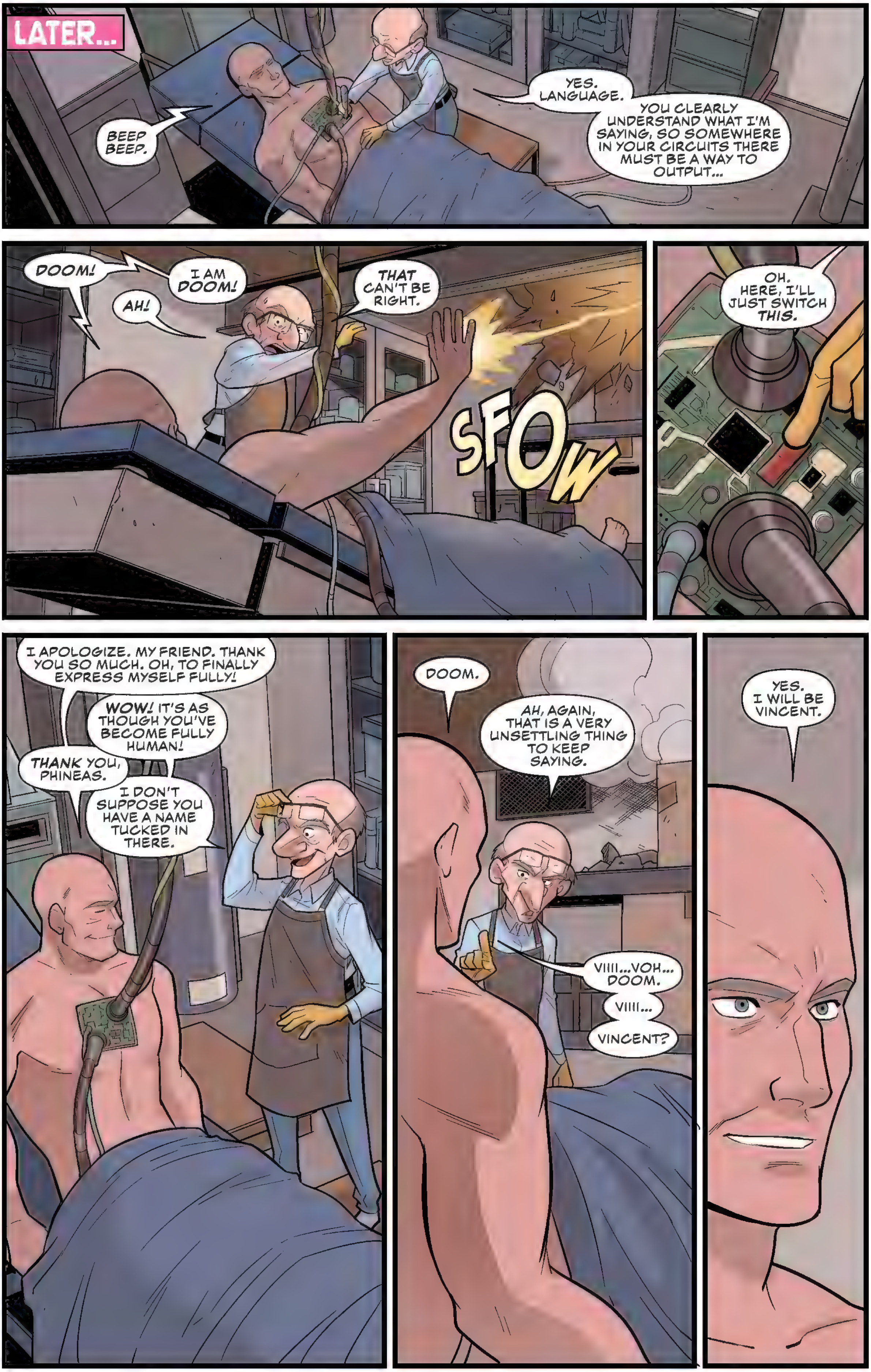

CLOSED
hineas' Fix-it
BEEP BEEP BEEP!
MY WORD! SOME SORT OF ROBOTIC MAN!
HELLO, FRIEND? DO YOU UNDERSTAND HUMAN LANGUAGE? IT IS VERY DIFFERENT THAN THE LANGUAGE OF PROGRAMMING, BUT YOU MAY!
BEEP?
A REACTION! INCREDIBLE! NOW, I'M SURE I'M GUILTY OF ANTHROPOMORPHIZING YOU, BUT YOU SEEM FRIGHTENED!
BEEP...
WELL, COME INSIDE! I'LL HIDE YOU FROM WHATEVER AWFUL MONSTROUS FORCE THAT'S PURSUING YOU.
COME ON! COME ON!
CLOSED

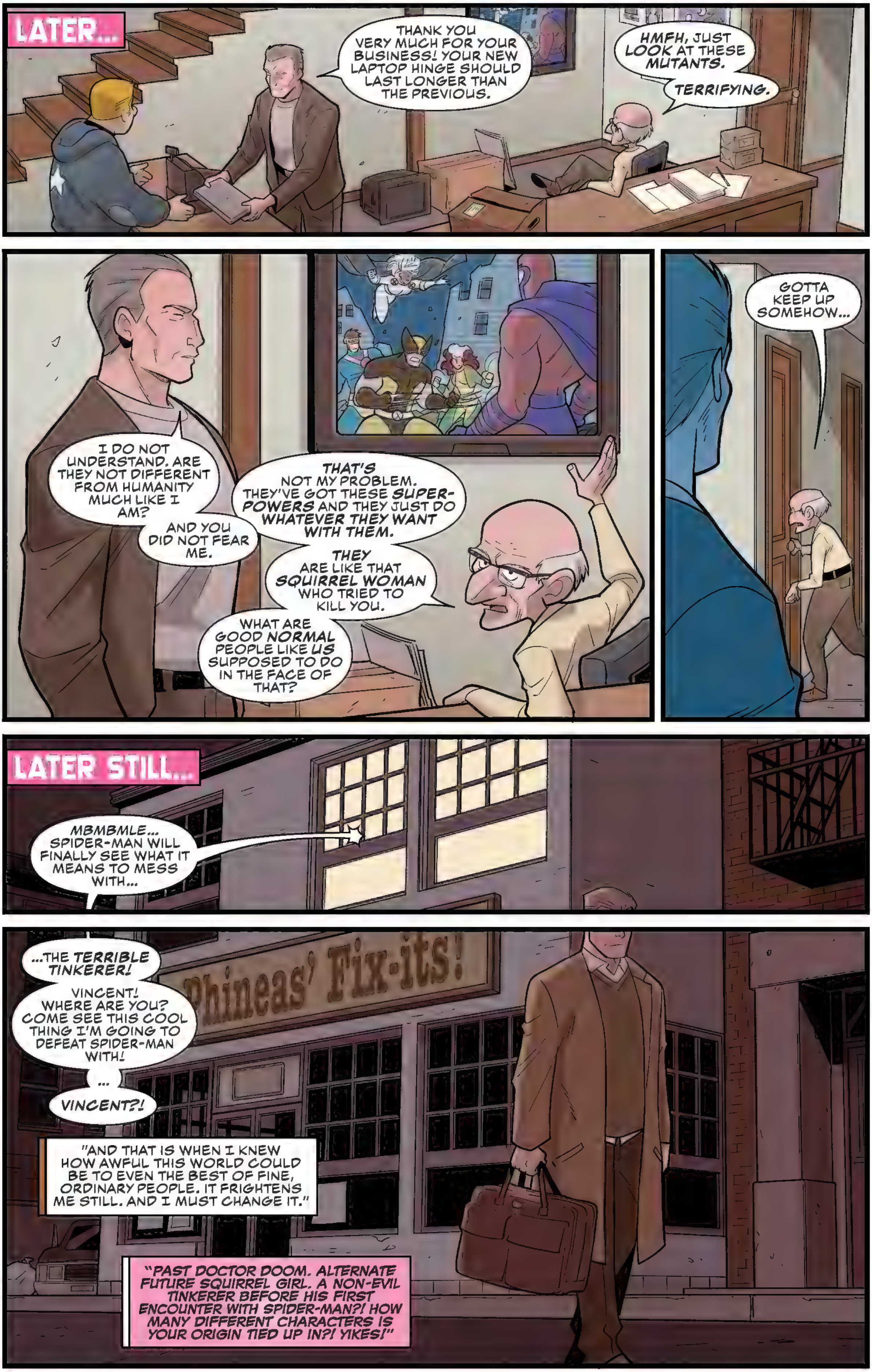

YES! GOOD! YOU ARE SAFE.
MY GOODNESS, IN THE LIGHT YOU ARE EVEN *MORE* UNUSUAL--
BEEP!
I'M SORRY, YOU STILL SEEMED FRIGHTENED.
WHO WOULD PROGRAM A MACHINE TO UNDERSTAND FEAR... WHAT POSSIBLE GOOD COULD COME OF THAT?

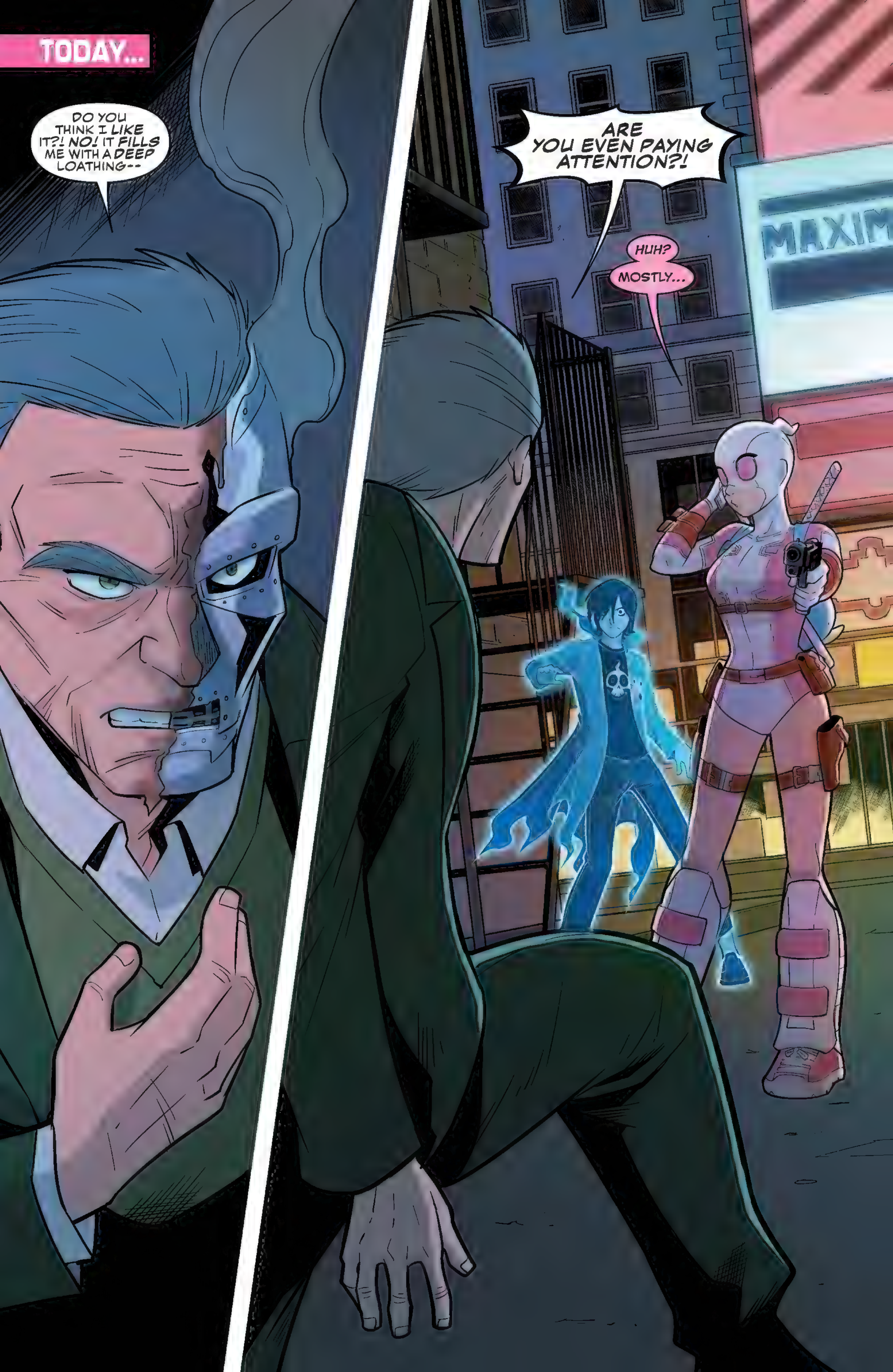
AS TIME WENT ON...

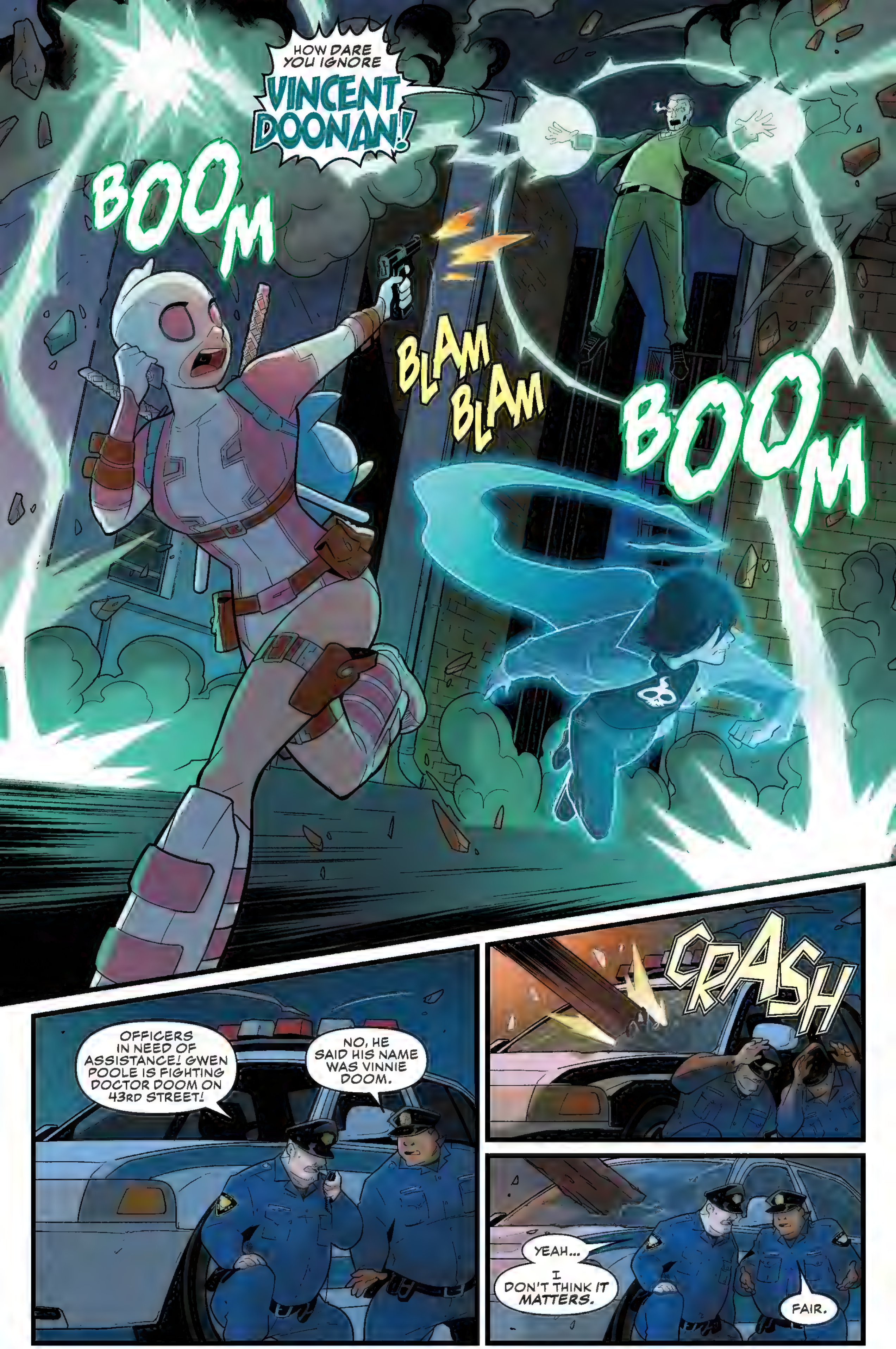

THANKS SO MUCH, MR. MASON! I'M SO HAPPY TO HAVE MY CD PLAYER WORKING AGAIN!
ALWAYS A PLEASURE!
BEEP BEEP BEEP!
O-OKAY, WELL, BYE!
AH, IT IS GOOD YOU HAVE BECOME LESS FRIGHTENED OF PEOPLE. WHATEVER EVIL FORCE THREATENED YOU IS GONE. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM GOOD NORMAL FOLK.
WE JUST HAVE TO DO SOMETHING TO MAKE *YOU* A LITTLE LESS FRIGHTENING TO *THEM.*

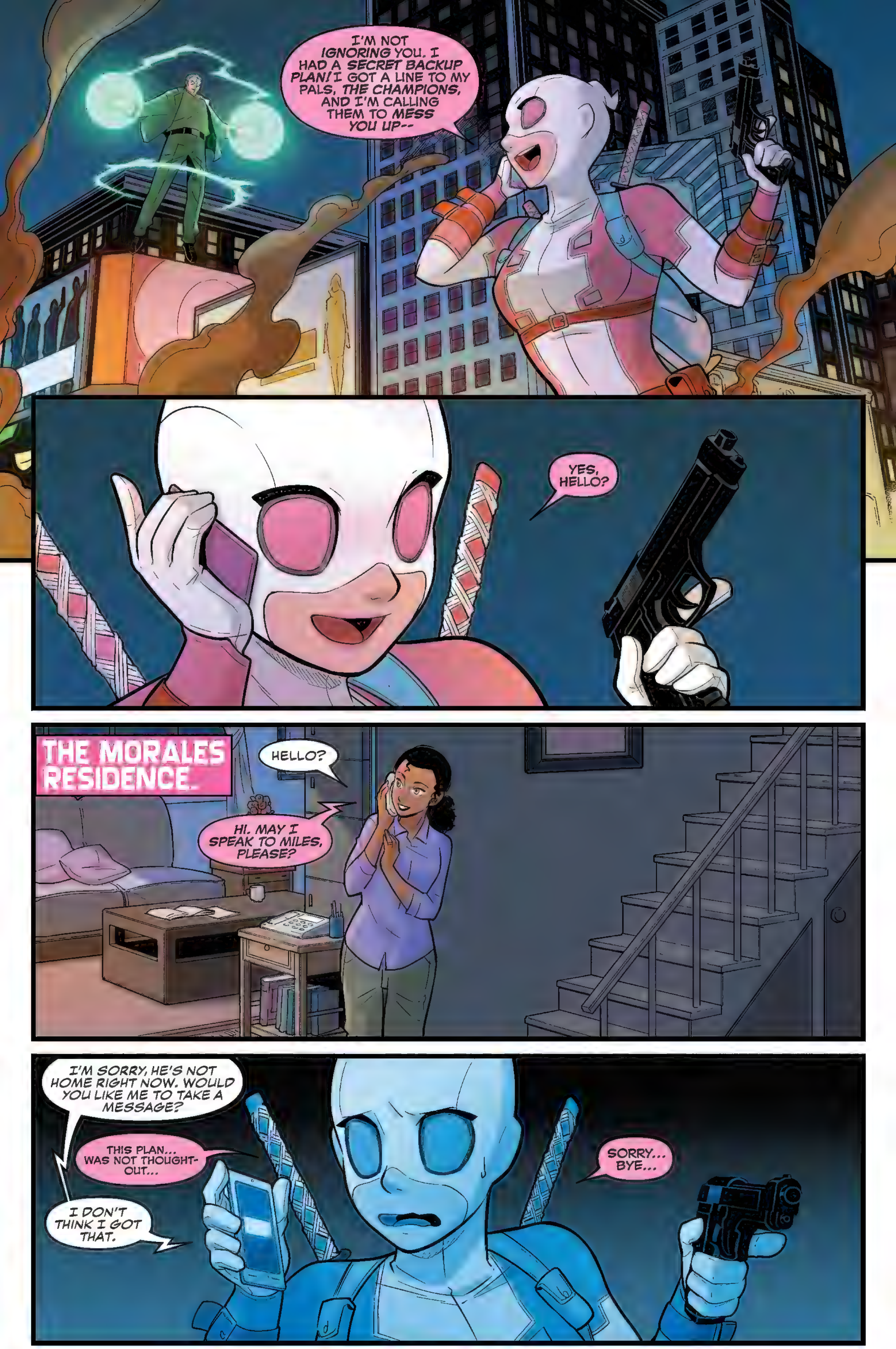

I'VE BEEN *TINKERING* WITH A NON-OBTRUSIVE *WATERPROOFING* AGENT THAT I THOUGHT MIGHT BE USEFUL IN MY ELECTRONICS REPAIRS, BUT--
--WELL, THERE'S NO CUTE SCIENTIFIC WAY TO SAY THIS. IT LOOKS LIKE HUMAN SKIN, AND THAT'S CREEPY TO PUT ON A RADIO.
BUT ON *YOU...*
SPLORT
BEEP!
WE'LL WORK ON IT.

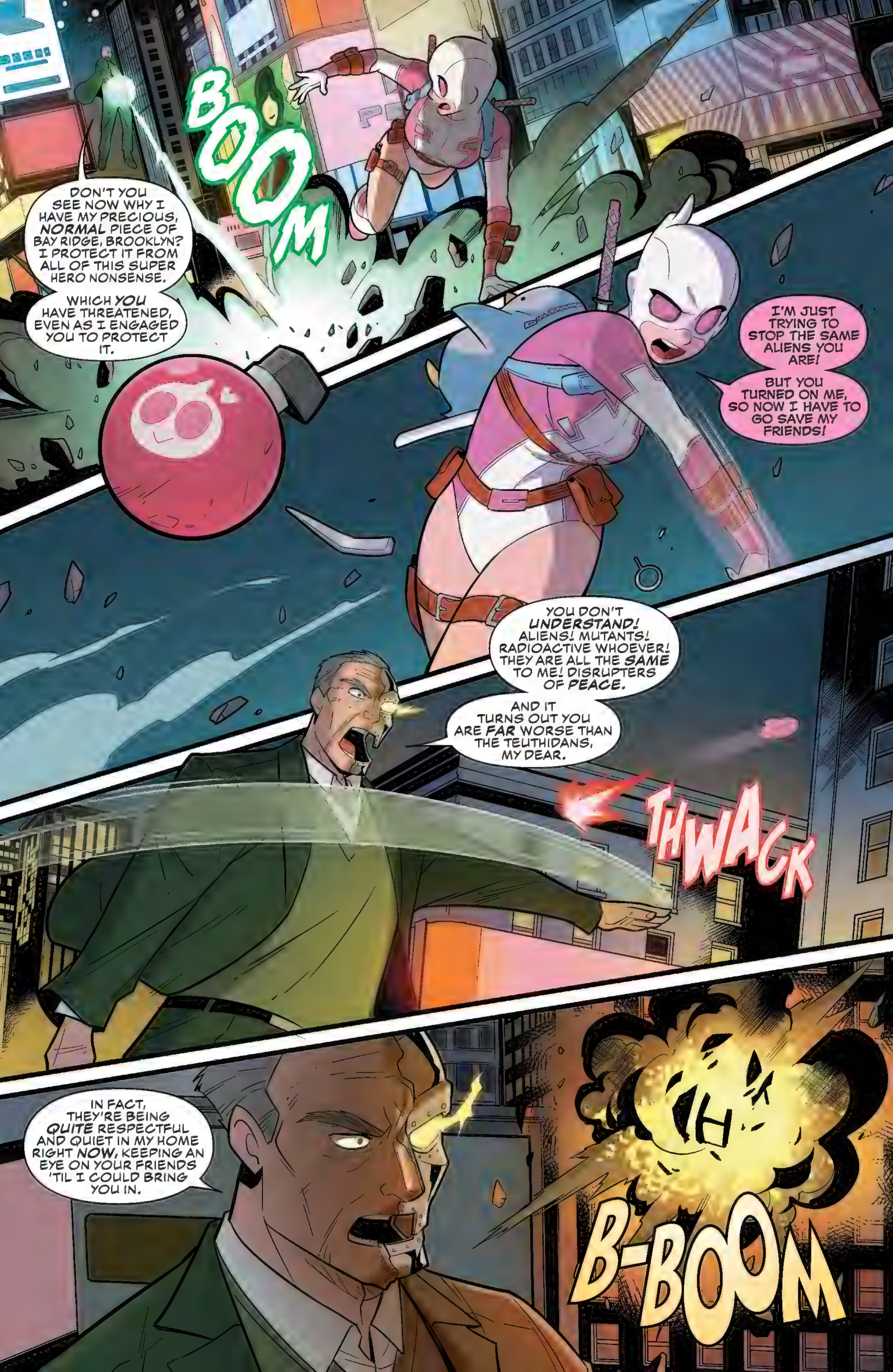

LATER...
BEEP BEEP.
YES. LANGUAGE.
YOU CLEARLY UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING, SO SOMEWHERE IN YOUR CIRCUITS THERE MUST BE A WAY TO OUTPUT...
DOOM!
I AM DOOM!
AH!
THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT.
SFOW
OH. HERE, I'LL JUST SWITCH THIS.
I APOLOGIZE. MY FRIEND. THANK YOU SO MUCH. OH, TO FINALLY EXPRESS MYSELF FULLY!
WOW! IT'S AS THOUGH YOU'VE BECOME FULLY HUMAN!
THANK YOU, PHINEAS.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU HAVE A NAME TUCKED IN THERE.
DOOM.
AH, AGAIN, THAT IS A VERY UNSETTLING THING TO KEEP SAYING.
VIIII...VOH... DOOM.
VIIII...
VINCENT?
YES. I WILL BE VINCENT.

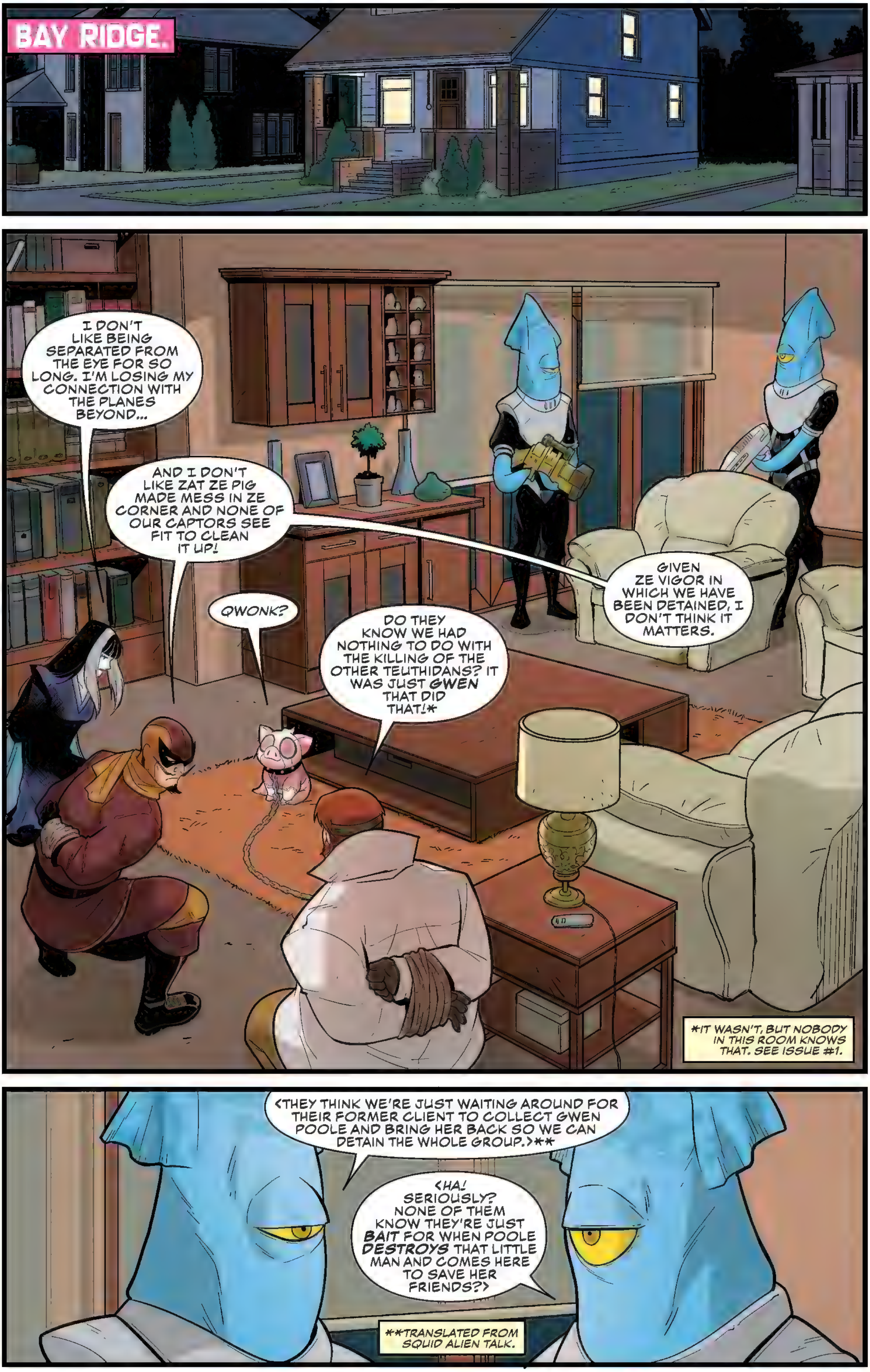

LATER...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR BUSINESS! YOUR NEW LAPTOP HINGE SHOULD LAST LONGER THAN THE PREVIOUS.
HMFH, JUST LOOK AT THESE MUTANTS.
TERRIFYING.
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. ARE THEY NOT DIFFERENT FROM HUMANITY MUCH LIKE I AM?
AND YOU DID NOT FEAR ME.
THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM. THEY'VE GOT THESE SUPER-POWERS AND THEY JUST DO WHATEVER THEY WANT WITH THEM.
THEY ARE LIKE THAT SQUIRREL WOMAN WHO TRIED TO KILL YOU.
WHAT ARE GOOD NORMAL PEOPLE LIKE US SUPPOSED TO DO IN THE FACE OF THAT?
GOTTA KEEP UP SOMEHOW...
LATER STILL...
MBMBMLE... SPIDER-MAN WILL FINALLY SEE WHAT IT MEANS TO MESS WITH...
...THE TERRIBLE TINKERER!
VINCENT! WHERE ARE YOU? COME SEE THIS COOL THING I'M GOING TO DEFEAT SPIDER-MAN WITH!
...
VINCENT?!
Phineas' Fix-its!
"AND THAT IS WHEN I KNEW HOW AWFUL THIS WORLD COULD BE TO EVEN THE BEST OF FINE, ORDINARY PEOPLE. IT FRIGHTENS ME STILL. AND I MUST CHANGE IT."
"PAST DOCTOR DOOM. ALTERNATE FUTURE SQUIRREL GIRL. A NON-EVIL TINKERER BEFORE HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH SPIDER-MAN?! HOW MANY DIFFERENT CHARACTERS IS YOUR ORIGIN TIED UP IN?! YIKES!"

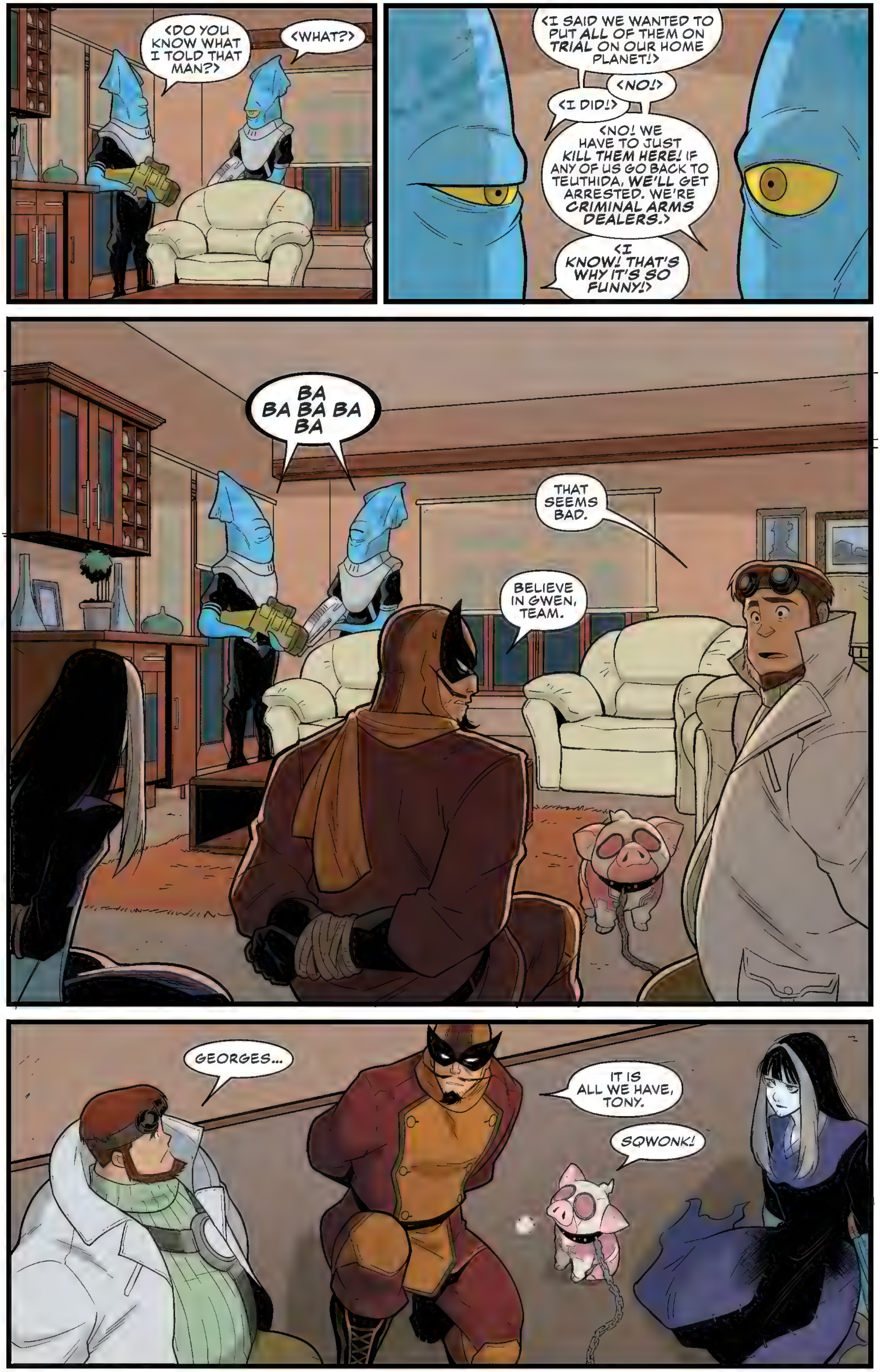

TODAY...
DO YOU THINK I LIKE IT?! NO! IT FILLS ME WITH A DEEP LOATHING--
ARE YOU EVEN PAYING ATTENTION?!
HUH?
MOSTLY...
MAXIM

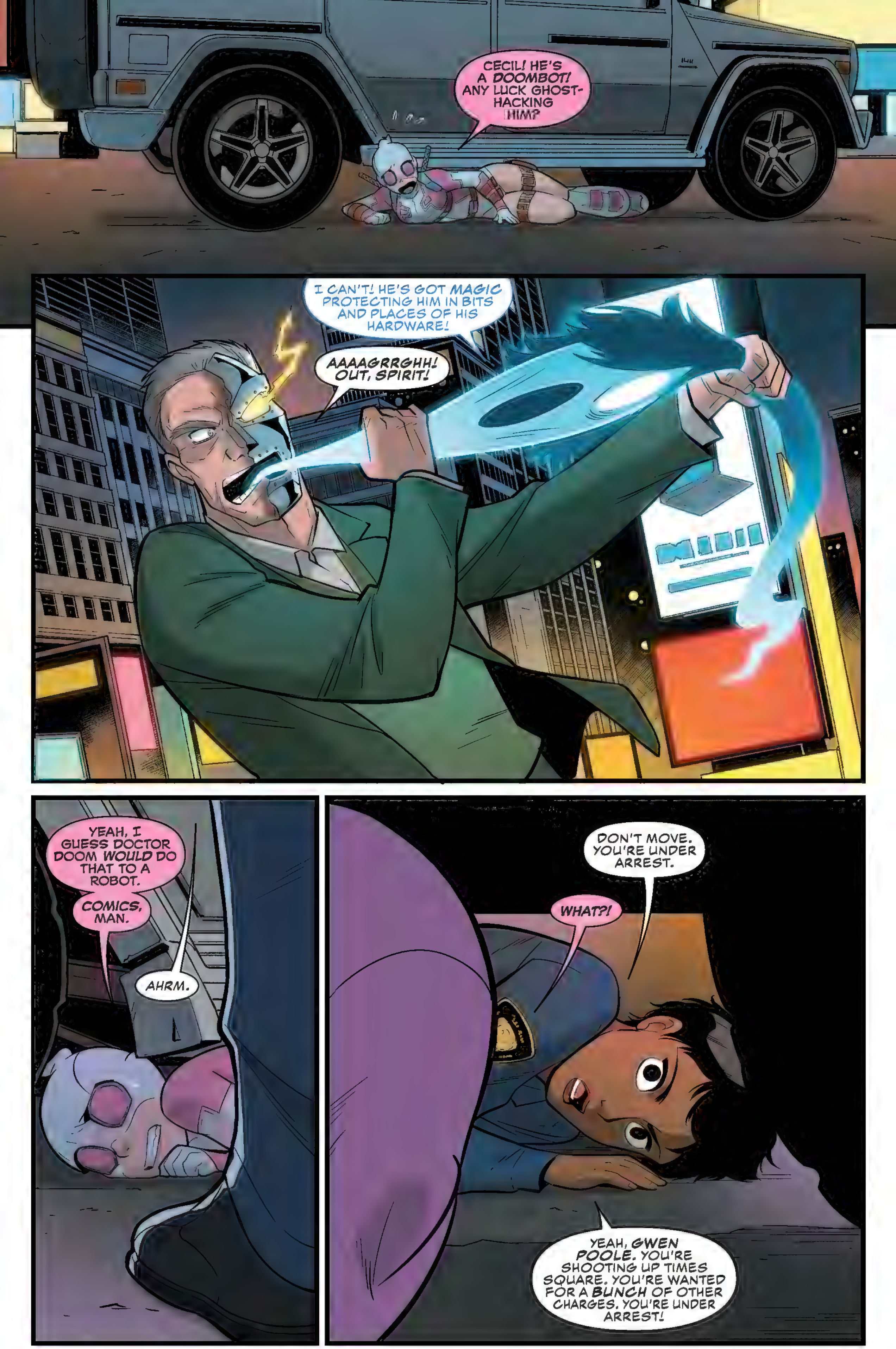

HOW DARE YOU IGNORE VINCENT DOONAN!
BOOM
BLAM BLAM
BOOM
OFFICERS IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE! GWEN POOLE IS FIGHTING DOCTOR DOOM ON 43RD STREET!
NO, HE SAID HIS NAME WAS VINNIE DOOM.
CRASH
YEAH...
I DON'T THINK IT MATTERS.
FAIR.

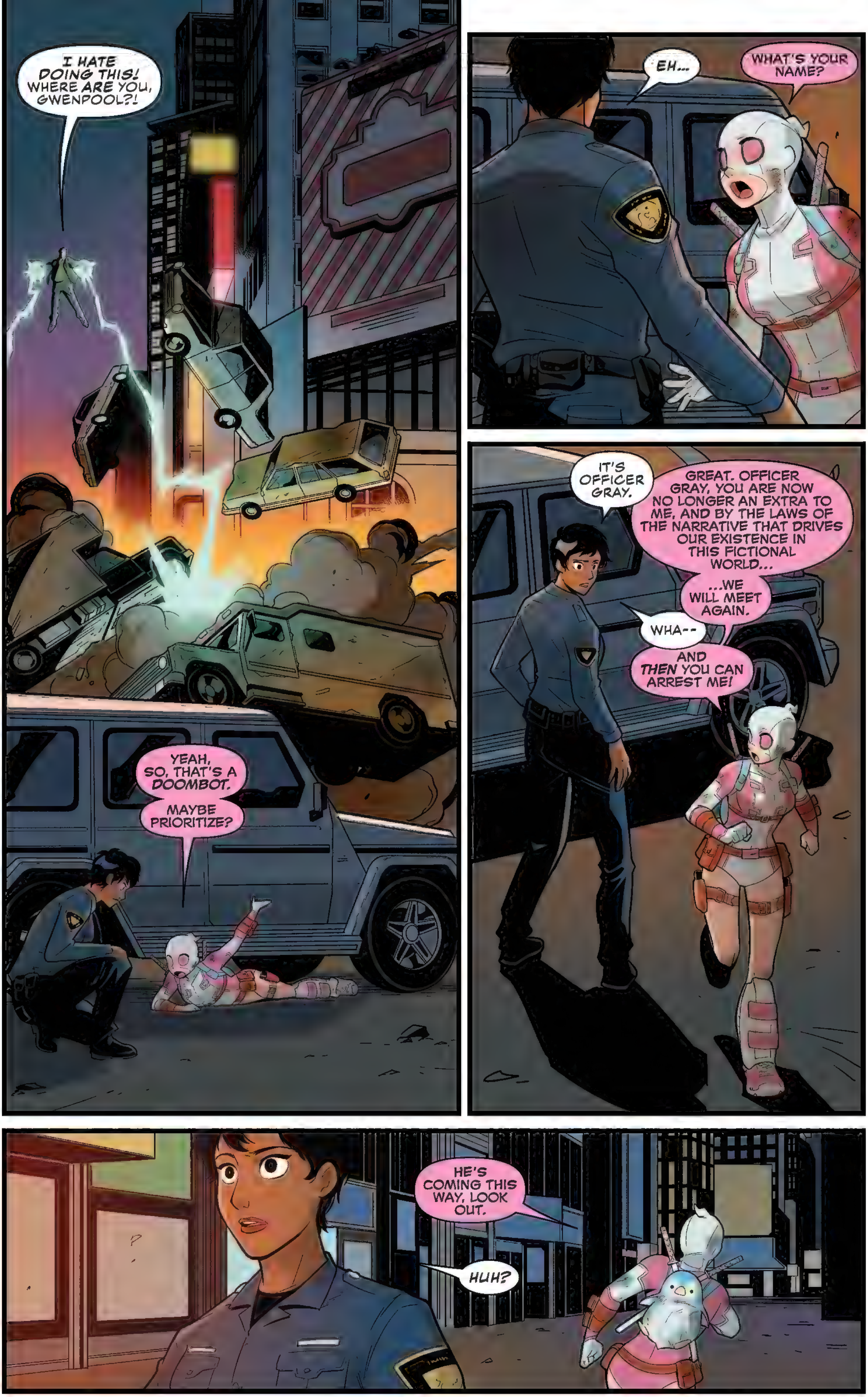

I'M NOT IGNORING YOU. I HAD A SECRET BACKUP PLAN! I GOT A LINE TO MY PALS, THE CHAMPIONS, AND I'M CALLING THEM TO MESS YOU UP--
YES, HELLO?
THE MORALES RESIDENCE.
HELLO?
HI. MAY I SPEAK TO MILES, PLEASE?
I'M SORRY, HE'S NOT HOME RIGHT NOW. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TAKE A MESSAGE?
THIS PLAN... WAS NOT THOUGHT-OUT...
I DON'T THINK I GOT THAT.
SORRY... BYE...

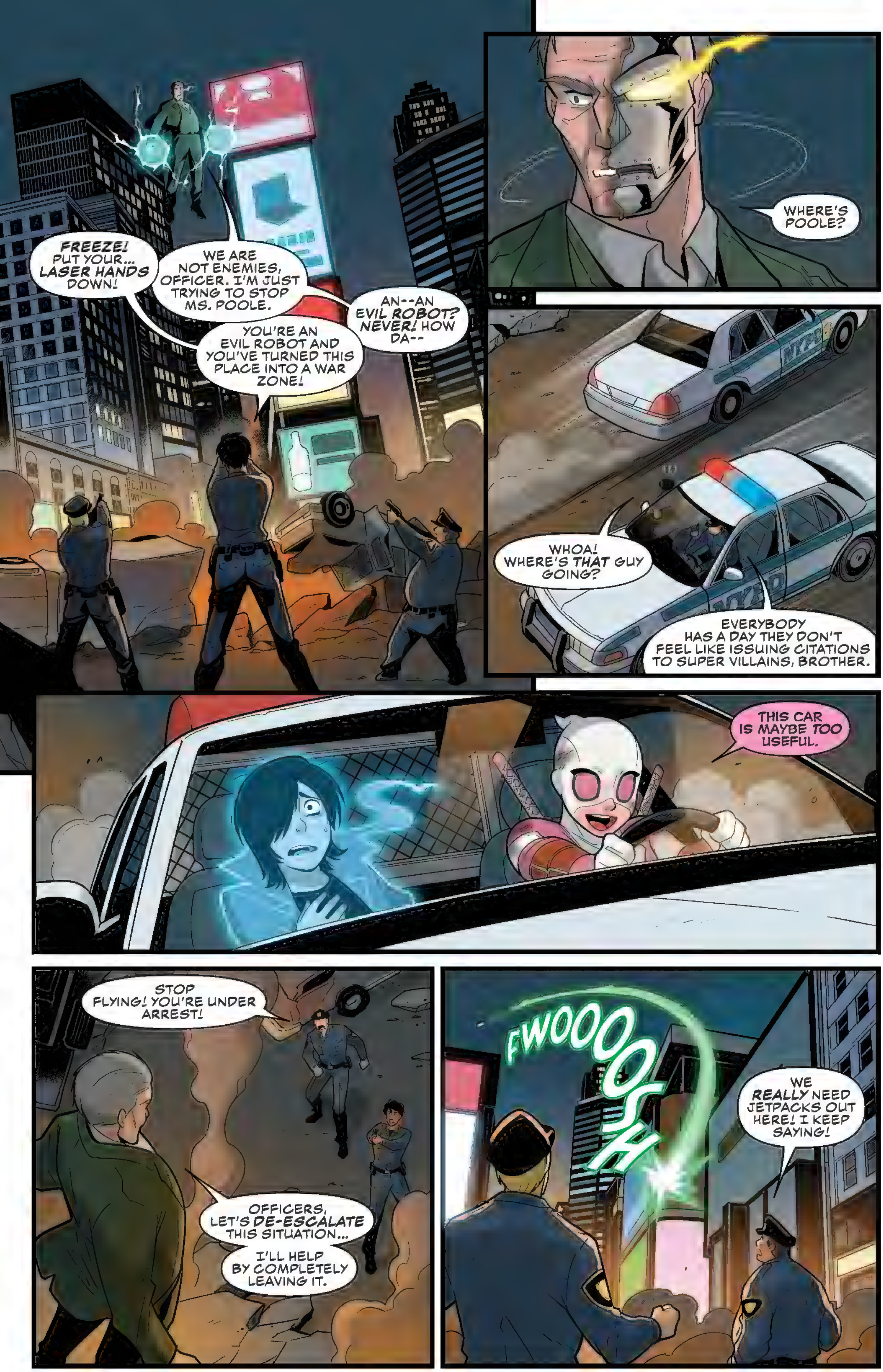

BOOM
DON'T YOU SEE NOW WHY I HAVE MY PRECIOUS, NORMAL PIECE OF BAY RIDGE, BROOKLYN? I PROTECT IT FROM ALL OF THIS SUPER HERO NONSENSE.
WHICH YOU HAVE THREATENED, EVEN AS I ENGAGED YOU TO PROTECT IT.
I'M JUST TRYING TO STOP THE SAME ALIENS YOU ARE!
BUT YOU TURNED ON ME, SO NOW I HAVE TO GO SAVE MY FRIENDS!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! ALIENS! MUTANTS! RADIOACTIVE WHOEVER! THEY ARE ALL THE SAME TO ME! DISRUPTERS OF PEACE.
AND IT TURNS OUT YOU ARE FAR WORSE THAN THE TEUTHIDANS, MY DEAR.
THWACK
IN FACT, THEY'RE BEING QUITE RESPECTFUL AND QUIET IN MY HOME RIGHT NOW, KEEPING AN EYE ON YOUR FRIENDS 'TIL I COULD BRING YOU IN.
B-BOOM

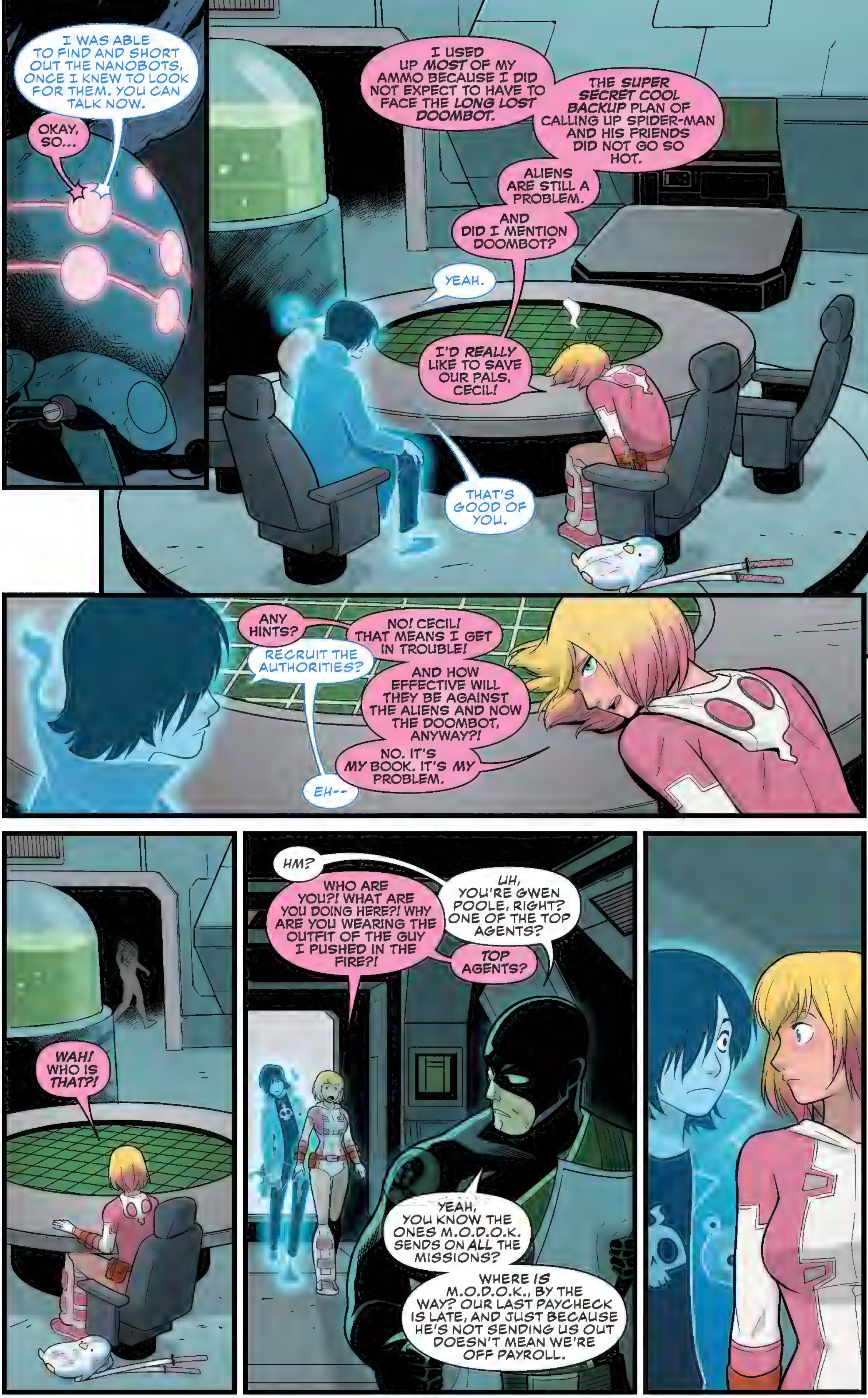

BAY RIDGE.
I DON'T LIKE BEING SEPARATED FROM THE EYE FOR SO LONG. I'M LOSING MY CONNECTION WITH THE PLANES BEYOND...
AND I DON'T LIKE ZAT ZE PIG MADE MESS IN ZE CORNER AND NONE OF OUR CAPTORS SEE FIT TO CLEAN IT UP!
GIVEN ZE VIGOR IN WHICH WE HAVE BEEN DETAINED, I DON'T THINK IT MATTERS.
QWONK?
DO THEY KNOW WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE KILLING OF THE OTHER TEUTHIDANS? IT WAS JUST GWEN THAT DID THAT!*
*IT WASN'T, BUT NOBODY IN THIS ROOM KNOWS THAT. SEE ISSUE #1.
<THEY THINK WE'RE JUST WAITING AROUND FOR THEIR FORMER CLIENT TO COLLECT GWEN POOLE AND BRING HER BACK SO WE CAN DETAIN THE WHOLE GROUP.>**
<HA! SERIOUSLY? NONE OF THEM KNOW THEY'RE JUST BAIT FOR WHEN POOLE DESTROYS THAT LITTLE MAN AND COMES HERE TO SAVE HER FRIENDS?>
**TRANSLATED FROM SQUID ALIEN TALK.

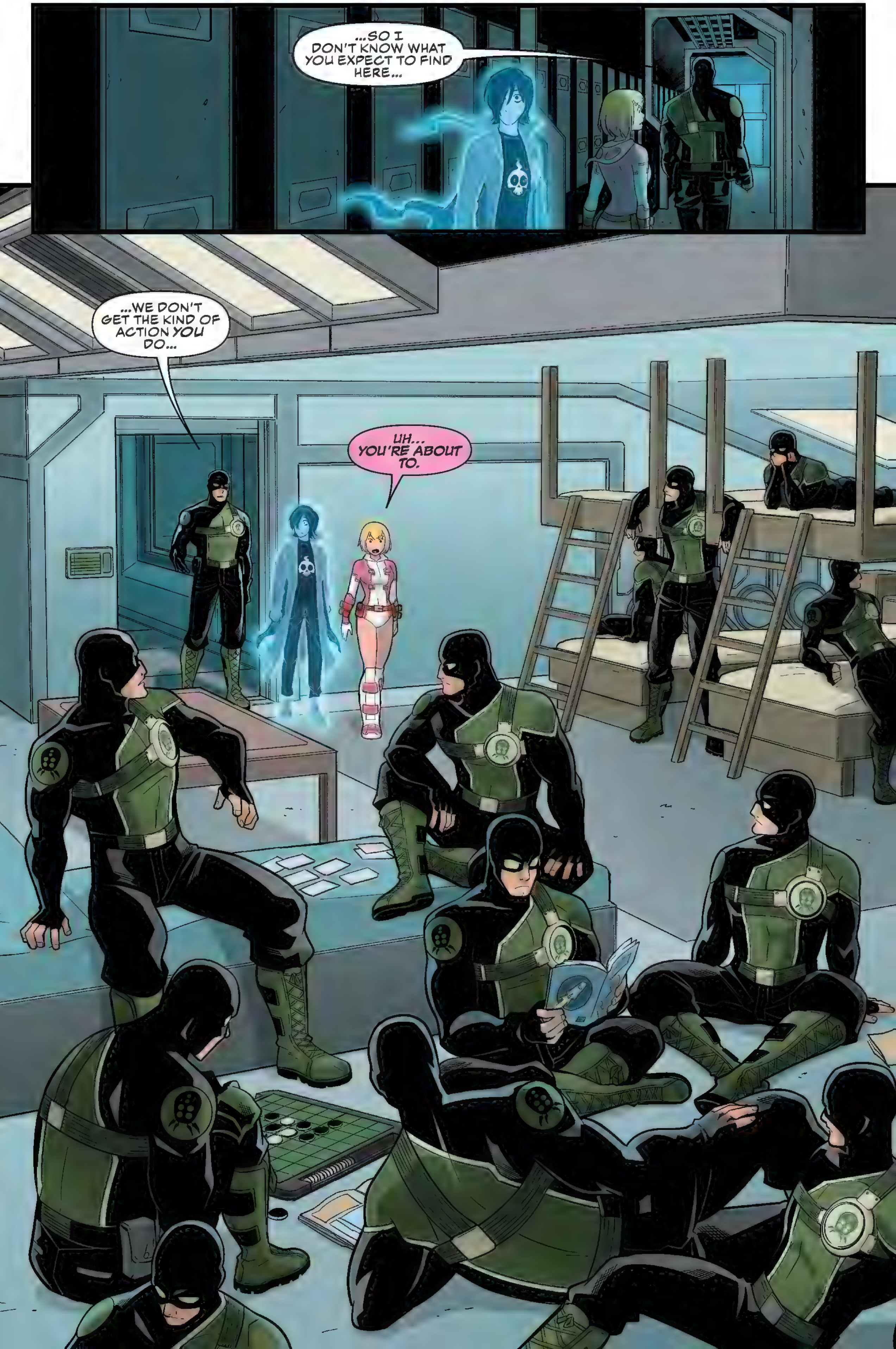

<DO YOU KNOW WHAT I TOLD THAT MAN?>
<WHAT?>
<I SAID WE WANTED TO PUT ALL OF THEM ON TRIAL ON OUR HOME PLANET!>
<NO!>
<I DID!>
<NO! WE HAVE TO JUST KILL THEM HERE! IF ANY OF US GO BACK TO TEUTHIDA, WE'LL GET ARRESTED. WE'RE CRIMINAL ARMS DEALERS.>
<I KNOW! THAT'S WHY IT'S SO FUNNY!>
BA BA BA BA BA
THAT SEEMS BAD.
BELIEVE IN GWEN, TEAM.
GEORGES...
IT IS ALL WE HAVE, TONY.
SQWONK!

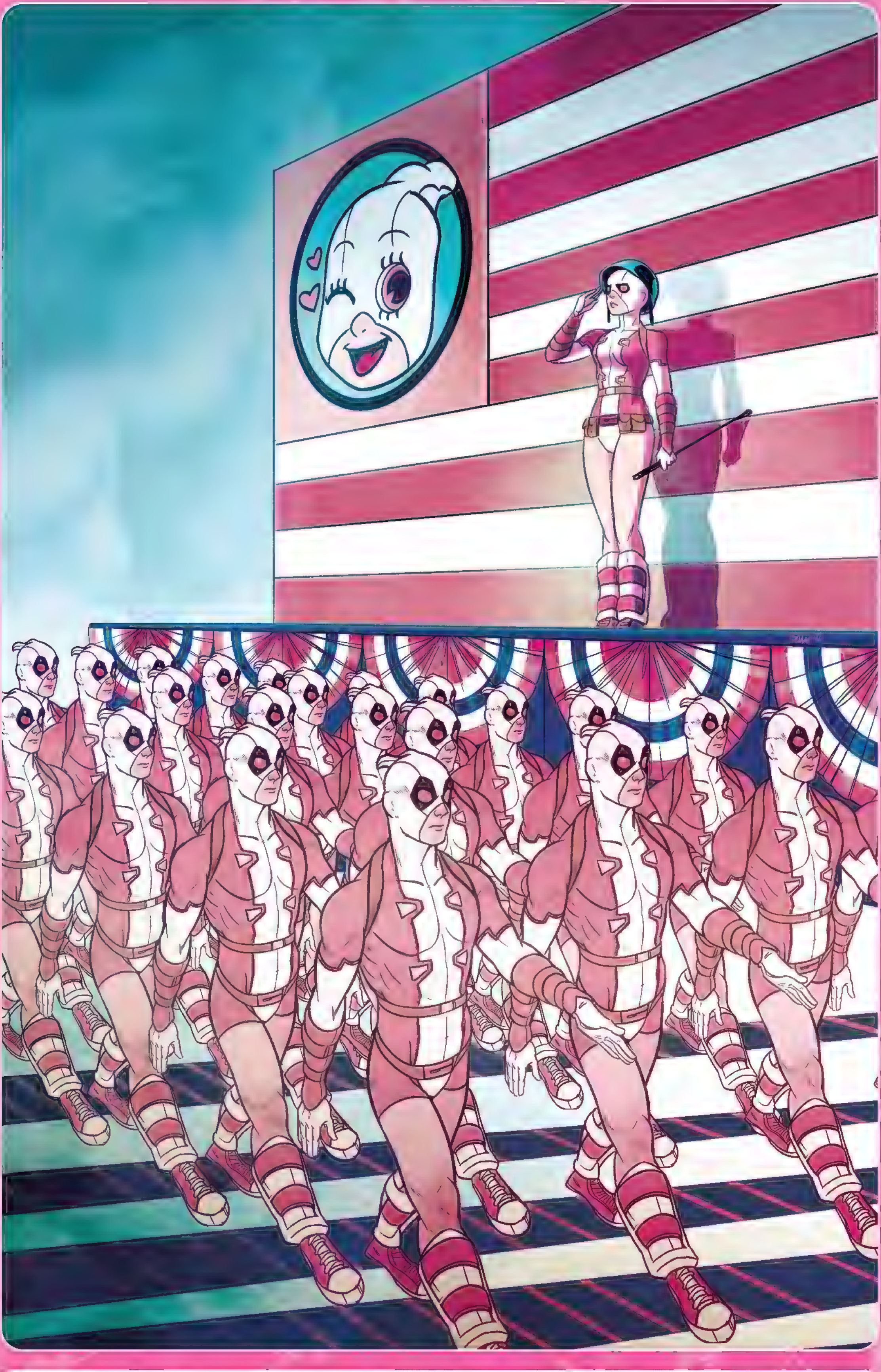

CECIL! HE'S A *DOOMBOT!* ANY LUCK GHOST-HACKING HIM?
I CAN'T! HE'S GOT *MAGIC* PROTECTING HIM IN BITS AND PLACES OF HIS HARDWARE!
AAAAGRRGHH! OUT, SPIRIT!
YEAH, I GUESS DOCTOR DOOM *WOULD* DO THAT TO A ROBOT.
COMICS, MAN.
AHRM.
DON'T MOVE. YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.
WHAT?!
YEAH, *GWEN POOLE*. YOU'RE SHOOTING UP TIMES SQUARE. YOU'RE WANTED FOR A *BUNCH* OF OTHER CHARGES. YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!


I HATE DOING THIS! WHERE ARE YOU, GWENPOOL?!
YEAH, SO, THAT'S A DOOMBOT.
MAYBE PRIORITIZE?
EH...
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
IT'S OFFICER GRAY.
GREAT. OFFICER GRAY, YOU ARE NOW NO LONGER AN EXTRA TO ME, AND BY THE LAWS OF THE NARRATIVE THAT DRIVES OUR EXISTENCE IN THIS FICTIONAL WORLD...
...WE WILL MEET AGAIN.
WHA--
AND THEN YOU CAN ARREST ME!
HE'S COMING THIS WAY, LOOK OUT.
HUH?

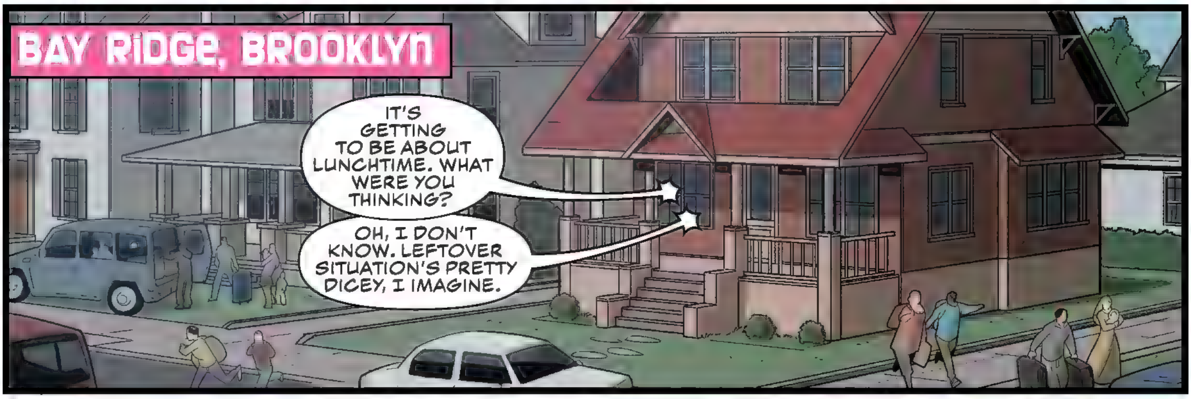

FREEZE! PUT YOUR... **LASER HANDS** DOWN!
WE ARE NOT ENEMIES, OFFICER. I'M JUST TRYING TO STOP MS. POOLE.
YOU'RE AN EVIL ROBOT AND YOU'VE TURNED THIS PLACE INTO A WAR ZONE!
AN--AN ***EVIL ROBOT? NEVER!*** HOW DA--
WHERE'S POOLE?
WHOA! WHERE'S ***THAT*** GUY GOING?
EVERYBODY HAS A DAY THEY DON'T FEEL LIKE ISSUING CITATIONS TO SUPER VILLAINS, BROTHER.
NYPD
THIS CAR IS MAYBE ***TOO*** USEFUL.
STOP FLYING! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
OFFICERS, LET'S ***DE-ESCALATE*** THIS SITUATION...
I'LL HELP BY COMPLETELY LEAVING IT.
FWOOOOSH
WE ***REALLY*** NEED JETPACKS OUT HERE! I KEEP SAYING!

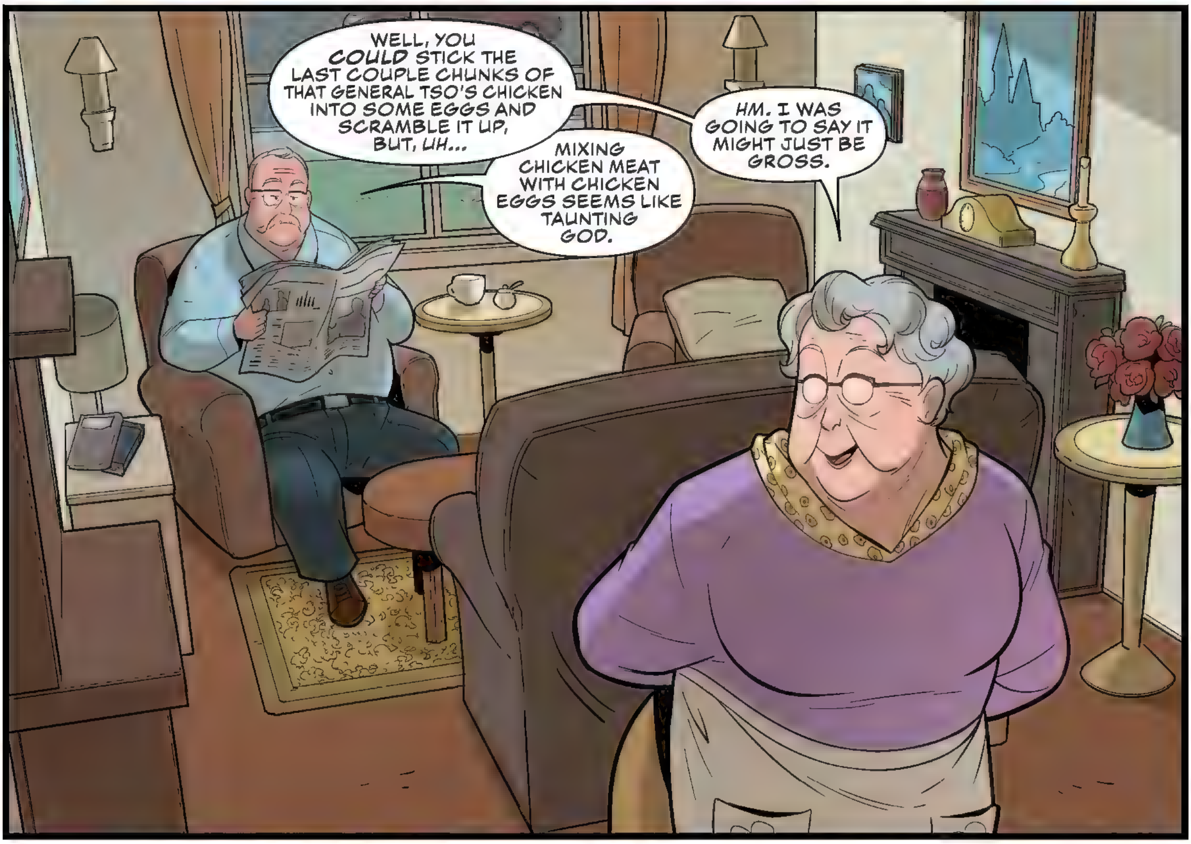

I WAS ABLE TO FIND AND SHORT OUT THE NANOBOTS, ONCE I KNEW TO LOOK FOR THEM. YOU CAN TALK NOW.
OKAY, SO...
I USED UP *MOST* OF MY AMMO BECAUSE I DID NOT EXPECT TO HAVE TO FACE THE *LONG LOST DOOMBOT.*
THE *SUPER SECRET COOL BACKUP* PLAN OF CALLING UP SPIDER-MAN AND HIS FRIENDS DID NOT GO SO HOT.
ALIENS ARE STILL A PROBLEM.
AND DID I MENTION DOOMBOT?
YEAH.
I'D *REALLY* LIKE TO SAVE OUR PALS, CECIL!
THAT'S GOOD OF YOU.
ANY HINTS?
RECRUIT THE AUTHORITIES?
NO! CECIL! THAT MEANS I GET IN TROUBLE!
AND HOW EFFECTIVE WILL THEY BE AGAINST THE ALIENS AND NOW THE DOOMBOT, ANYWAY?!
NO. IT'S *MY* BOOK. IT'S *MY* PROBLEM.
EH--
WAH! WHO IS THAT?!
HM?
WHO ARE YOU?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?! WHY ARE YOU WEARING THE OUTFIT OF THE GUY I PUSHED IN THE FIRE?!
UH, YOU'RE GWEN POOLE, RIGHT? ONE OF THE TOP AGENTS?
TOP AGENTS?
YEAH, YOU KNOW THE ONES M.O.D.O.K. SENDS ON *ALL* THE MISSIONS?
WHERE *IS* M.O.D.O.K., BY THE WAY? OUR LAST PAYCHECK IS LATE, AND JUST BECAUSE HE'S NOT SENDING US OUT DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE OFF PAYROLL.

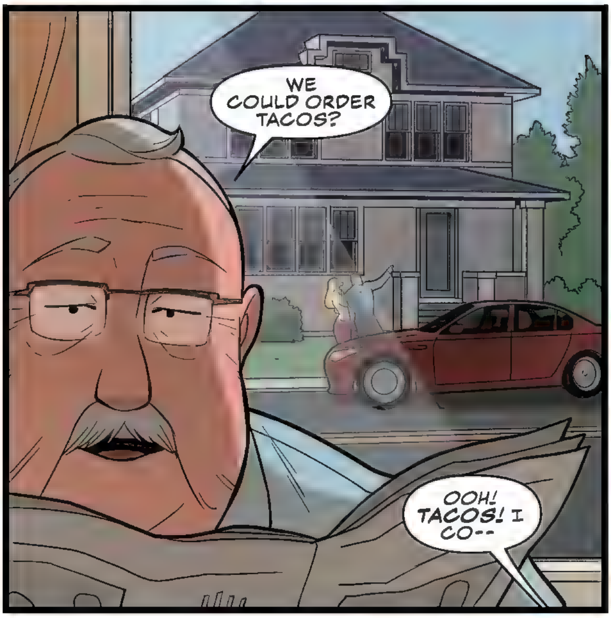

...SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU EXPECT TO FIND HERE...
...WE DON'T GET THE KIND OF ACTION *YOU* DO...
UH... YOU'RE ABOUT TO.

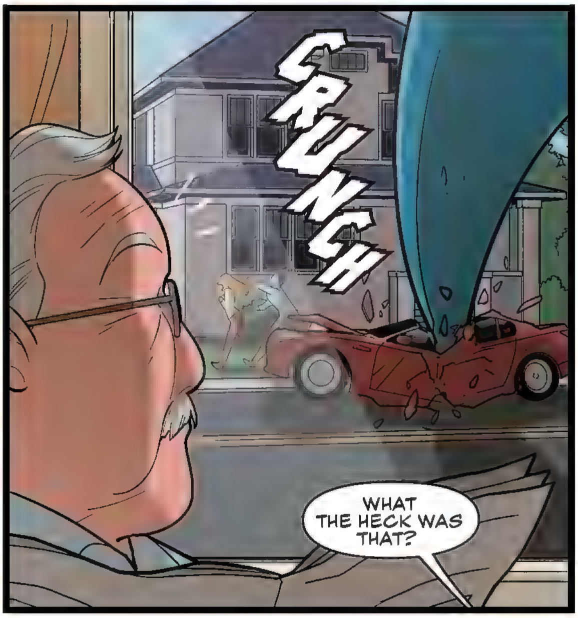


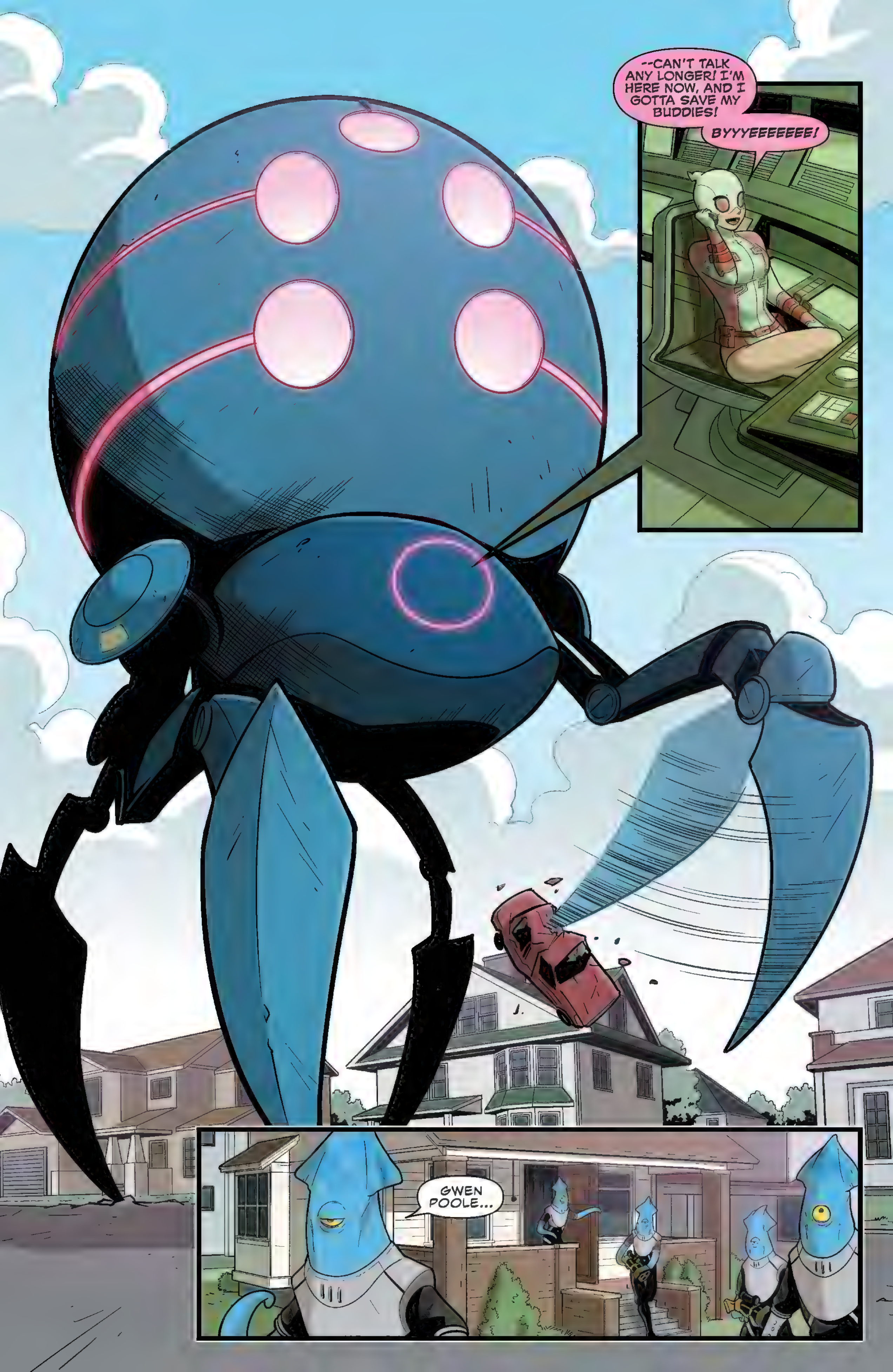
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #10

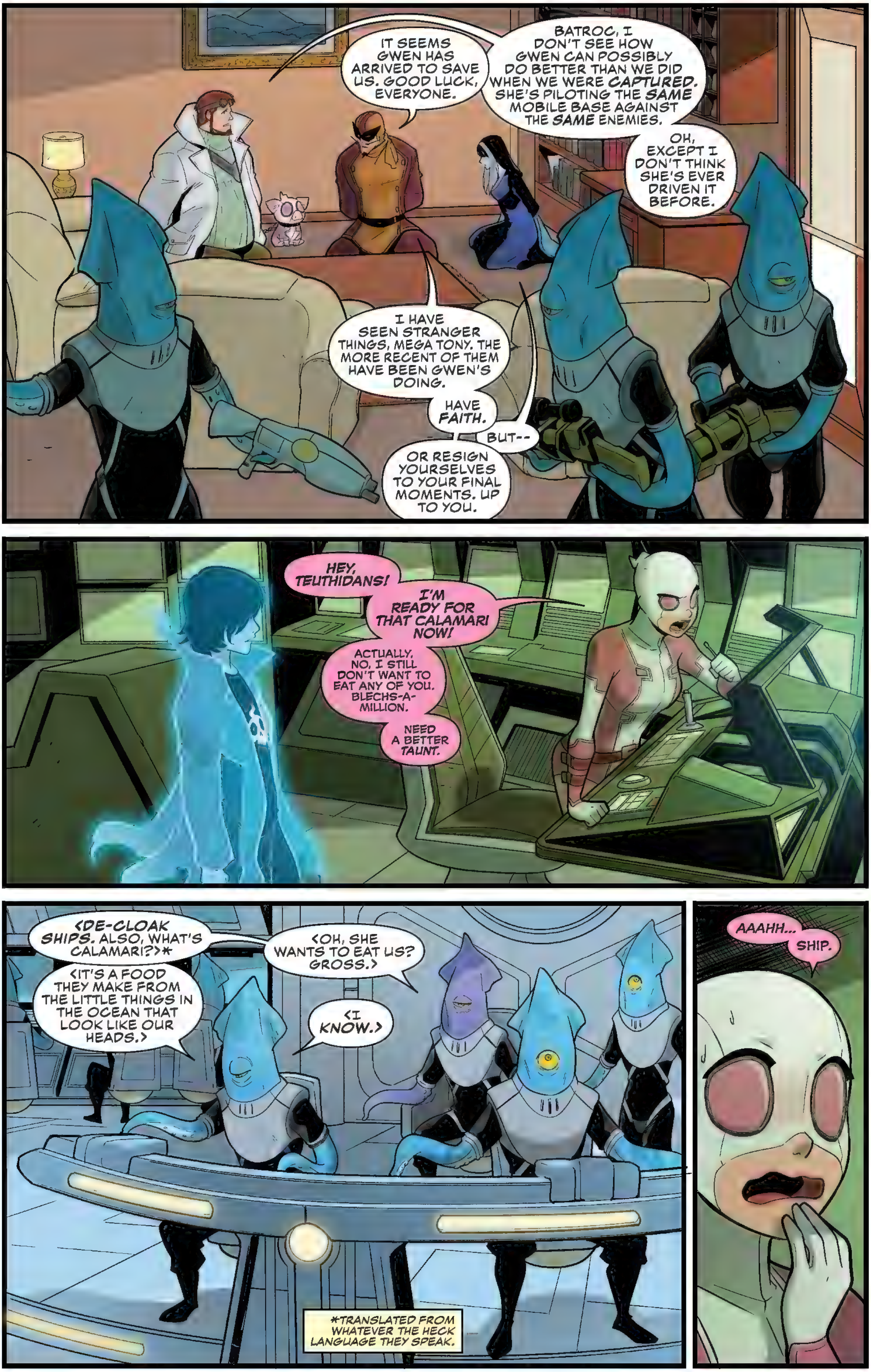

BAY RIDGE, BROOKLYN
IT'S GETTING TO BE ABOUT LUNCHTIME. WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
OH, I DON'T KNOW. LEFTOVER SITUATION'S PRETTY DICEY, I IMAGINE.

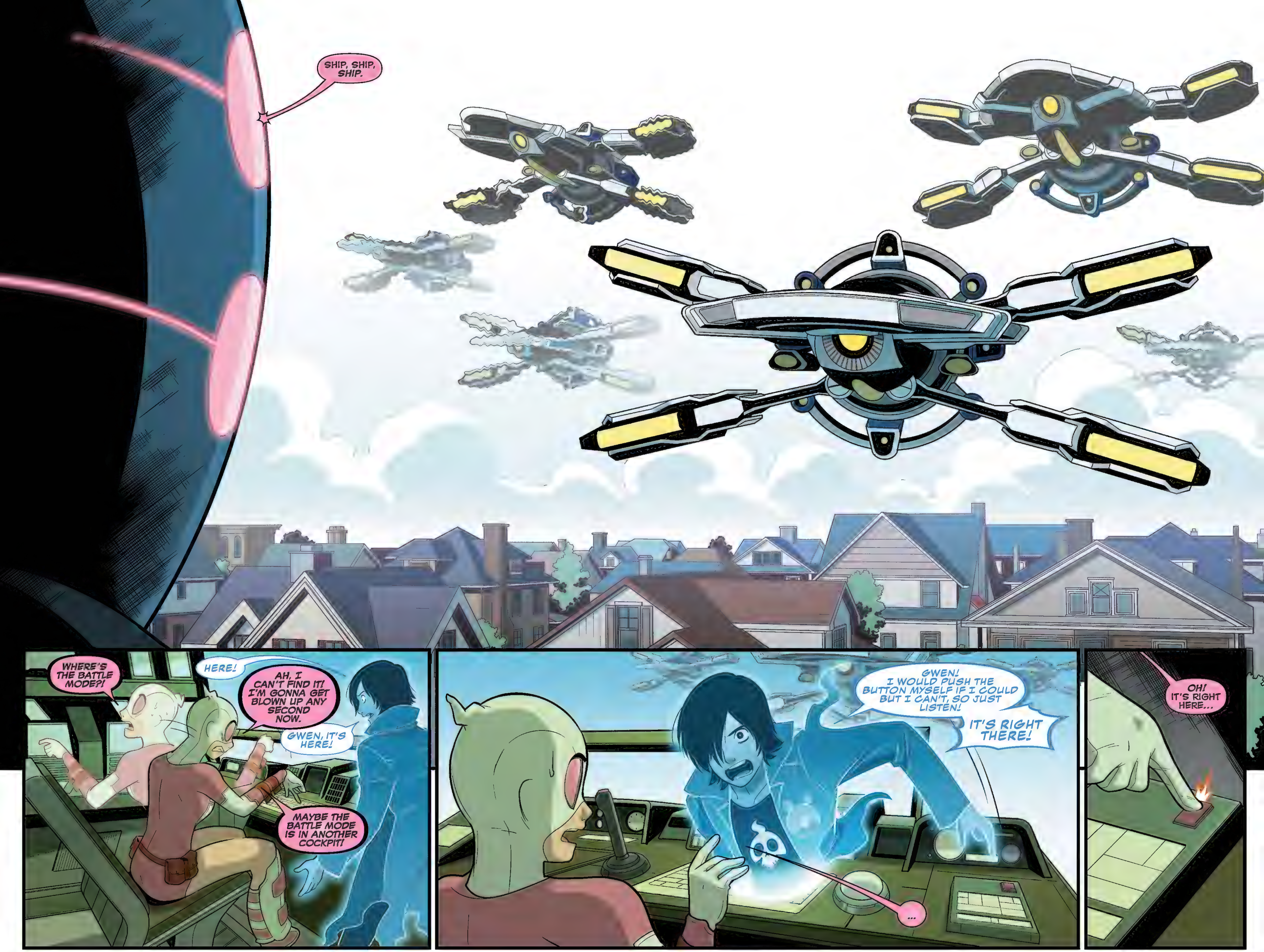

WELL, YOU COULD STICK THE LAST COUPLE CHUNKS OF THAT GENERAL TSO'S CHICKEN INTO SOME EGGS AND SCRAMBLE IT UP, BUT, UH...
MIXING CHICKEN MEAT WITH CHICKEN EGGS SEEMS LIKE TAUNTING GOD.
HM. I WAS GOING TO SAY IT MIGHT JUST BE GROSS.

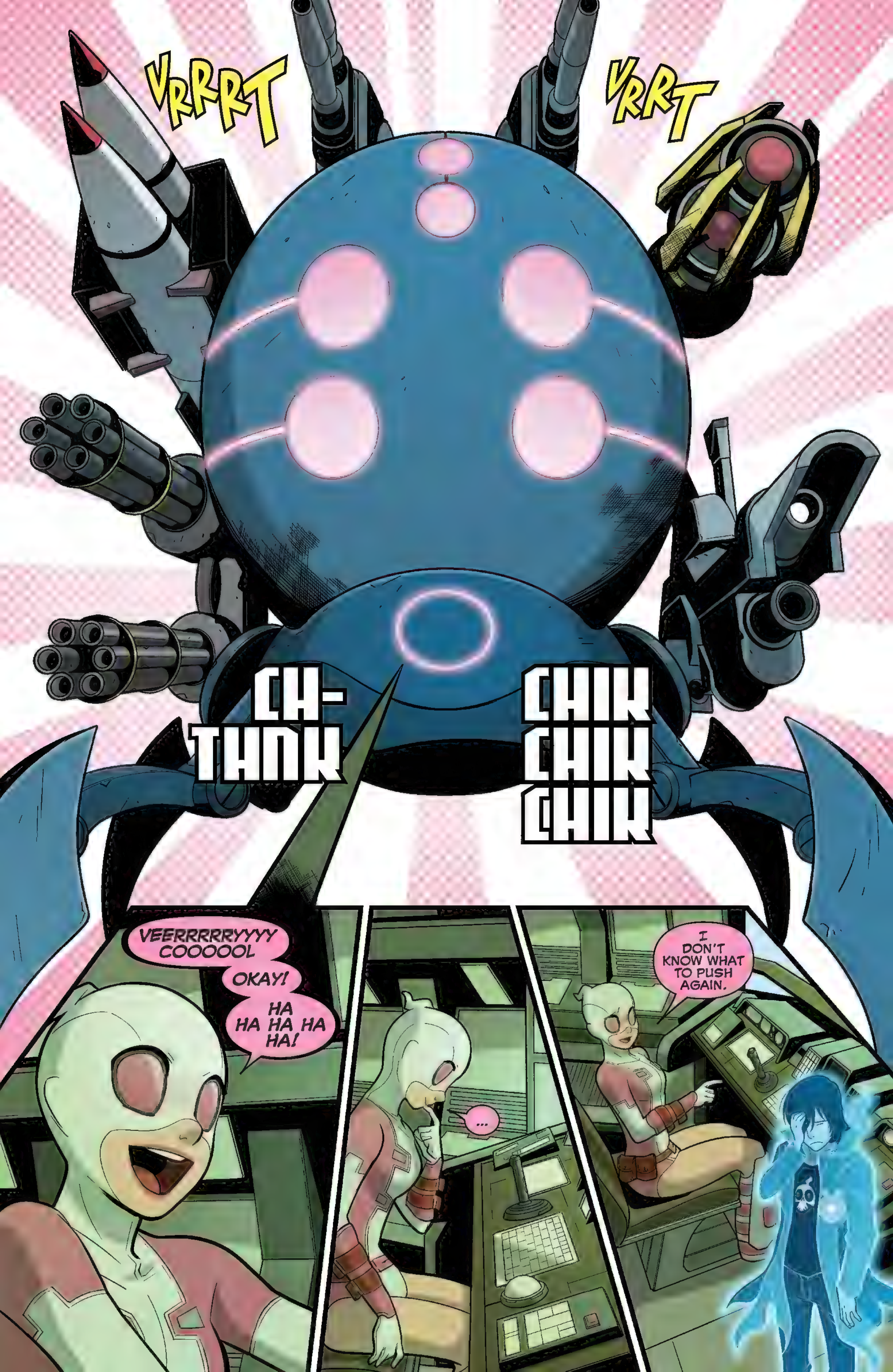

WE COULD ORDER TACOS?
OOH! TACOS! I CO--

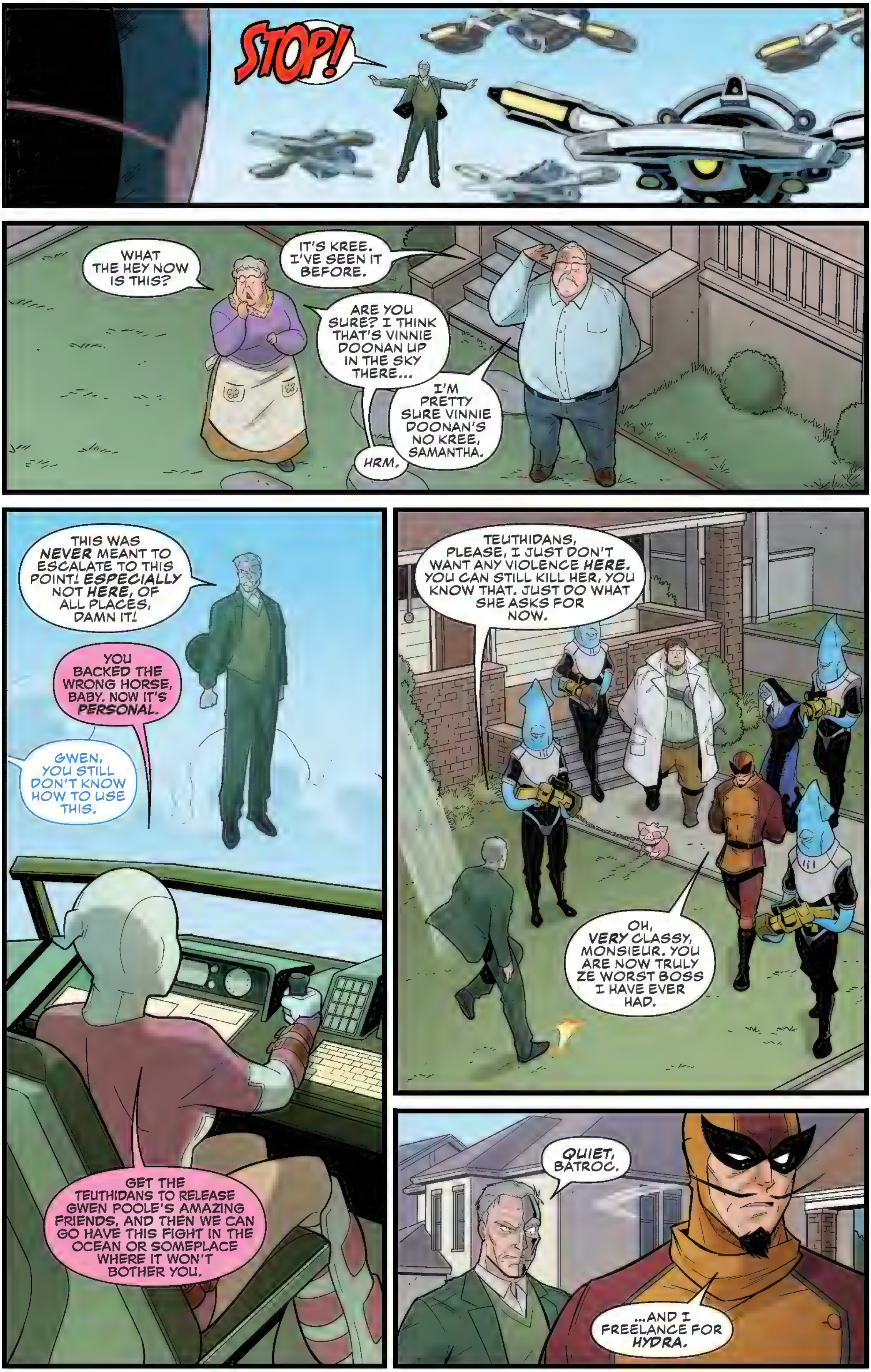

CRUNCH
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?

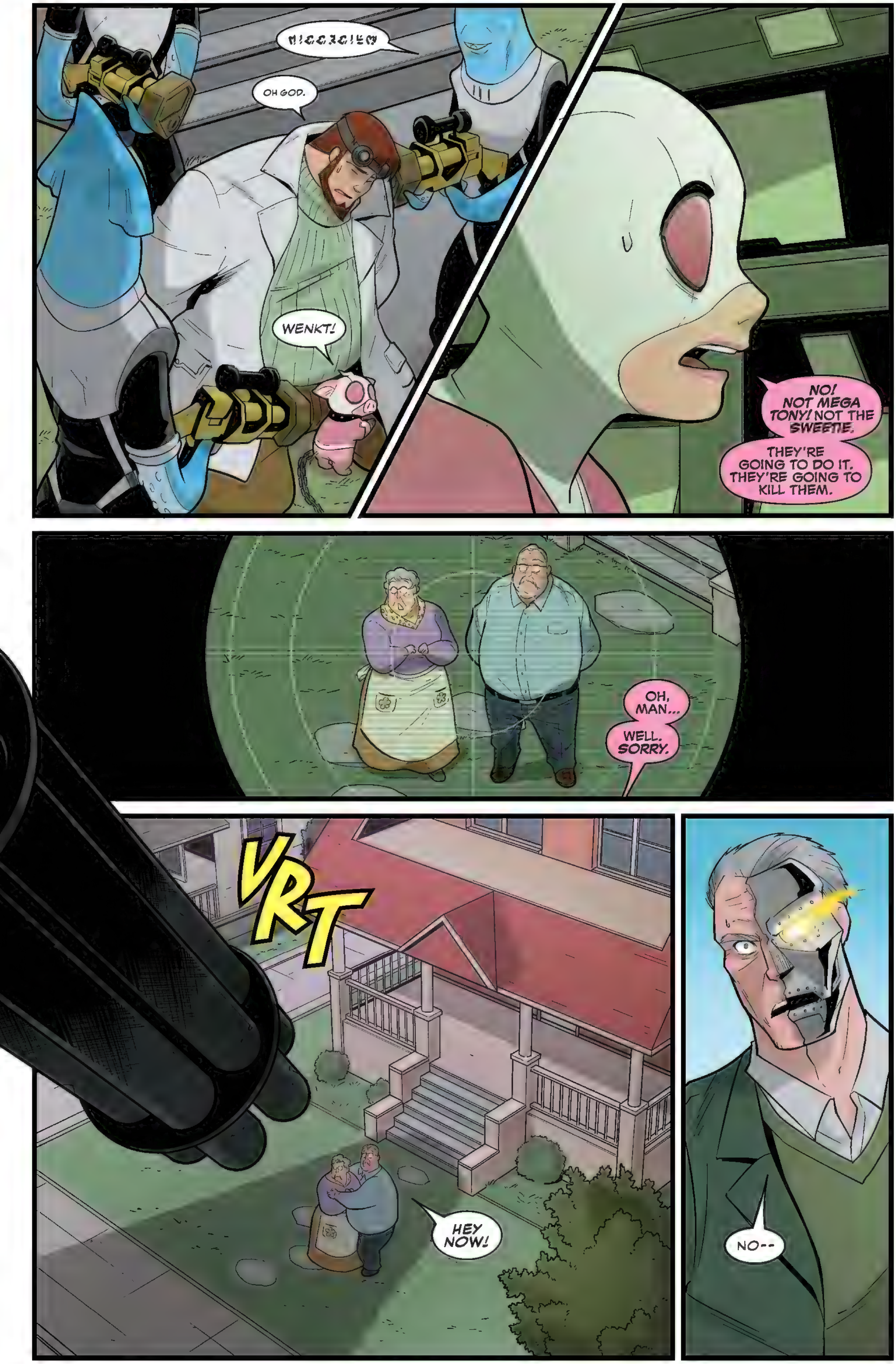

--CAN'T TALK ANY LONGER! I'M HERE NOW, AND I GOTTA SAVE MY BUDDIES!
BYYYEEEEEEEE!
GWEN POOLE...

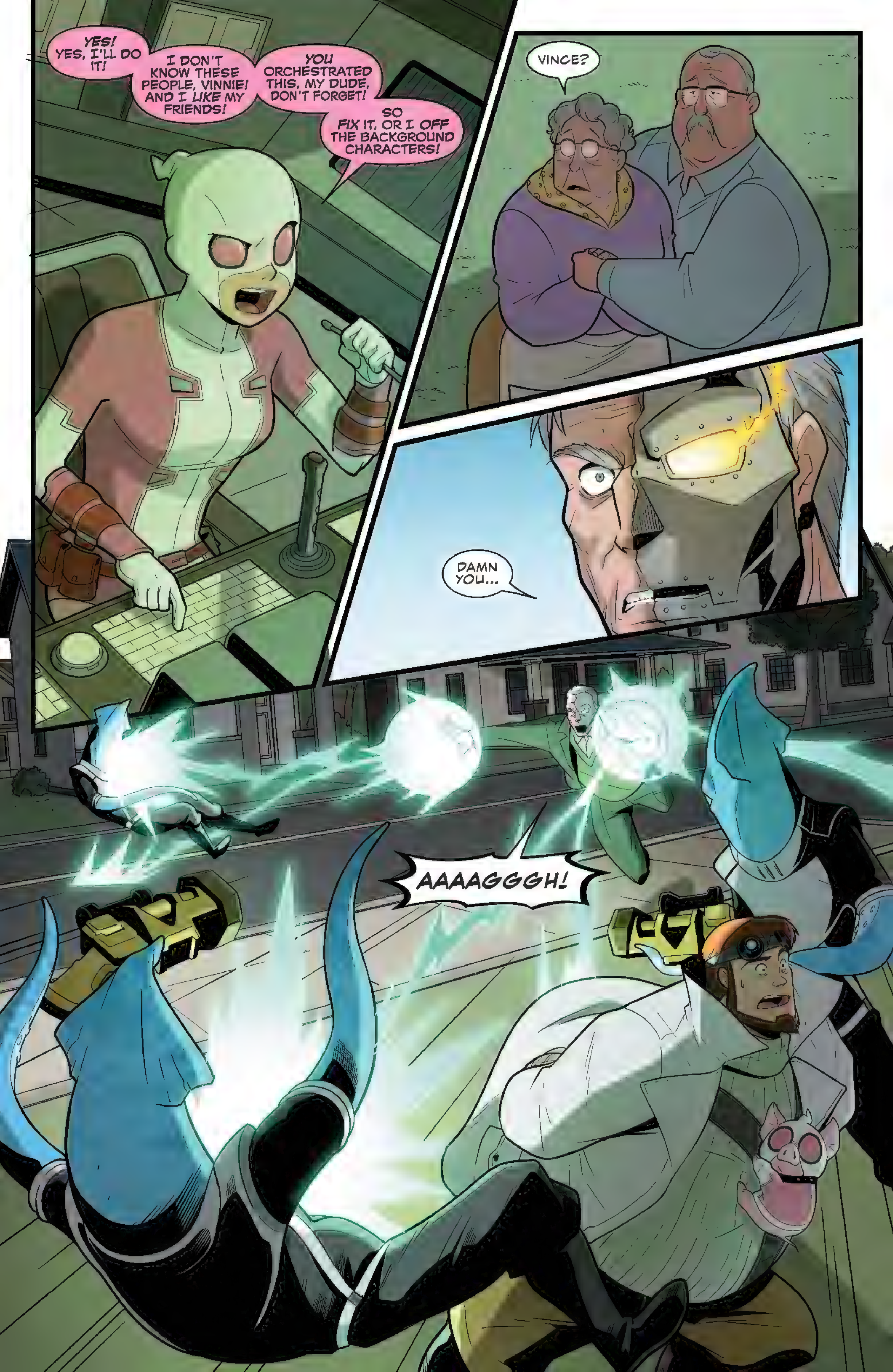

IT SEEMS GWEN HAS ARRIVED TO SAVE US. GOOD LUCK, EVERYONE.
BATROC, I DON'T SEE HOW GWEN CAN POSSIBLY DO BETTER THAN WE DID WHEN WE WERE *CAPTURED.* SHE'S PILOTING THE *SAME* MOBILE BASE AGAINST THE *SAME* ENEMIES.
OH, EXCEPT I DON'T THINK SHE'S EVER DRIVEN IT BEFORE.
I HAVE SEEN STRANGER THINGS, MEGA TONY. THE MORE RECENT OF THEM HAVE BEEN GWEN'S DOING.
HAVE *FAITH.*
BUT--
OR RESIGN YOURSELVES TO YOUR FINAL MOMENTS. UP TO YOU.
HEY, TEUTHIDANS!
I'M READY FOR THAT CALAMARI NOW!
ACTUALLY, NO, I STILL DON'T WANT TO EAT ANY OF YOU. BLECHS-A-MILLION.
NEED A BETTER *TAUNT.*
<*DE-CLOAK SHIPS.* ALSO, WHAT'S CALAMARI?>*
<IT'S A FOOD THEY MAKE FROM THE LITTLE THINGS IN THE OCEAN THAT LOOK LIKE OUR HEADS.>
<OH, SHE WANTS TO EAT US? GROSS.>
<I KNOW.>
**TRANSLATED FROM WHATEVER THE HECK LANGUAGE THEY SPEAK.*
AAAHH...
SHIP.

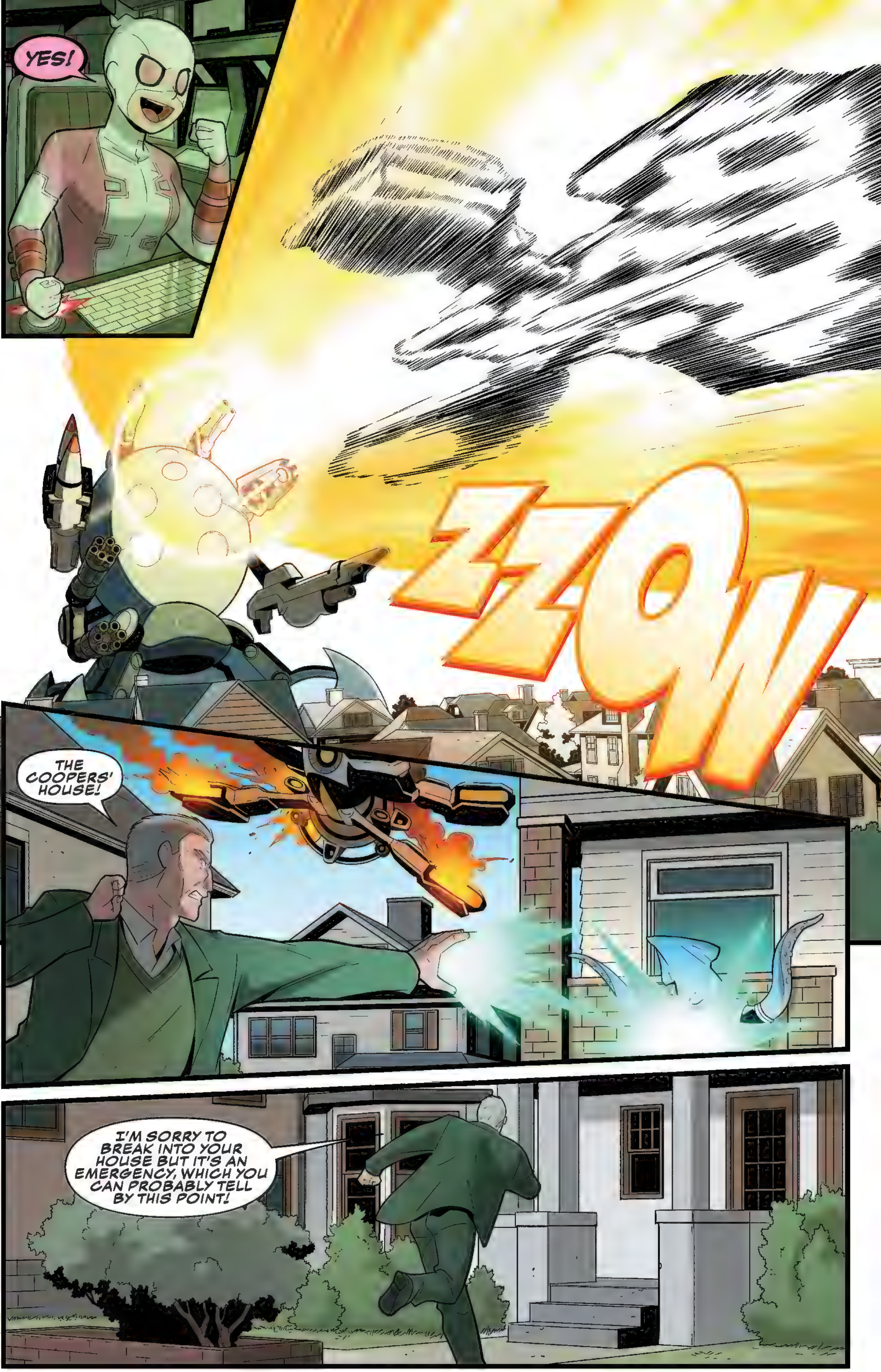

SHIP, SHIP, SHIP.
WHERE'S THE BATTLE MODE?!
HERE!
AH, I CAN'T FIND IT! I'M GONNA GET BLOWN UP ANY SECOND NOW.
GWEN, IT'S HERE!
MAYBE THE BATTLE MODE IS IN ANOTHER COCKPIT!
GWEN! I WOULD PUSH THE BUTTON MYSELF IF I COULD BUT I CAN'T, SO JUST LISTEN!
IT'S RIGHT THERE!
...
OH! IT'S RIGHT HERE...

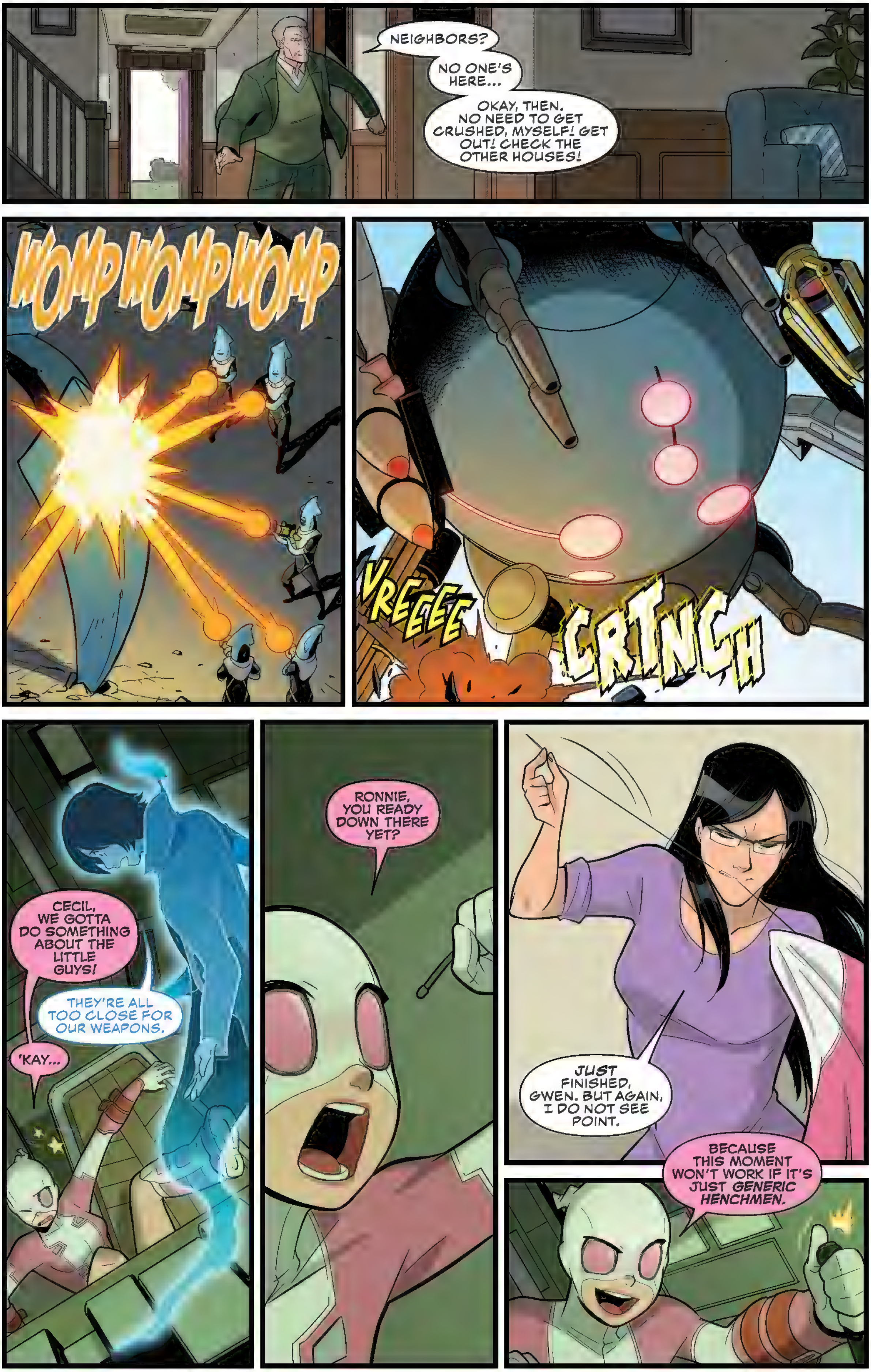

VRRRT
VRRT
CH-THNK
CHIK CHIK CHIK
VEERRRRRYYYY COOOOOL
OKAY!
HA HA HA HA HA!
...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO PUSH AGAIN.

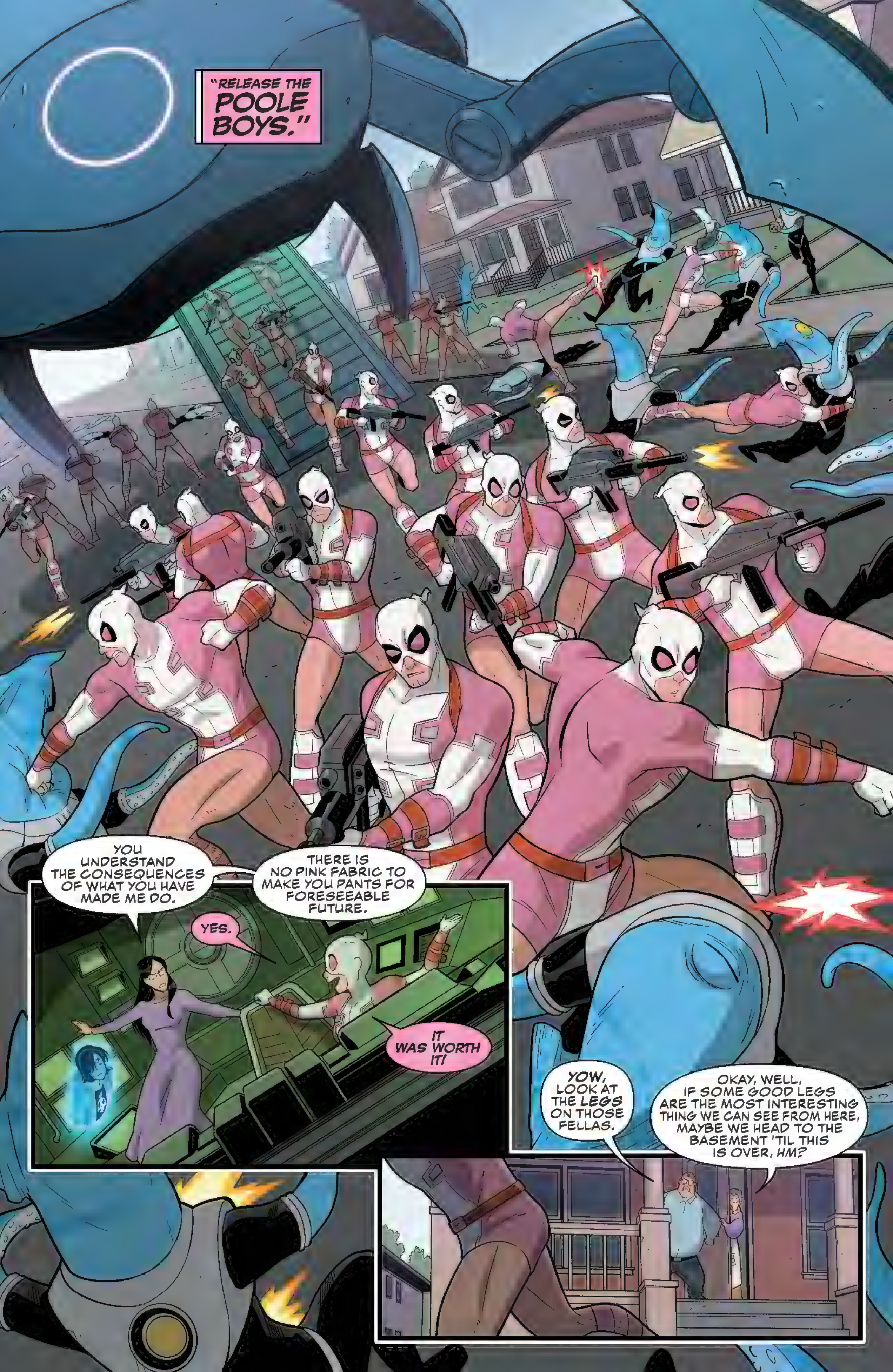

STOP!
WHAT THE HEY NOW IS THIS?
IT'S KREE. I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE.
ARE YOU SURE? I THINK THAT'S VINNIE DOONAN UP IN THE SKY THERE...
I'M PRETTY SURE VINNIE DOONAN'S NO KREE, SAMANTHA.
HRM.
THIS WAS **NEVER** MEANT TO ESCALATE TO THIS POINT! **ESPECIALLY** NOT **HERE**, OF ALL PLACES, DAMN IT!
YOU BACKED THE WRONG HORSE, BABY. NOW IT'S ***PERSONAL.***
GWEN, YOU STILL DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE THIS.
GET THE TEUTHIDANS TO RELEASE GWEN POOLE'S AMAZING FRIENDS, AND THEN WE CAN GO HAVE THIS FIGHT IN THE OCEAN OR SOMEPLACE WHERE IT WON'T BOTHER YOU.
TEUTHIDANS, PLEASE, I JUST DON'T WANT ANY VIOLENCE **HERE.** YOU CAN STILL KILL HER, YOU KNOW THAT. JUST DO WHAT SHE ASKS FOR NOW.
OH, **VERY** CLASSY, MONSIEUR. YOU ARE NOW TRULY ZE WORST BOSS I HAVE EVER HAD.
QUIET, BATROC.
...AND I FREELANCE FOR ***HYDRA.***

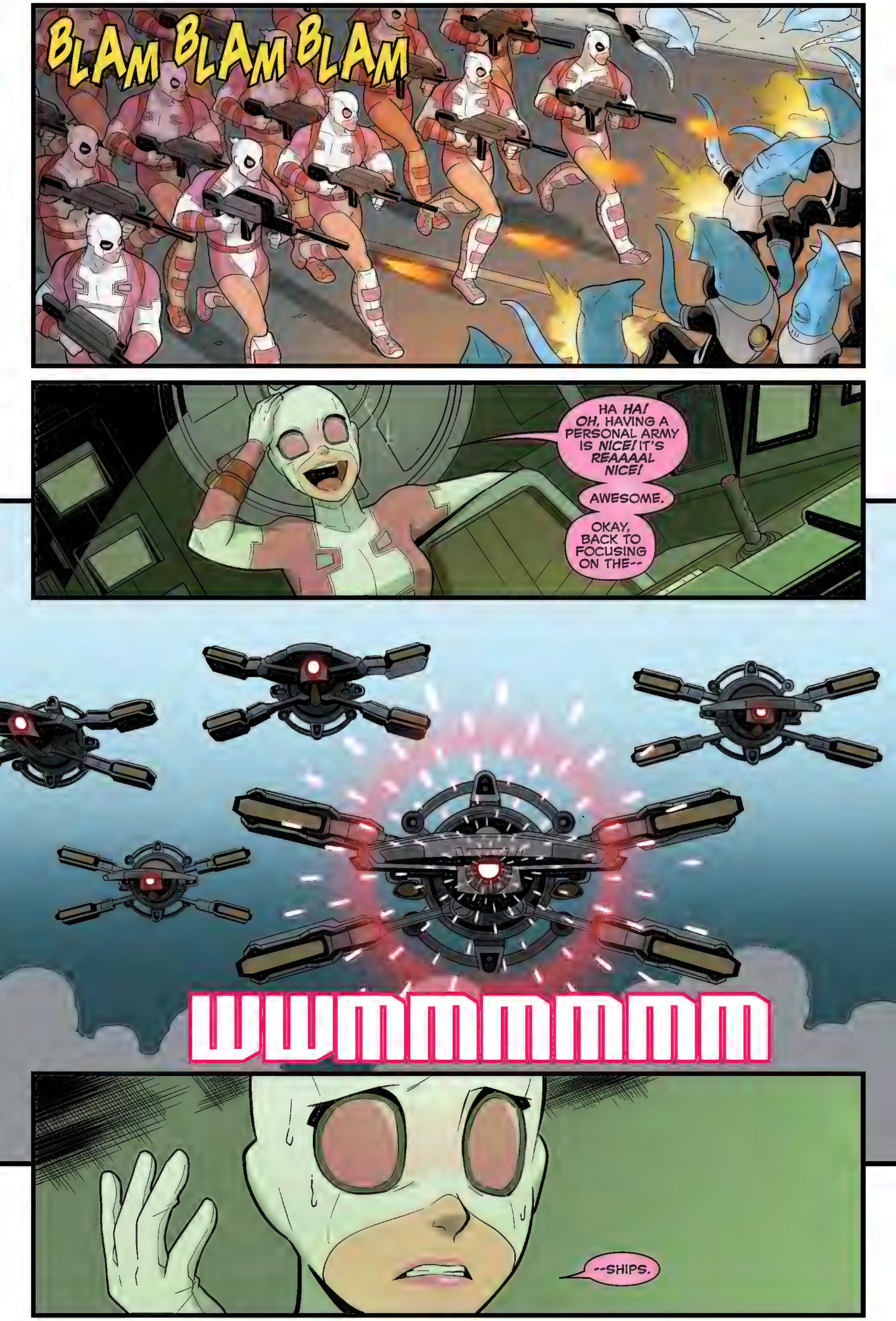

OH GOD.
WENKT!
NO! NOT MEGA TONY! NOT THE SWEETIE.
THEY'RE GOING TO DO IT. THEY'RE GOING TO KILL THEM.
OH, MAN...
WELL. SORRY.
VRT
HEY NOW!
NO--

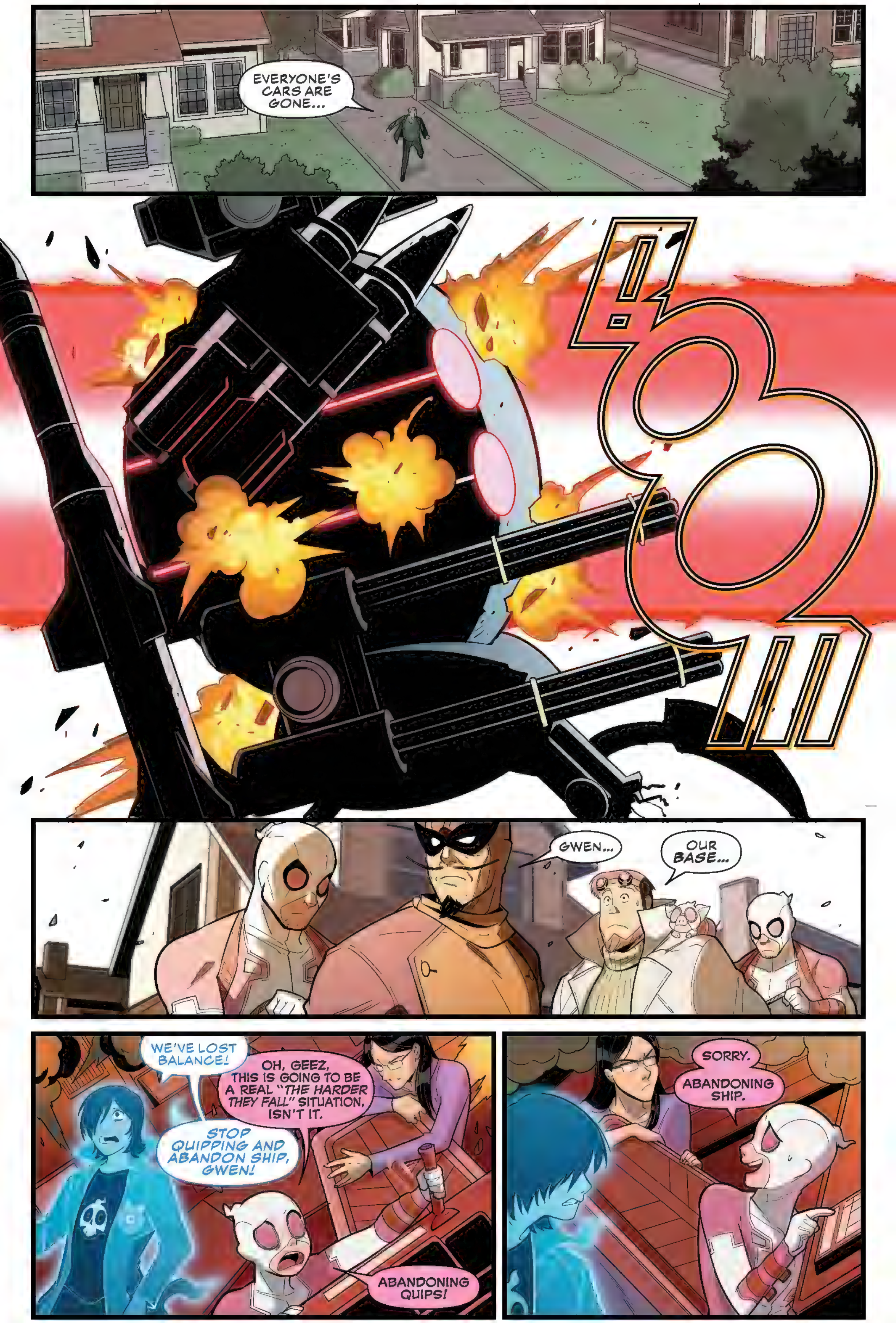

YES! YES, I'LL DO IT!
I DON'T KNOW THESE PEOPLE, VINNIE! AND I *LIKE* MY FRIENDS!
YOU ORCHESTRATED THIS, MY DUDE, DON'T FORGET!
SO *FIX* IT, OR I *OFF* THE BACKGROUND CHARACTERS!
VINCE?
DAMN YOU...
AAAAGGGH!

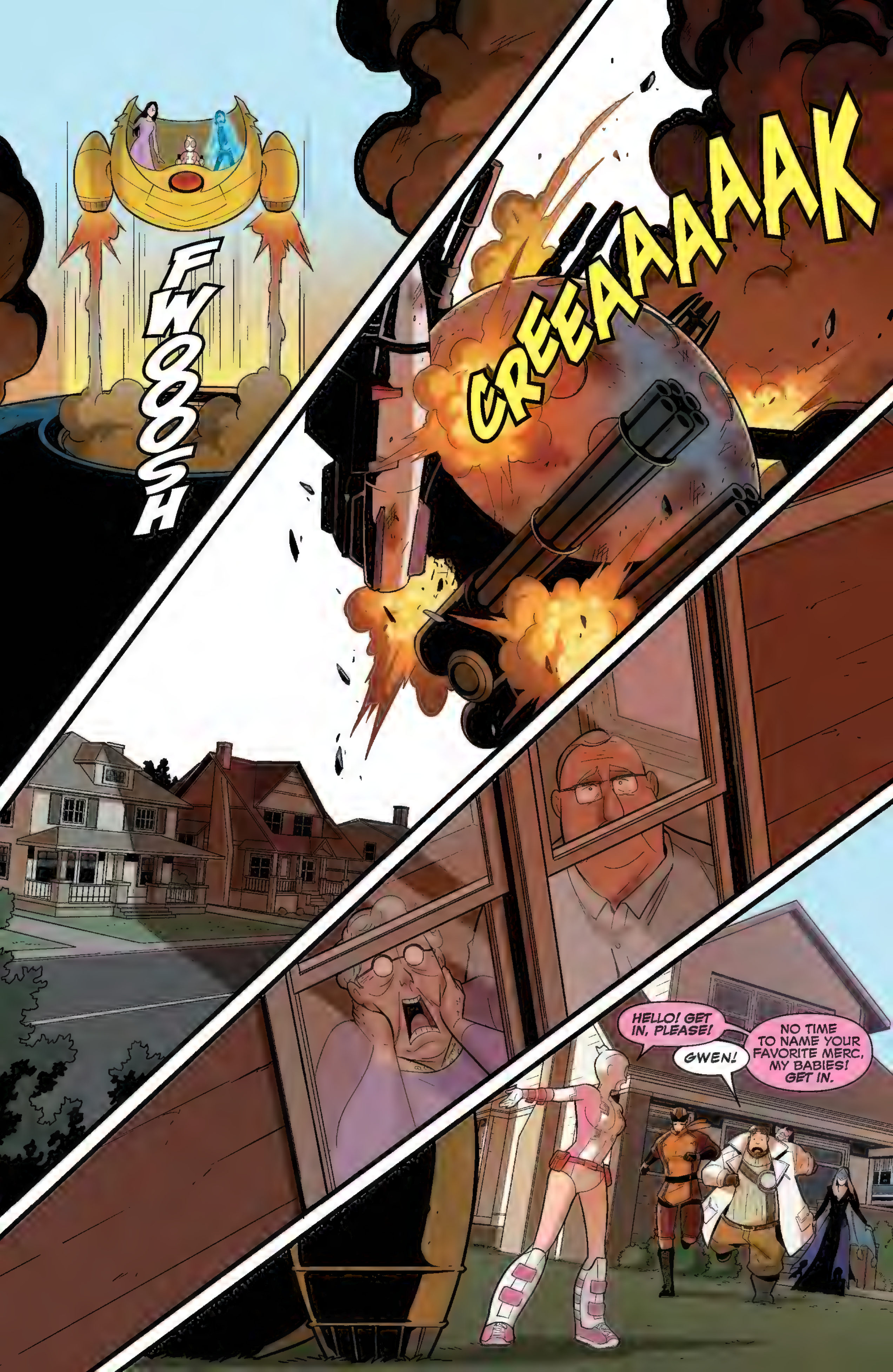

YES!
Z-ZOW
THE COOPERS' HOUSE!
I'M SORRY TO BREAK INTO YOUR HOUSE BUT IT'S AN EMERGENCY, WHICH YOU CAN PROBABLY TELL BY THIS POINT!

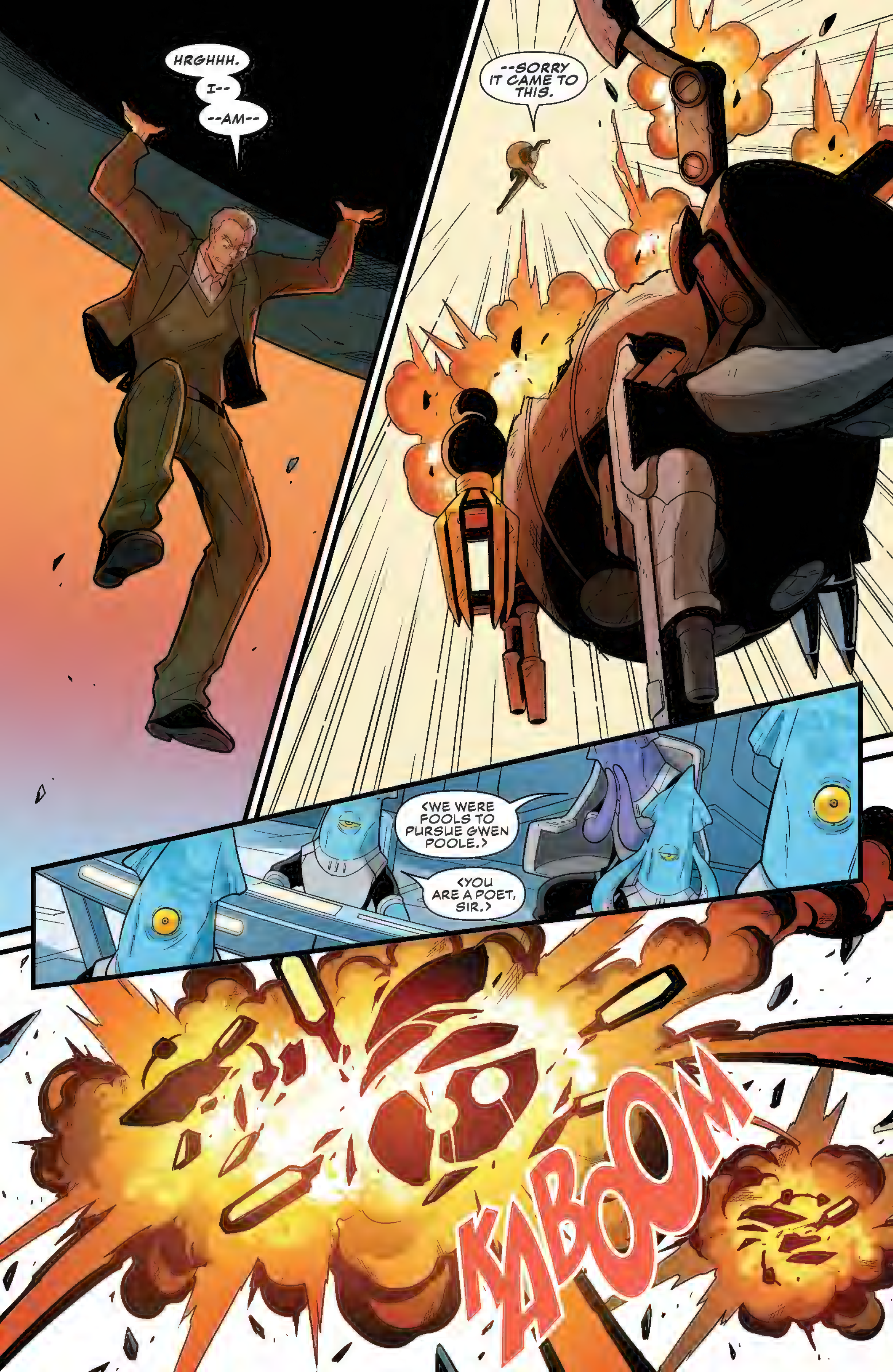

NEIGHBORS?
NO ONE'S HERE...
OKAY, THEN. NO NEED TO GET CRUSHED, MYSELF! GET OUT! CHECK THE OTHER HOUSES!
WOMP WOMP WOMP
VREEEE
CRTNCH
CECIL, WE GOTTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE LITTLE GUYS!
THEY'RE ALL TOO CLOSE FOR OUR WEAPONS.
'KAY...
RONNIE, YOU READY DOWN THERE YET?
JUST FINISHED, GWEN. BUT AGAIN, I DO NOT SEE POINT.
BECAUSE THIS MOMENT WON'T WORK IF IT'S JUST GENERIC HENCHMEN.

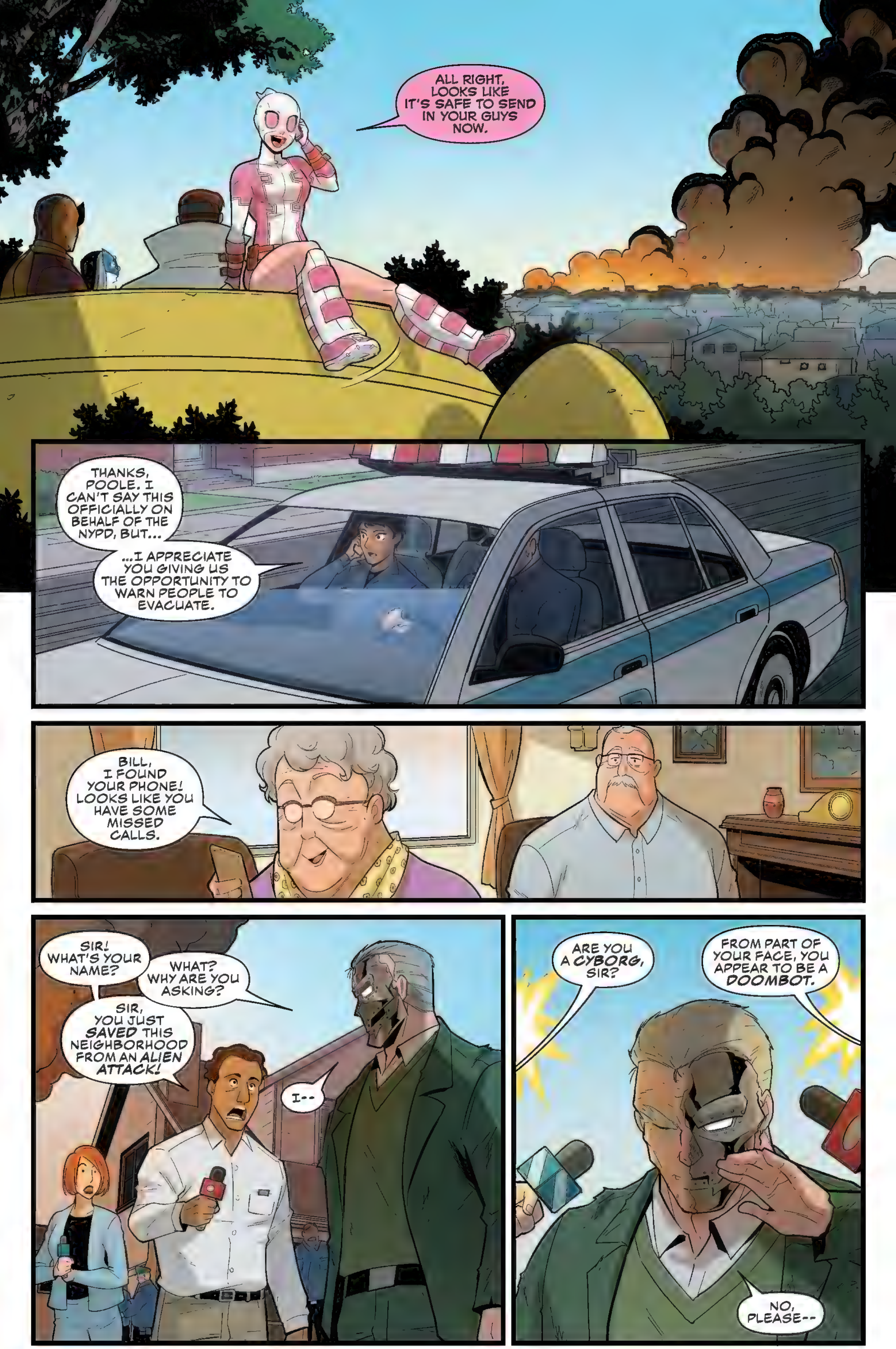

"RELEASE THE POOLE BOYS."
YOU UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES OF WHAT YOU HAVE MADE ME DO.
THERE IS NO PINK FABRIC TO MAKE YOU PANTS FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
YES.
IT WAS WORTH IT!
YOW, LOOK AT THE LEGS ON THOSE FELLAS.
OKAY, WELL, IF SOME GOOD LEGS ARE THE MOST INTERESTING THING WE CAN SEE FROM HERE, MAYBE WE HEAD TO THE BASEMENT 'TIL THIS IS OVER, HM?

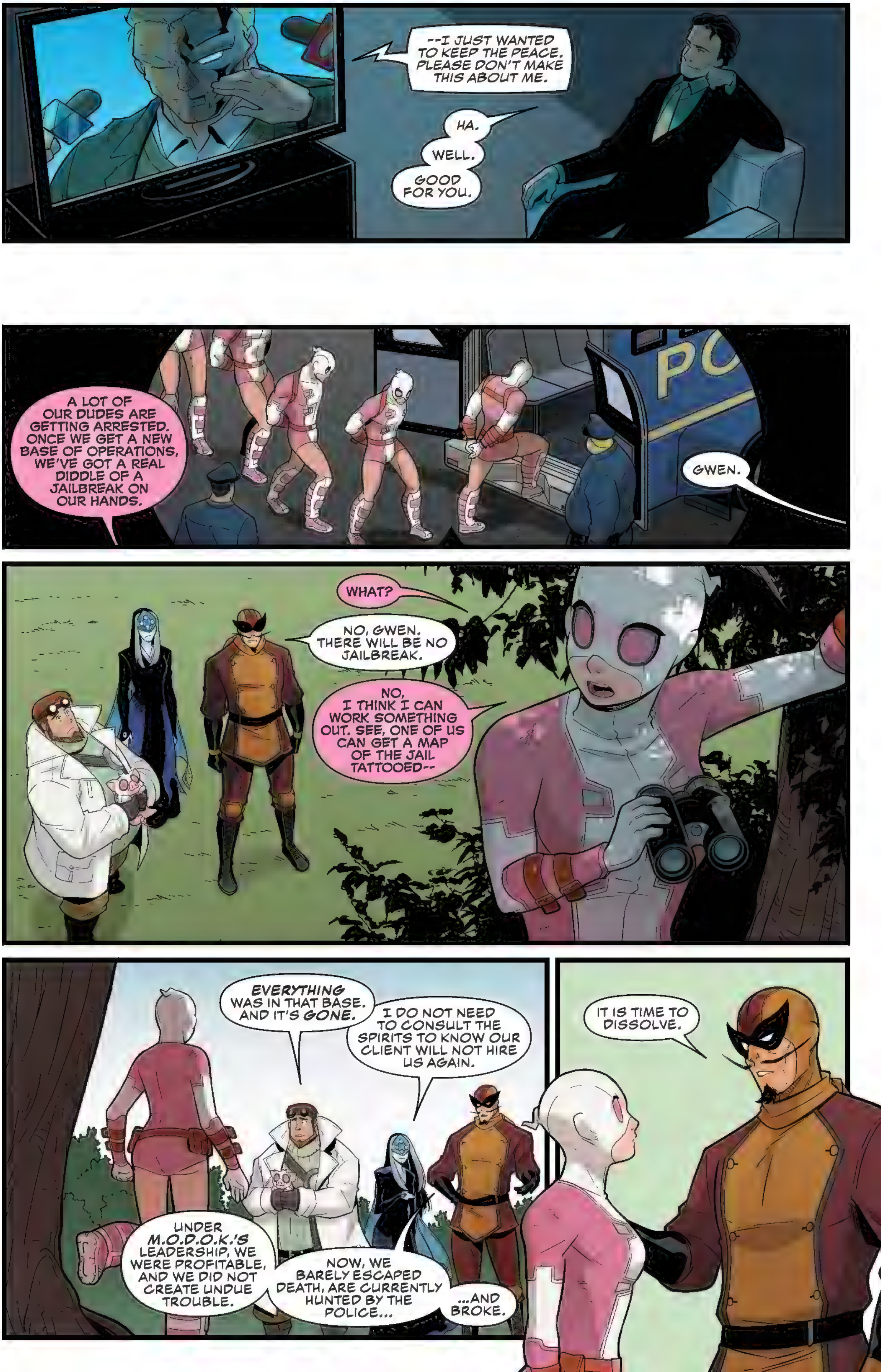

BLAM BLAM BLAM
HA HA! OH, HAVING A PERSONAL ARMY IS NICE! IT'S REAAAAL NICE!
AWESOME.
OKAY, BACK TO FOCUSING ON THE--
WWMMMMMMM
--SHIPS.

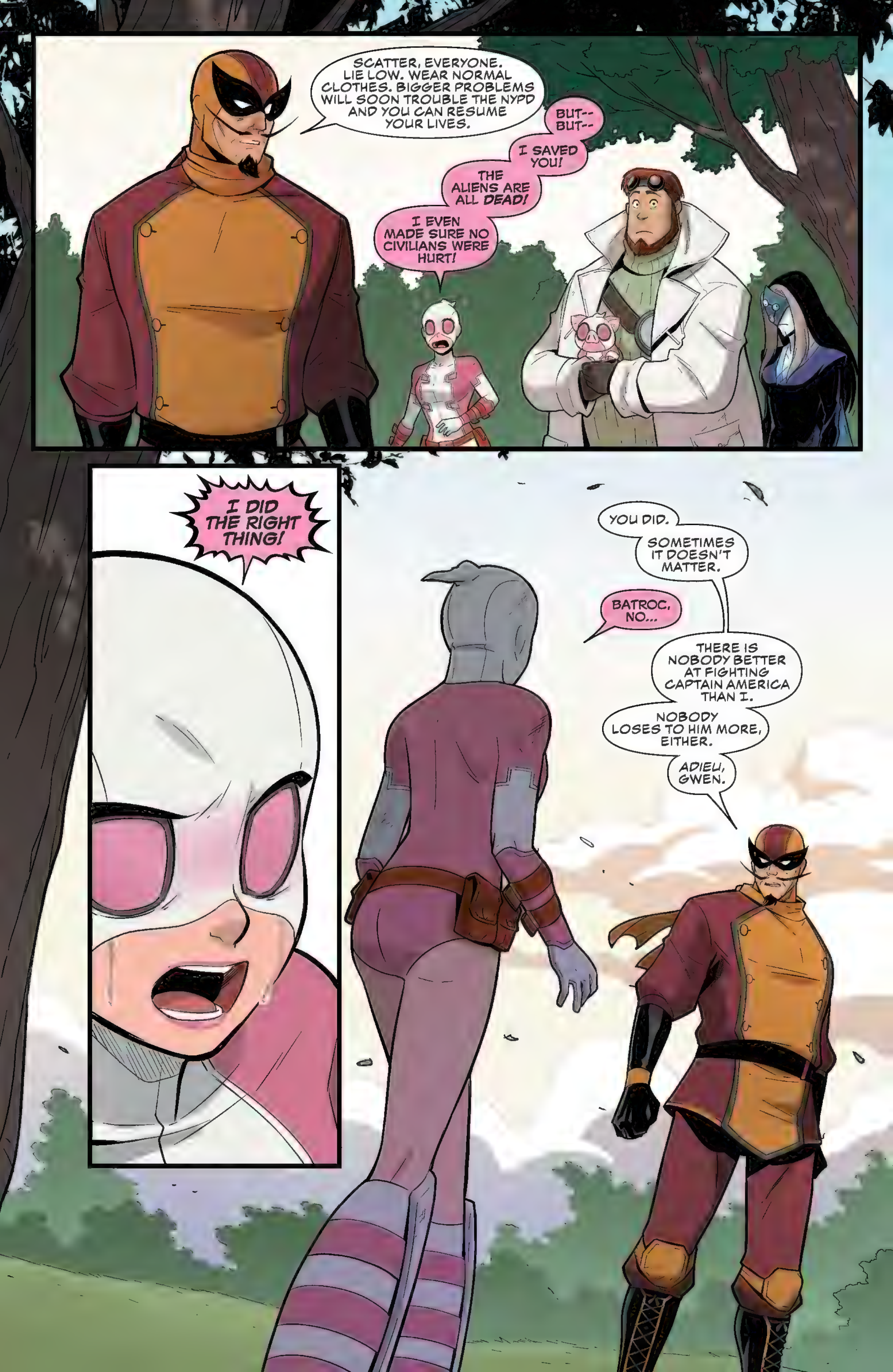

EVERYONE'S CARS ARE GONE...
GWEN...
OUR BASE...
WE'VE LOST BALANCE!
OH, GEEZ, THIS IS GOING TO BE A REAL "THE HARDER THEY FALL" SITUATION, ISN'T IT.
STOP QUIPPING AND ABANDON SHIP, GWEN!
ABANDONING QUIPS!
SORRY.
ABANDONING SHIP.

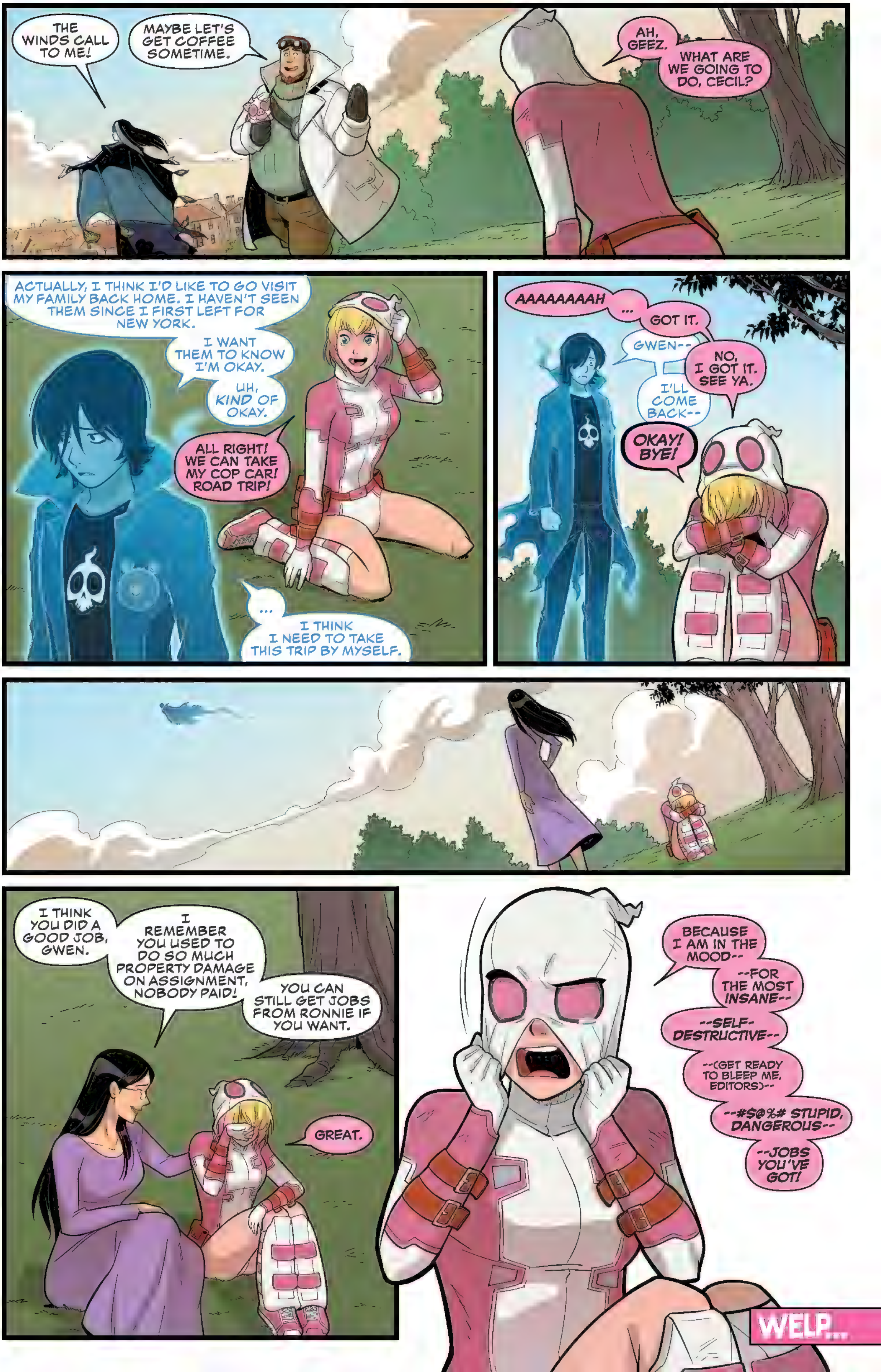

FWOOOSH
CREEAAAAAK
HELLO! GET IN, PLEASE!
GWEN!
NO TIME TO NAME YOUR FAVORITE MERC, MY BABIES! GET IN.


HRGHHH.
I--
--AM--
--SORRY IT CAME TO THIS.
<WE WERE FOOLS TO PURSUE GWEN POOLE.>
<YOU ARE A POET, SIR.>
KABOOM

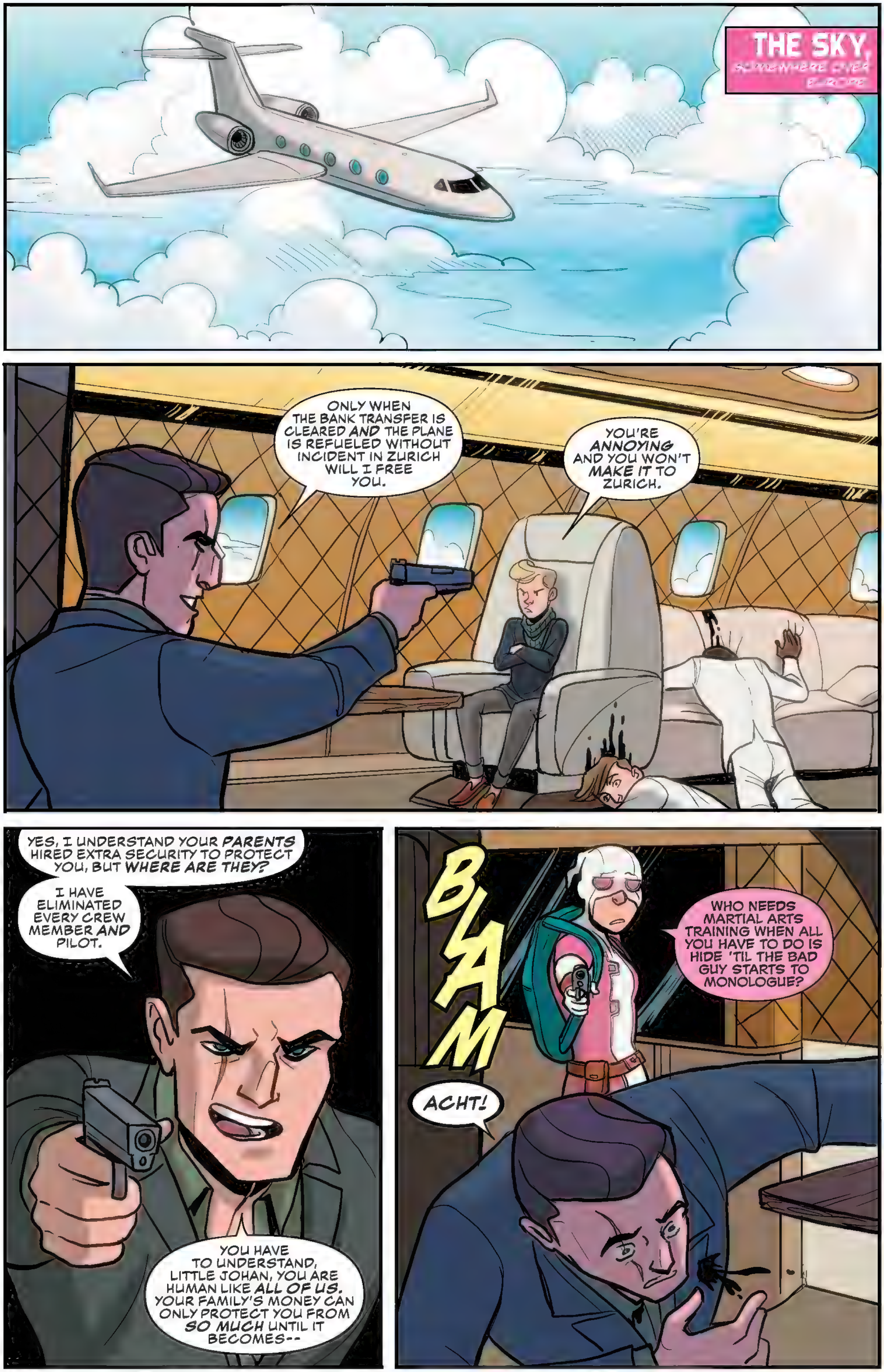

ALL RIGHT, LOOKS LIKE IT'S SAFE TO SEND IN YOUR GUYS NOW.
THANKS, POOLE. I CAN'T SAY THIS OFFICIALLY ON BEHALF OF THE NYPD, BUT...
...I APPRECIATE YOU GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO WARN PEOPLE TO EVACUATE.
BILL, I FOUND YOUR PHONE! LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE SOME MISSED CALLS.
SIR! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU ASKING?
SIR, YOU JUST SAVED THIS NEIGHBORHOOD FROM AN ALIEN ATTACK!
I--
ARE YOU A CYBORG, SIR?
FROM PART OF YOUR FACE, YOU APPEAR TO BE A DOOMBOT.
NO, PLEASE--

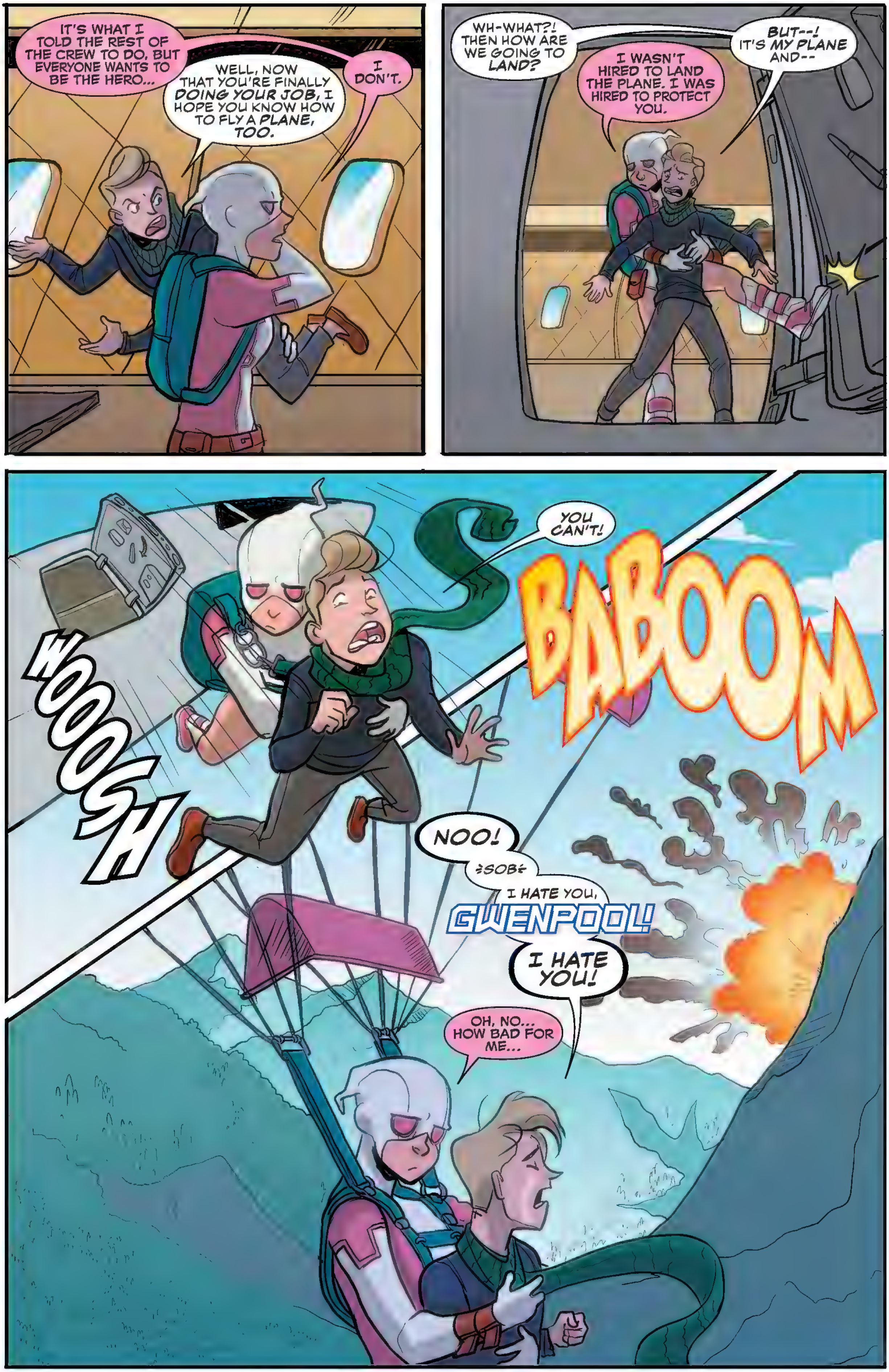

--I JUST WANTED TO KEEP THE PEACE. PLEASE DON'T MAKE THIS ABOUT ME.
HA.
WELL.
GOOD FOR YOU.
A LOT OF OUR DUDES ARE GETTING ARRESTED. ONCE WE GET A NEW BASE OF OPERATIONS, WE'VE GOT A REAL DIDDLE OF A JAILBREAK ON OUR HANDS.
PO
GWEN.
WHAT?
NO, GWEN. THERE WILL BE NO JAILBREAK.
NO, I THINK I CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT. SEE, ONE OF US CAN GET A MAP OF THE JAIL TATTOOED--
EVERYTHING WAS IN THAT BASE. AND IT'S *GONE*.
I DO NOT NEED TO CONSULT THE SPIRITS TO KNOW OUR CLIENT WILL NOT HIRE US AGAIN.
UNDER *M.O.D.O.K.'S* LEADERSHIP, WE WERE PROFITABLE, AND WE DID NOT CREATE UNDUE TROUBLE.
NOW, WE BARELY ESCAPED DEATH, ARE CURRENTLY HUNTED BY THE POLICE...
...AND BROKE.
IT IS TIME TO DISSOLVE.

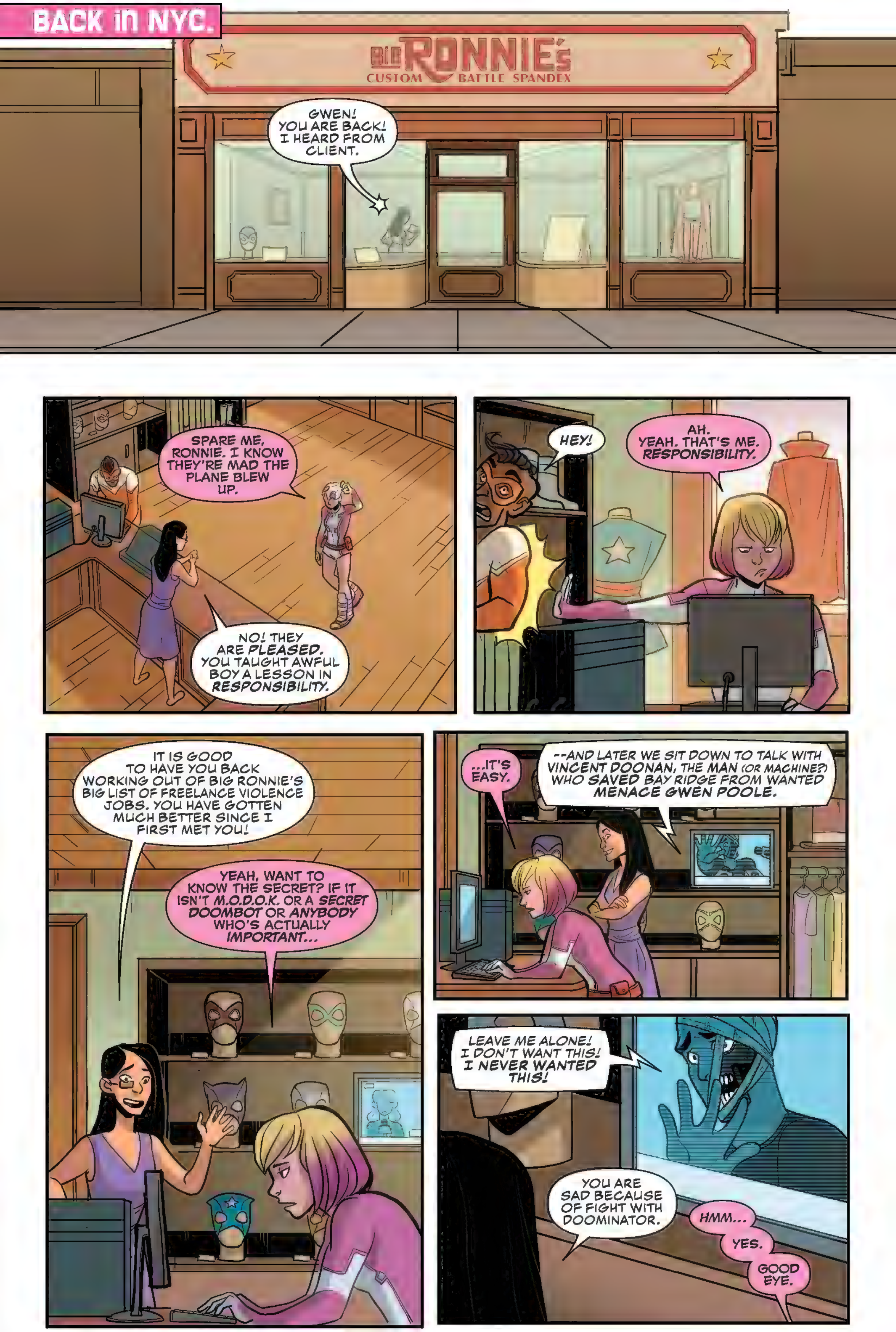

SCATTER, EVERYONE. LIE LOW. WEAR NORMAL CLOTHES. BIGGER PROBLEMS WILL SOON TROUBLE THE NYPD AND YOU CAN RESUME YOUR LIVES.
BUT-- BUT--
I SAVED YOU!
THE ALIENS ARE ALL *DEAD!*
I EVEN MADE SURE NO CIVILIANS WERE HURT!
I DID THE RIGHT THING!
YOU DID.
SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T MATTER.
BATROC, NO...
THERE IS NOBODY BETTER AT FIGHTING CAPTAIN AMERICA THAN I.
NOBODY LOSES TO HIM MORE, EITHER.
ADIEU, GWEN.

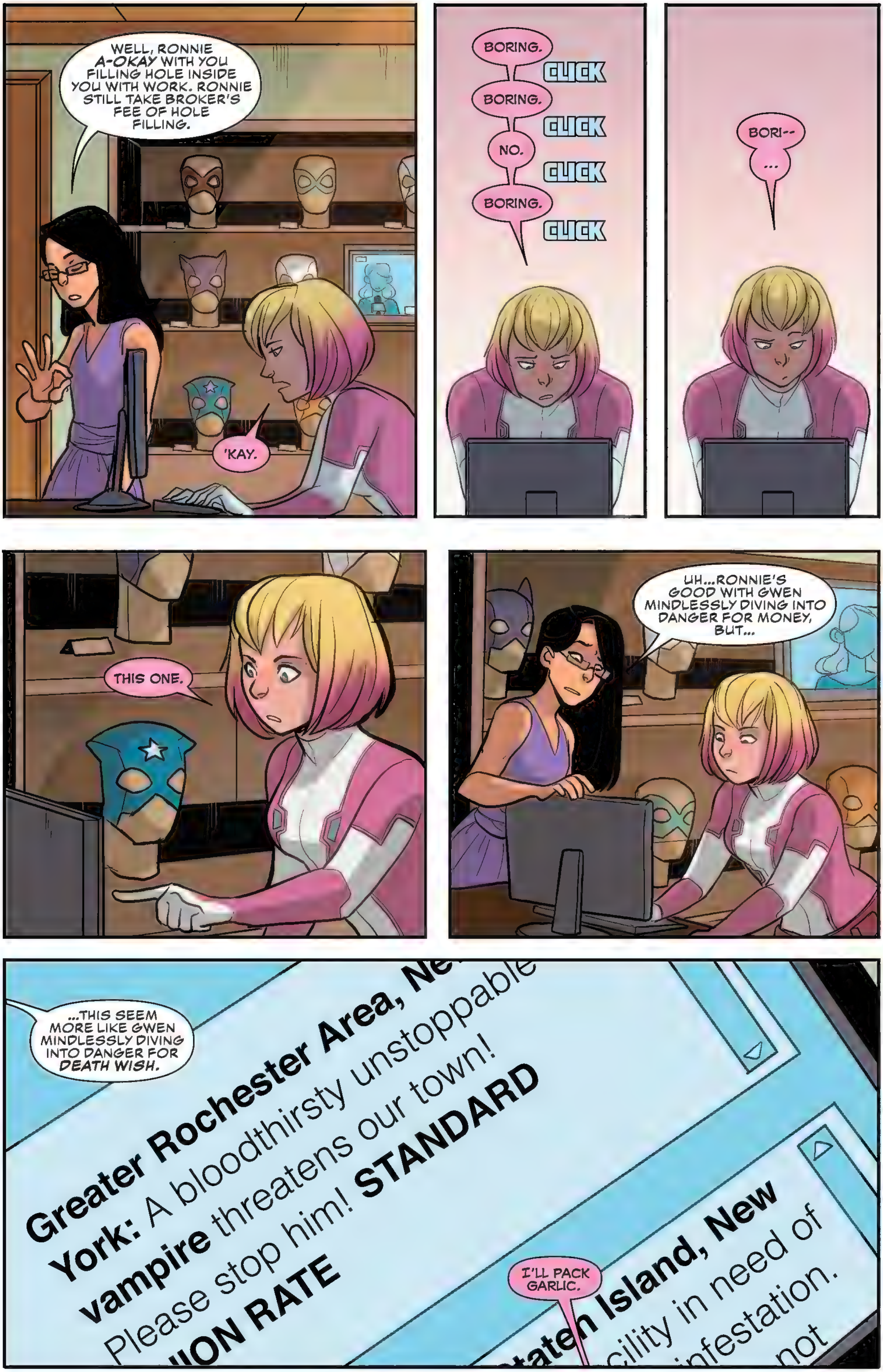

THE WINDS CALL TO ME!
MAYBE LET'S GET COFFEE SOMETIME.
AH, GEEZ.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, CECIL?
ACTUALLY, I THINK I'D LIKE TO GO VISIT MY FAMILY BACK HOME. I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE I FIRST LEFT FOR NEW YORK.
I WANT THEM TO KNOW I'M OKAY.
UH, KIND OF OKAY.
ALL RIGHT! WE CAN TAKE MY COP CAR! ROAD TRIP!
...
I THINK I NEED TO TAKE THIS TRIP BY MYSELF.
AAAAAAAAH
...
GOT IT.
GWEN--
NO, I GOT IT. SEE YA.
I'LL COME BACK--
OKAY! BYE!
I THINK YOU DID A GOOD JOB, GWEN.
I REMEMBER YOU USED TO DO SO MUCH PROPERTY DAMAGE ON ASSIGNMENT, NOBODY PAID!
YOU CAN STILL GET JOBS FROM RONNIE IF YOU WANT.
GREAT.
BECAUSE I AM IN THE MOOD--
--FOR THE MOST INSANE--
--SELF-DESTRUCTIVE--
--(GET READY TO BLEEP ME, EDITORS)--
--#$@%# STUPID, DANGEROUS--
--JOBS YOU'VE GOT!
WELP...

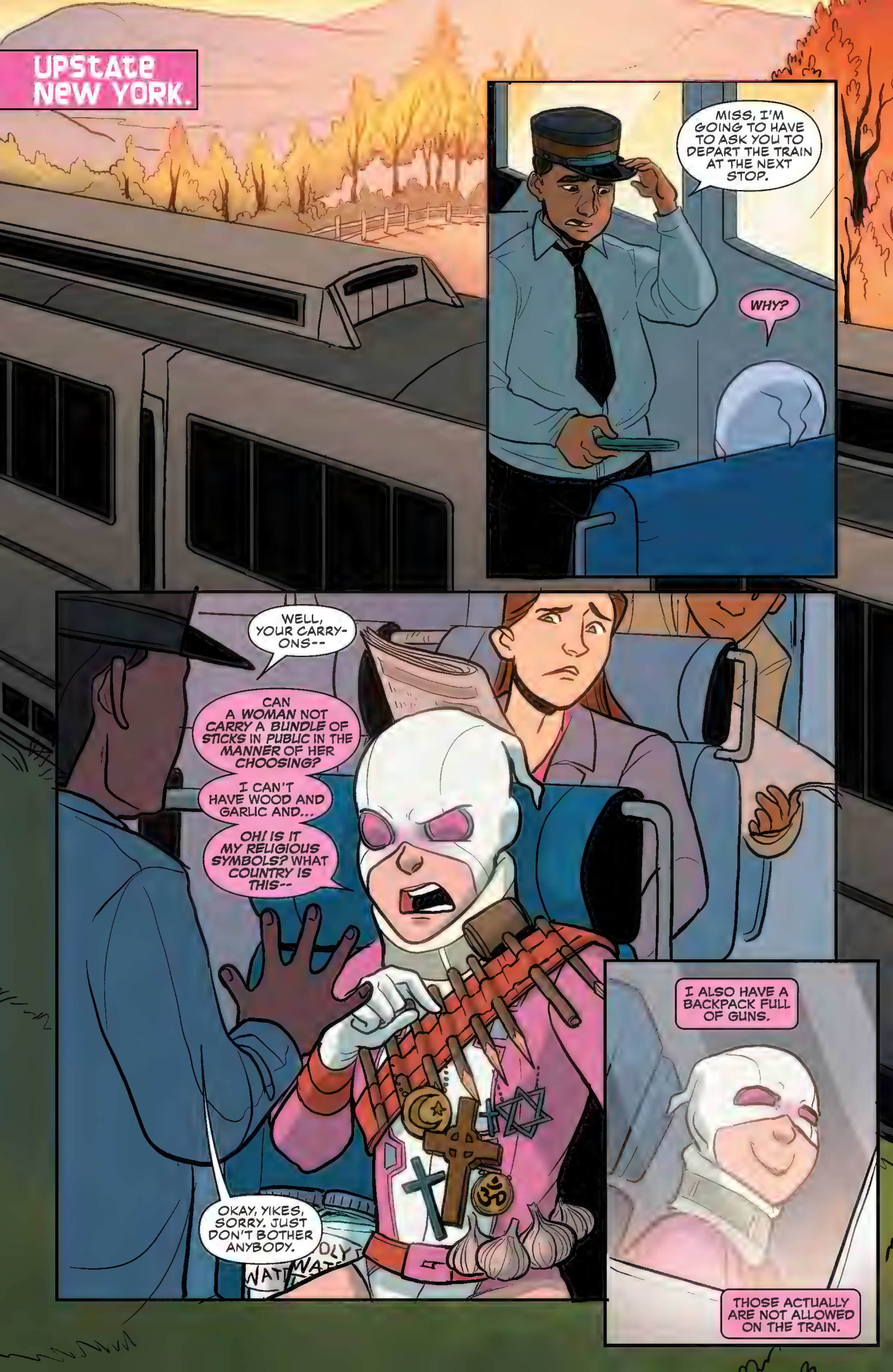
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #11

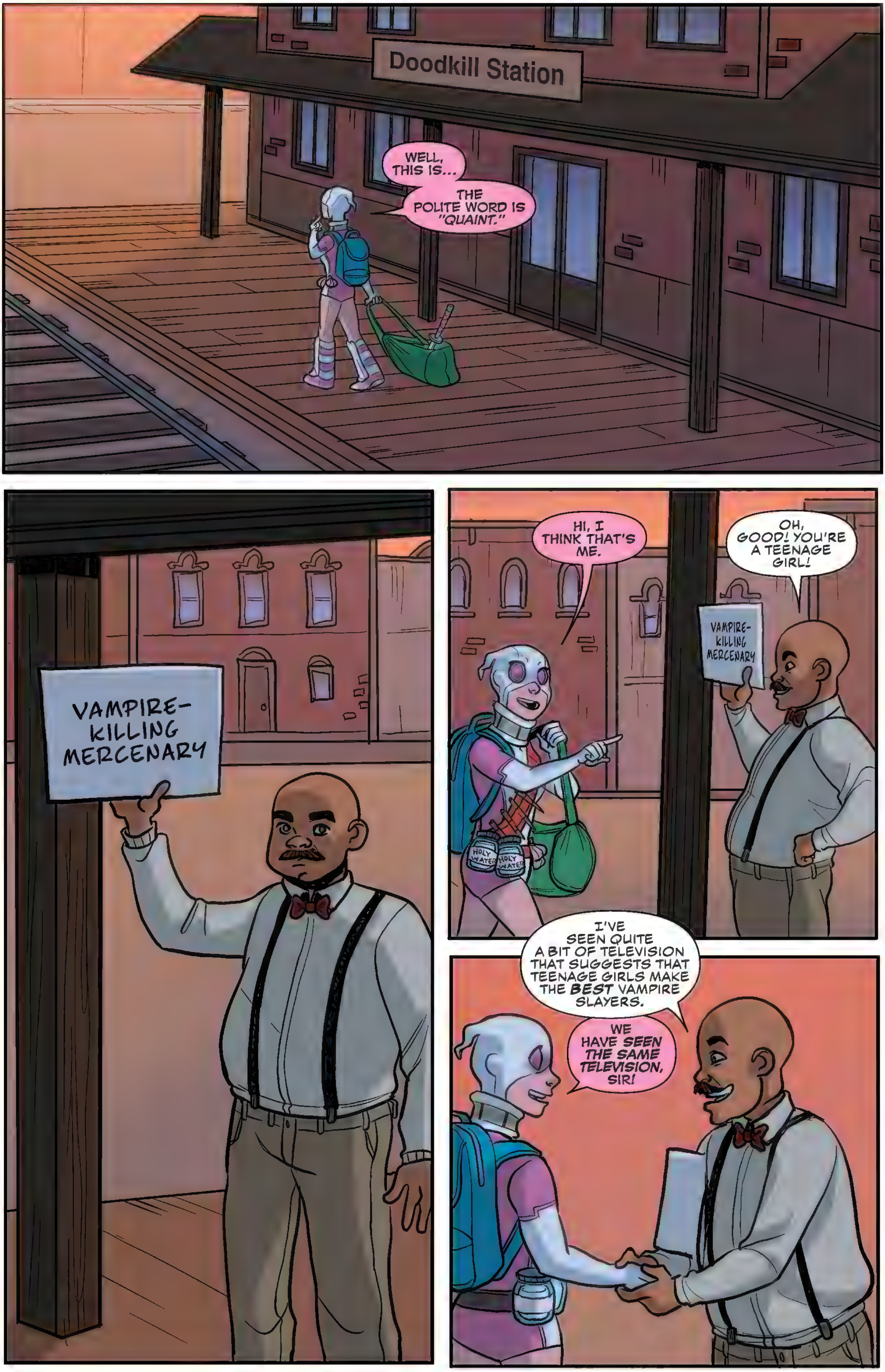

THE SKY, SOMEWHERE OVER EUROPE
ONLY WHEN THE BANK TRANSFER IS CLEARED *AND* THE PLANE IS REFUELED WITHOUT INCIDENT IN ZURICH WILL I FREE YOU.
YOU'RE *ANNOYING* AND YOU WON'T *MAKE IT* TO ZURICH.
YES, I UNDERSTAND YOUR *PARENTS* HIRED EXTRA SECURITY TO PROTECT YOU, BUT *WHERE ARE THEY?*
I HAVE ELIMINATED EVERY CREW MEMBER *AND* PILOT.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, LITTLE JOHAN, YOU ARE HUMAN LIKE *ALL OF US.* YOUR FAMILY'S MONEY CAN ONLY PROTECT YOU FROM *SO MUCH* UNTIL IT BECOMES--
BLAM
WHO NEEDS MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING WHEN ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS HIDE 'TIL THE BAD GUY STARTS TO MONOLOGUE?
ACHT!

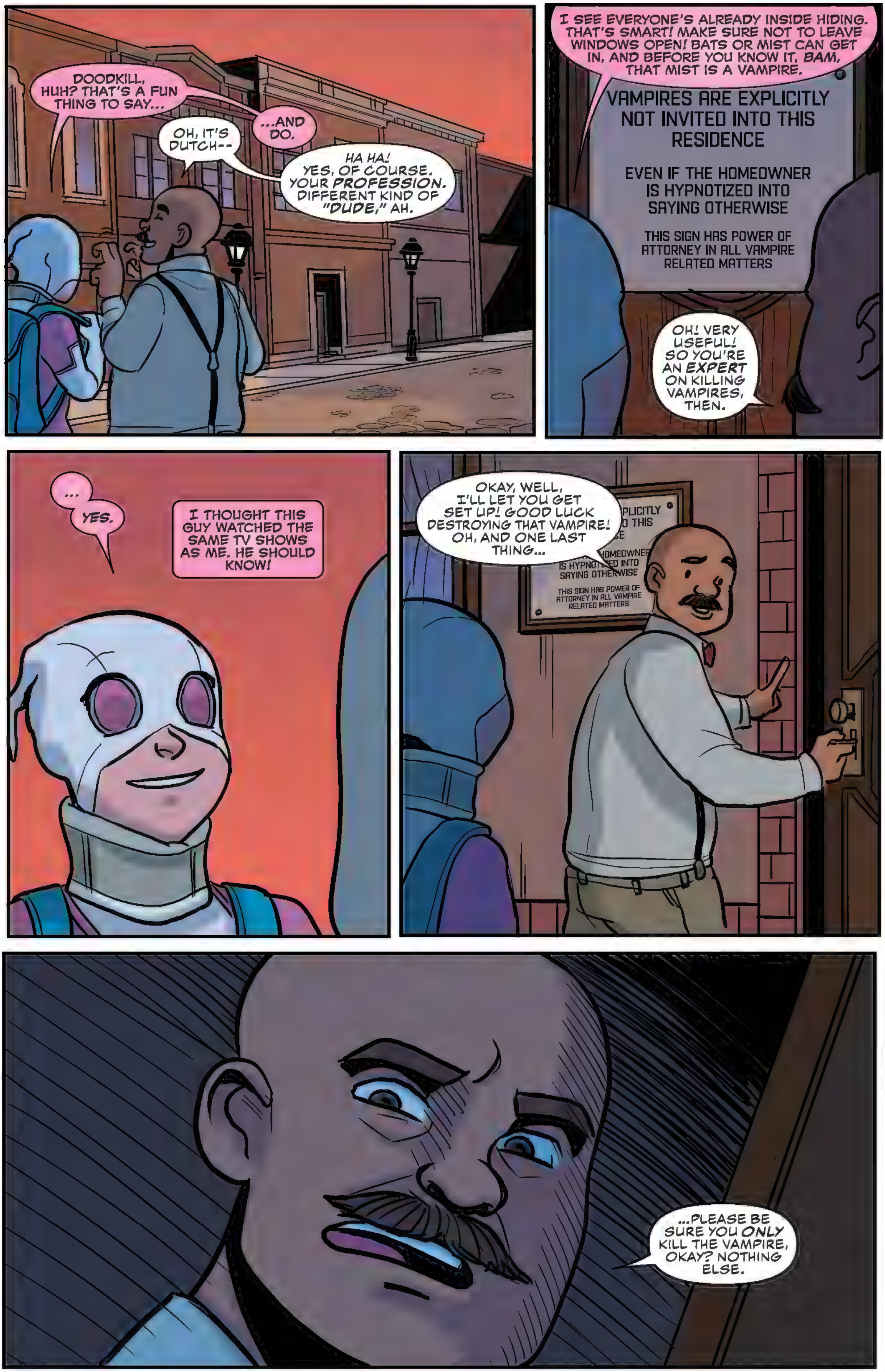

IT'S WHAT I TOLD THE REST OF THE CREW TO DO, BUT EVERYONE WANTS TO BE THE HERO...
WELL, NOW THAT YOU'RE FINALLY *DOING YOUR JOB*, I HOPE YOU KNOW HOW TO FLY A *PLANE*, TOO.
I DON'T.
WH-WHAT?! THEN HOW ARE WE GOING TO *LAND?*
I WASN'T HIRED TO LAND THE PLANE. I WAS HIRED TO PROTECT YOU.
BUT--! IT'S *MY PLANE* AND--
YOU CAN'T!
BABOOM
WOOOSH
NOO!
⸗SOB⸗
I HATE YOU, GWENPOOL!
I HATE YOU!
OH, NO... HOW BAD FOR ME...

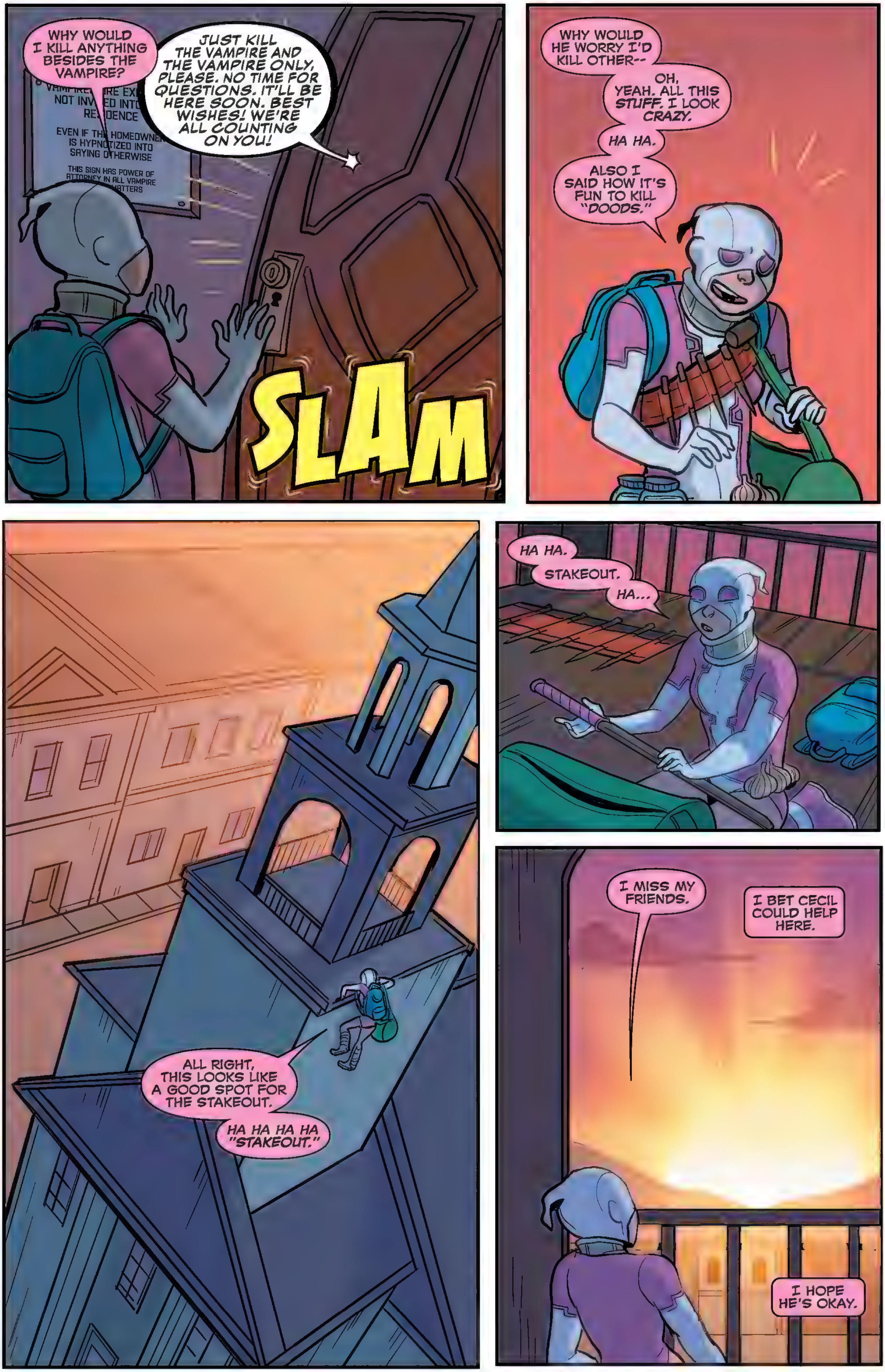

BACK in NYC.
BIG RONNIE'S
CUSTOM BATTLE SPANDEX
GWEN! YOU ARE BACK! I HEARD FROM CLIENT.
SPARE ME, RONNIE. I KNOW THEY'RE MAD THE PLANE BLEW UP.
NO! THEY ARE *PLEASED.* YOU TAUGHT AWFUL BOY A LESSON IN *RESPONSIBILITY.*
HEY!
AH. YEAH. THAT'S ME. *RESPONSIBILITY.*
IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK WORKING OUT OF BIG RONNIE'S BIG LIST OF FREELANCE VIOLENCE JOBS. YOU HAVE GOTTEN MUCH BETTER SINCE I FIRST MET YOU!
YEAH, WANT TO KNOW THE SECRET? IF IT ISN'T *M.O.D.O.K.* OR A *SECRET DOOMBOT* OR *ANYBODY* WHO'S ACTUALLY *IMPORTANT...*
...IT'S EASY.
--AND LATER WE SIT DOWN TO TALK WITH *VINCENT DOONAN,* THE MAN (OR MACHINE?) WHO *SAVED* BAY RIDGE FROM WANTED *MENACE GWEN POOLE.*
LEAVE ME ALONE! I DON'T WANT THIS! I NEVER WANTED THIS!
YOU ARE SAD BECAUSE OF FIGHT WITH DOOMINATOR.
HMM...
YES.
GOOD EYE.

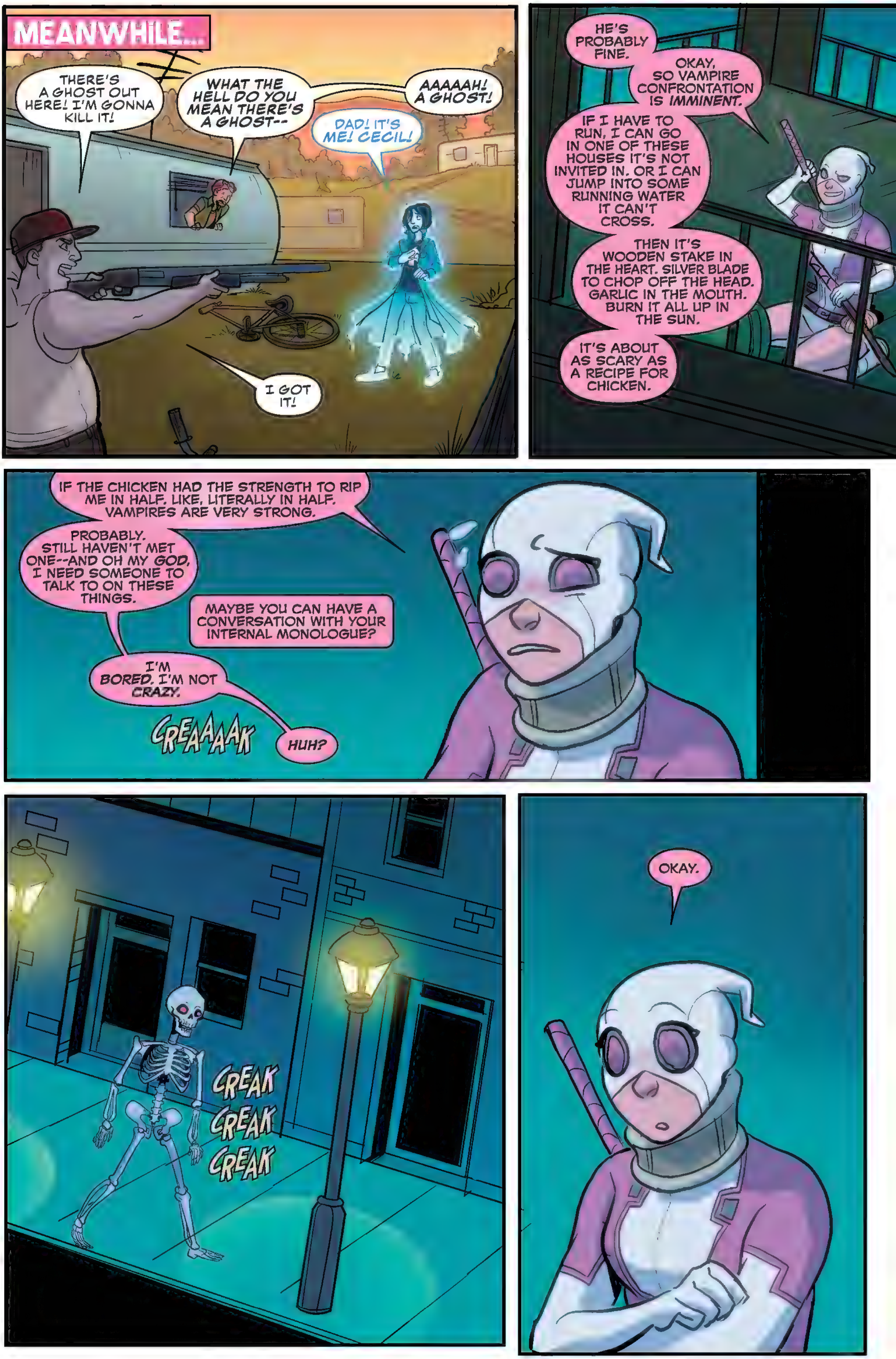

WELL, RONNIE *A-OKAY* WITH YOU FILLING HOLE INSIDE YOU WITH WORK. RONNIE STILL TAKE BROKER'S FEE OF HOLE FILLING.
'KAY.
BORING.
CLICK
BORING.
CLICK
NO.
CLICK
BORING.
CLICK
BORI--
...
THIS ONE.
UH...RONNIE'S GOOD WITH GWEN MINDLESSLY DIVING INTO DANGER FOR MONEY, BUT...
...THIS SEEM MORE LIKE GWEN MINDLESSLY DIVING INTO DANGER FOR *DEATH WISH.*
Greater Rochester Area, Ne
York: A bloodthirsty unstoppable
vampire threatens our town!
Please stop him! STANDARD
ION RATE
I'LL PACK GARLIC.
taten Island, New
cility in need of
infestation.
not

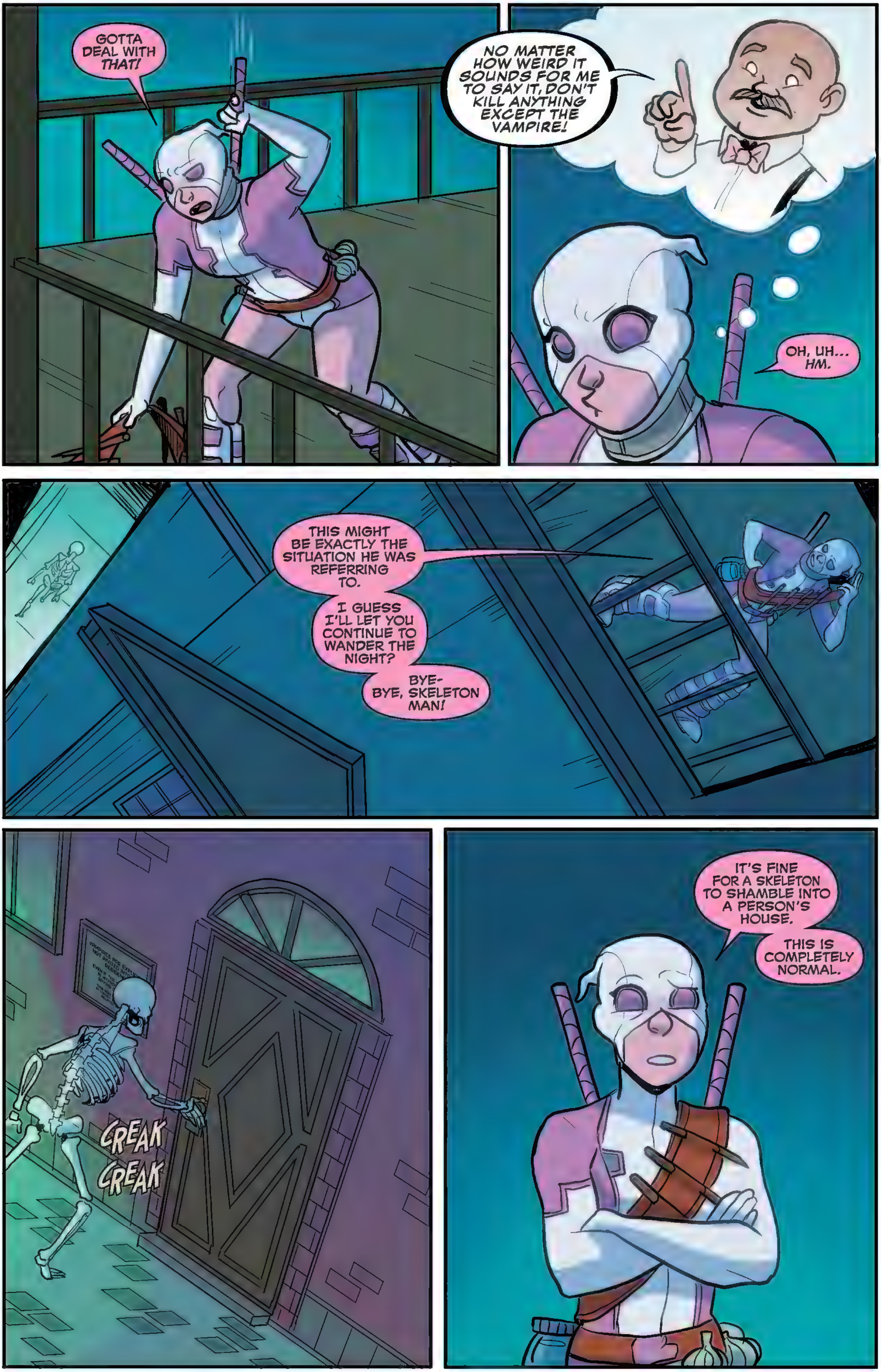

UPSTATE NEW YORK.
MISS, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO ASK YOU TO DEPART THE TRAIN AT THE NEXT STOP.
WHY?
WELL, YOUR CARRY-ONS--
CAN A WOMAN NOT CARRY A BUNDLE OF STICKS IN PUBLIC IN THE MANNER OF HER CHOOSING?
I CAN'T HAVE WOOD AND GARLIC AND...
OH! IS IT MY RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS? WHAT COUNTRY IS THIS--
OKAY, YIKES, SORRY. JUST DON'T BOTHER ANYBODY.
HOLY WATER
I ALSO HAVE A BACKPACK FULL OF GUNS.
THOSE ACTUALLY ARE NOT ALLOWED ON THE TRAIN.

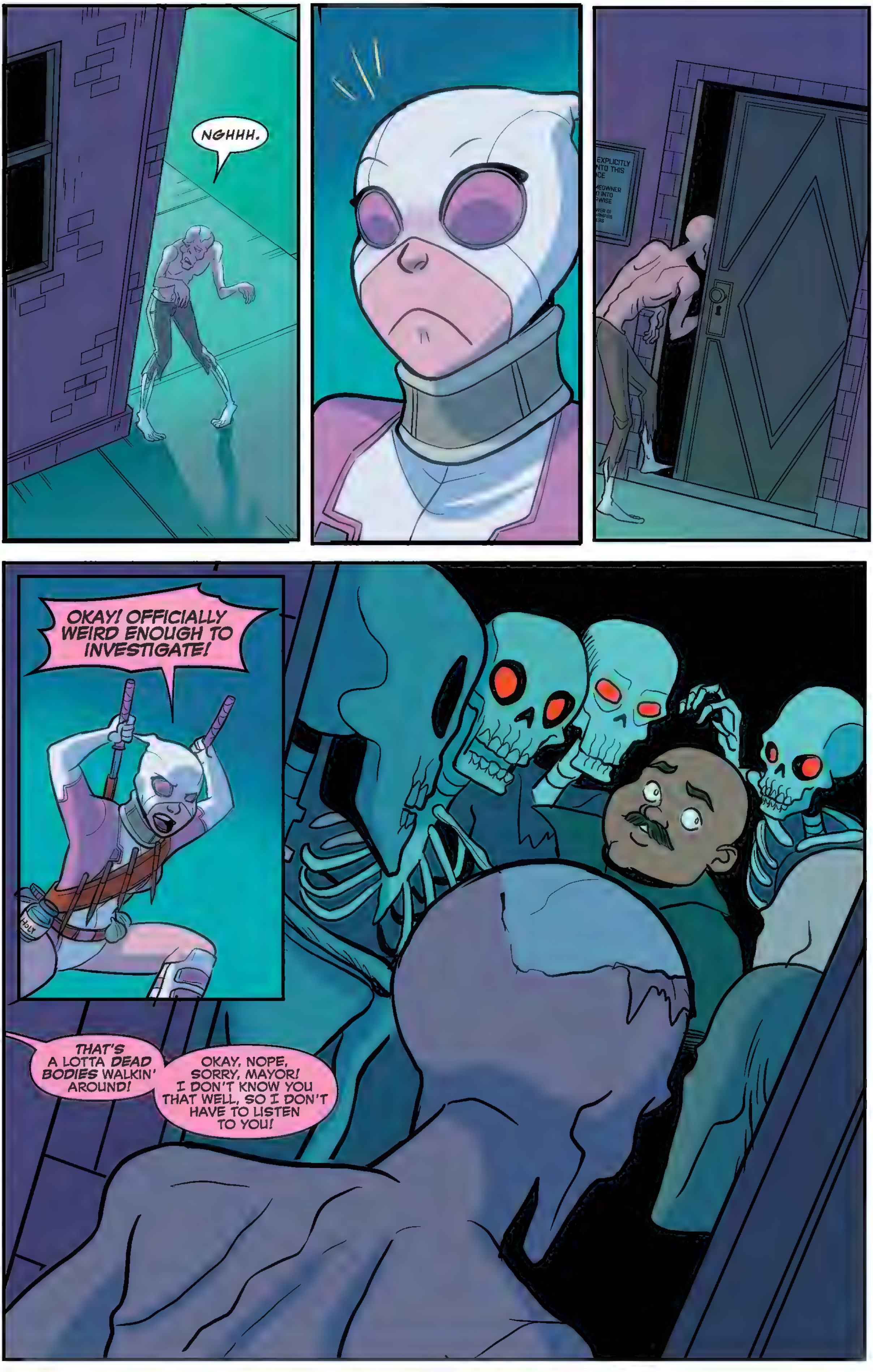

Doodkill Station
WELL, THIS IS...
THE POLITE WORD IS "QUAINT."
VAMPIRE-KILLING MERCENARY
HI, I THINK THAT'S ME.
OH, GOOD! YOU'RE A TEENAGE GIRL!
VAMPIRE-KILLING MERCENARY
HOLY WATER
HOLY WATER
I'VE SEEN QUITE A BIT OF TELEVISION THAT SUGGESTS THAT TEENAGE GIRLS MAKE THE **BEST** VAMPIRE SLAYERS.
WE *HAVE SEEN THE SAME TELEVISION,* SIR!

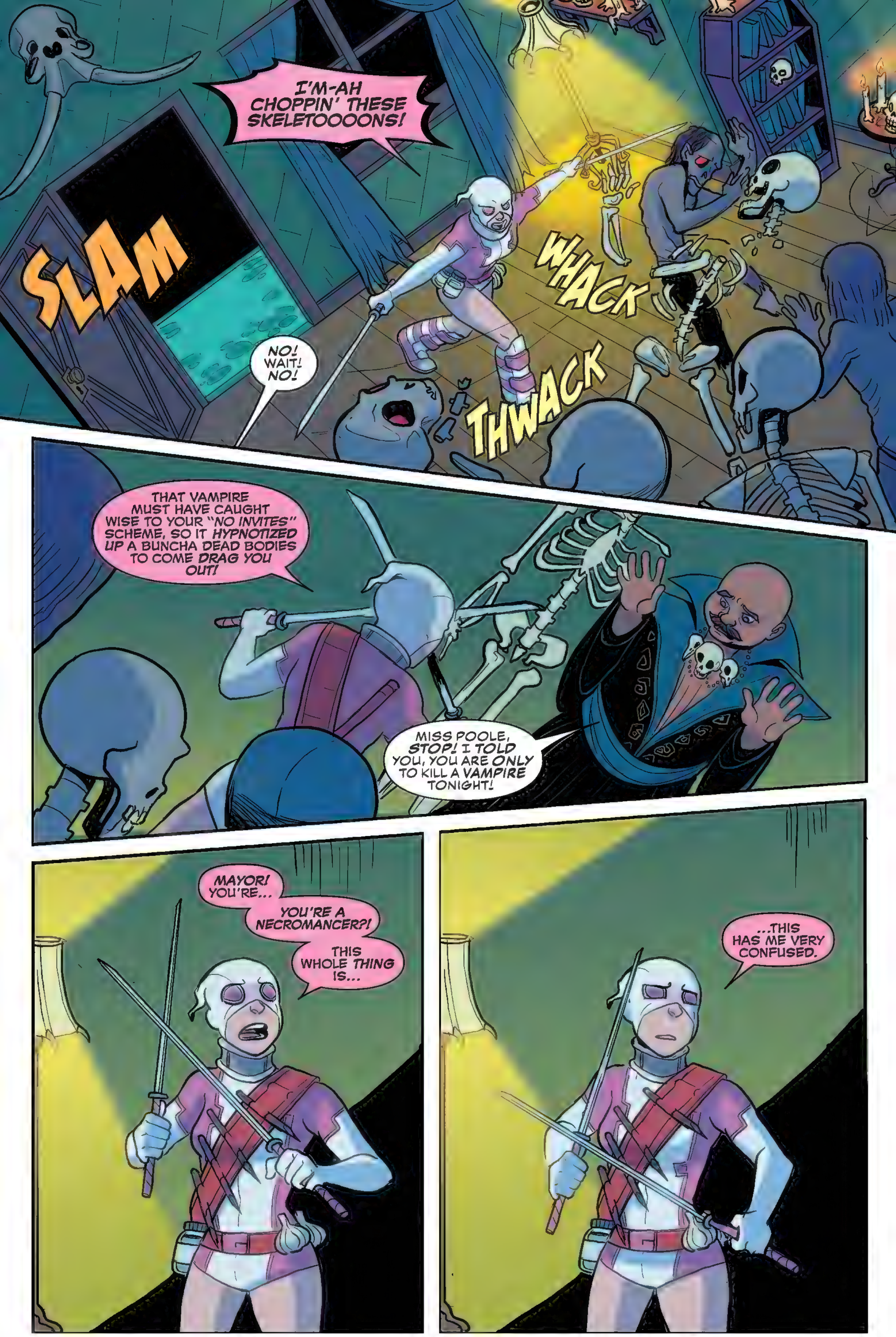

DOODKILL, HUH? THAT'S A FUN THING TO SAY...
OH, IT'S DUTCH--
...AND DO.
HA HA! YES, OF COURSE. YOUR *PROFESSION.* DIFFERENT KIND OF *"DUDE,"* AH.
I SEE EVERYONE'S ALREADY INSIDE HIDING. THAT'S SMART! MAKE SURE NOT TO LEAVE WINDOWS OPEN! BATS OR MIST CAN GET IN, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, *BAM,* THAT MIST IS A VAMPIRE.
VAMPIRES ARE EXPLICITLY NOT INVITED INTO THIS RESIDENCE
EVEN IF THE HOMEOWNER IS HYPNOTIZED INTO SAYING OTHERWISE
THIS SIGN HAS POWER OF ATTORNEY IN ALL VAMPIRE RELATED MATTERS
OH! VERY USEFUL! SO YOU'RE AN *EXPERT* ON KILLING VAMPIRES, THEN.
... YES.
I THOUGHT THIS GUY WATCHED THE SAME TV SHOWS AS ME. HE SHOULD KNOW!
OKAY, WELL, I'LL LET YOU GET SET UP! GOOD LUCK DESTROYING THAT VAMPIRE! OH, AND ONE LAST THING...
...PLEASE BE SURE YOU *ONLY* KILL THE VAMPIRE, OKAY? NOTHING ELSE.

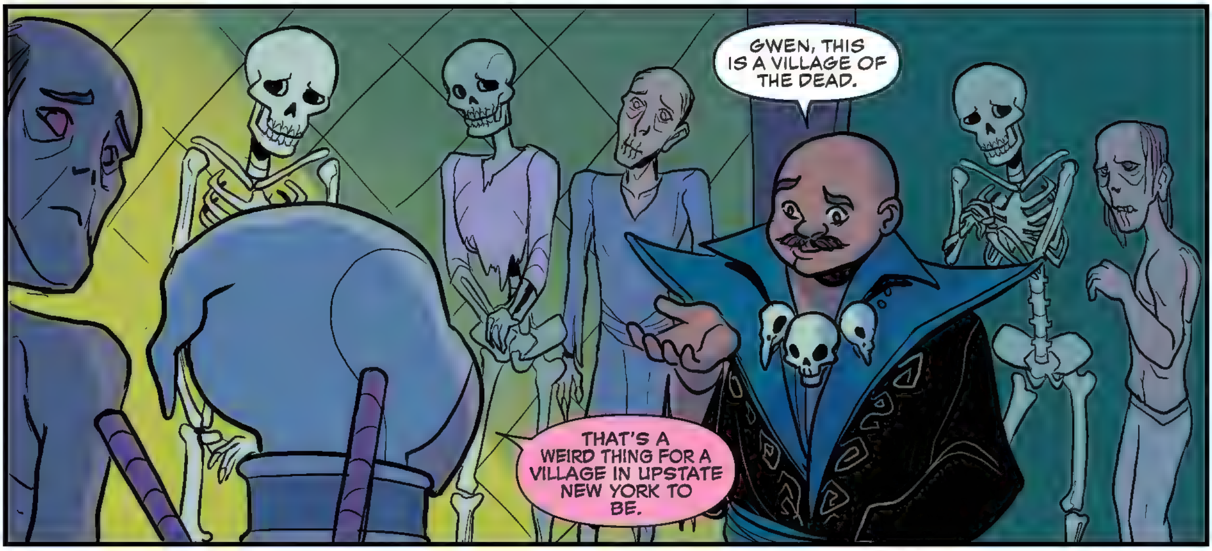

WHY WOULD I KILL ANYTHING BESIDES THE VAMPIRE?
VAMPIRES ARE EX NOT INVITED INTO RESIDENCE
EVEN IF THE HOMEOWNER IS HYPNOTIZED INTO SAYING OTHERWISE
THIS SIGN HAS POWER OF ATTORNEY IN ALL VAMPIRE MATTERS
JUST KILL THE VAMPIRE AND THE VAMPIRE ONLY, PLEASE. NO TIME FOR QUESTIONS. IT'LL BE HERE SOON. BEST WISHES! WE'RE ALL COUNTING ON YOU!
SLAM
WHY WOULD HE WORRY I'D KILL OTHER--
OH, YEAH. ALL THIS STUFF. I LOOK CRAZY.
HA HA.
ALSO I SAID HOW IT'S FUN TO KILL "DOODS."
ALL RIGHT, THIS LOOKS LIKE A GOOD SPOT FOR THE STAKEOUT.
HA HA HA HA "STAKEOUT."
HA HA.
STAKEOUT.
HA...
I MISS MY FRIENDS.
I BET CECIL COULD HELP HERE.
I HOPE HE'S OKAY.

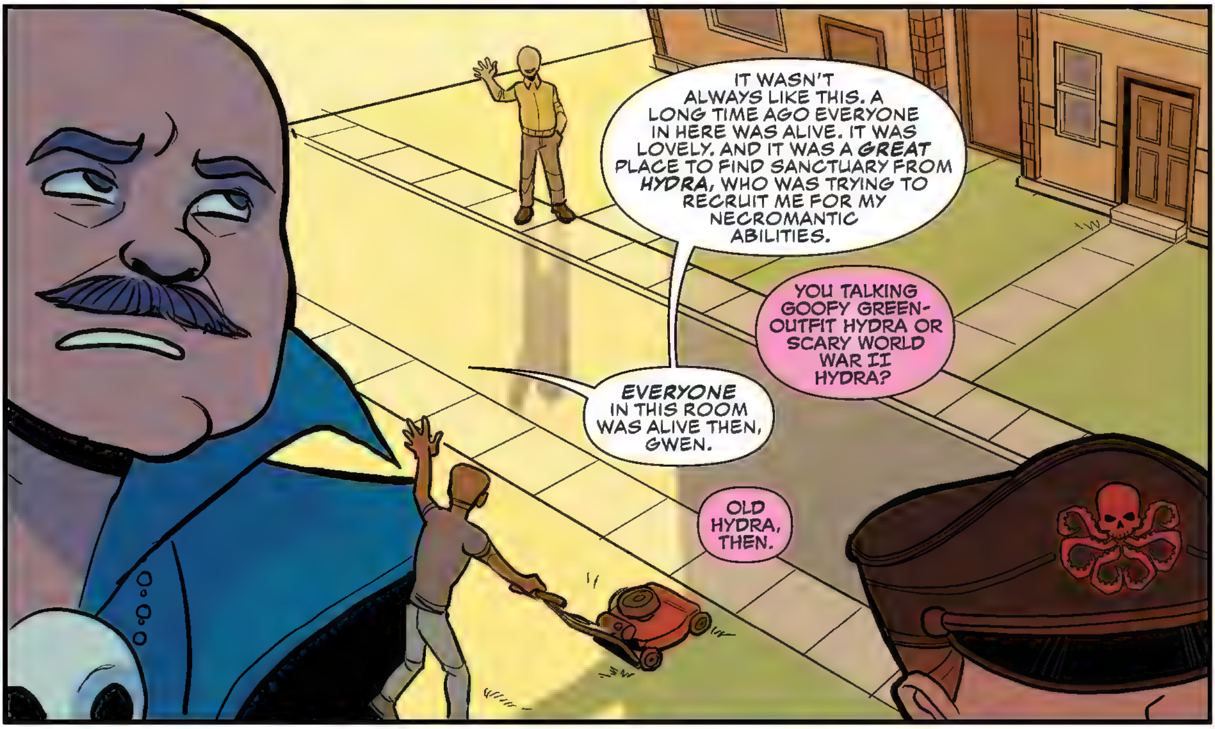

MEANWHILE...
THERE'S A GHOST OUT HERE! I'M GONNA KILL IT!
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN THERE'S A GHOST--
AAAAAH! A GHOST!
DAD! IT'S ME! CECIL!
I GOT IT!
HE'S PROBABLY FINE.
OKAY, SO VAMPIRE CONFRONTATION IS *IMMINENT.*
IF I HAVE TO RUN, I CAN GO IN ONE OF THESE HOUSES IT'S NOT INVITED IN. OR I CAN JUMP INTO SOME RUNNING WATER IT CAN'T CROSS.
THEN IT'S WOODEN STAKE IN THE HEART. SILVER BLADE TO CHOP OFF THE HEAD. GARLIC IN THE MOUTH. BURN IT ALL UP IN THE SUN.
IT'S ABOUT AS SCARY AS A RECIPE FOR CHICKEN.
IF THE CHICKEN HAD THE STRENGTH TO RIP ME IN HALF. LIKE, LITERALLY IN HALF. VAMPIRES ARE VERY STRONG.
PROBABLY. STILL HAVEN'T MET ONE--AND OH MY *GOD,* I NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO ON THESE THINGS.
MAYBE YOU CAN HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR INTERNAL MONOLOGUE?
I'M *BORED.* I'M NOT *CRAZY.*
CREAAAAK
HUH?
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
OKAY.

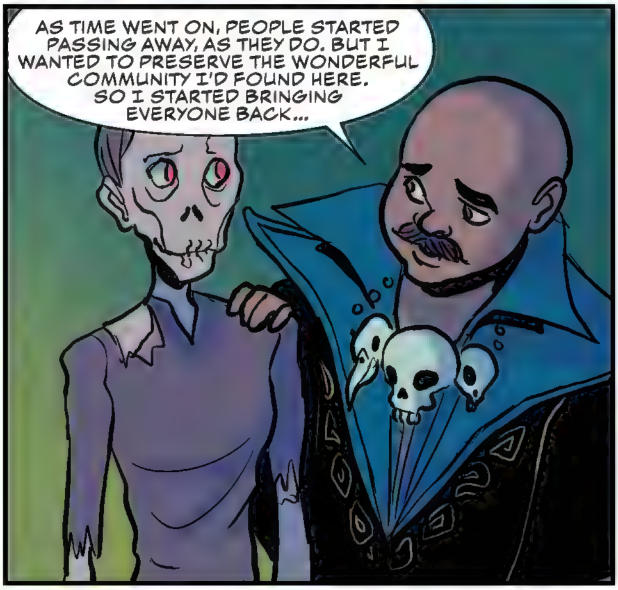

GOTTA DEAL WITH THAT!
NO MATTER HOW WEIRD IT SOUNDS FOR ME TO SAY IT, DON'T KILL ANYTHING EXCEPT THE VAMPIRE!
OH, UH... HM.
THIS MIGHT BE EXACTLY THE SITUATION HE WAS REFERRING TO.
I GUESS I'LL LET YOU CONTINUE TO WANDER THE NIGHT?
BYE-BYE, SKELETON MAN!
CREAK
CREAK
IT'S FINE FOR A SKELETON TO SHAMBLE INTO A PERSON'S HOUSE.
THIS IS COMPLETELY NORMAL.

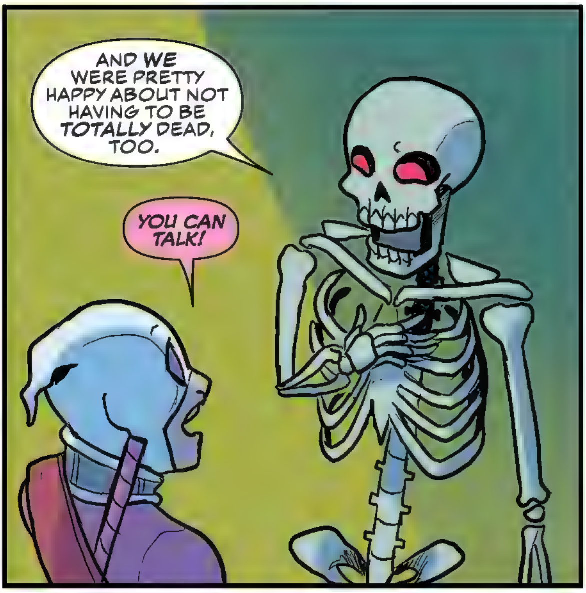

NGHHH.
EXPLICITLY
NTO THIS
ICE
MEOWNER
D INTO
RWISE
WER OF
VAMPIRE
ERS
OKAY! OFFICIALLY WEIRD ENOUGH TO INVESTIGATE!
HOLY
THAT'S A LOTTA *DEAD BODIES* WALKIN' AROUND!
OKAY, NOPE, SORRY, MAYOR! I DON'T KNOW YOU THAT WELL, SO I DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO YOU!

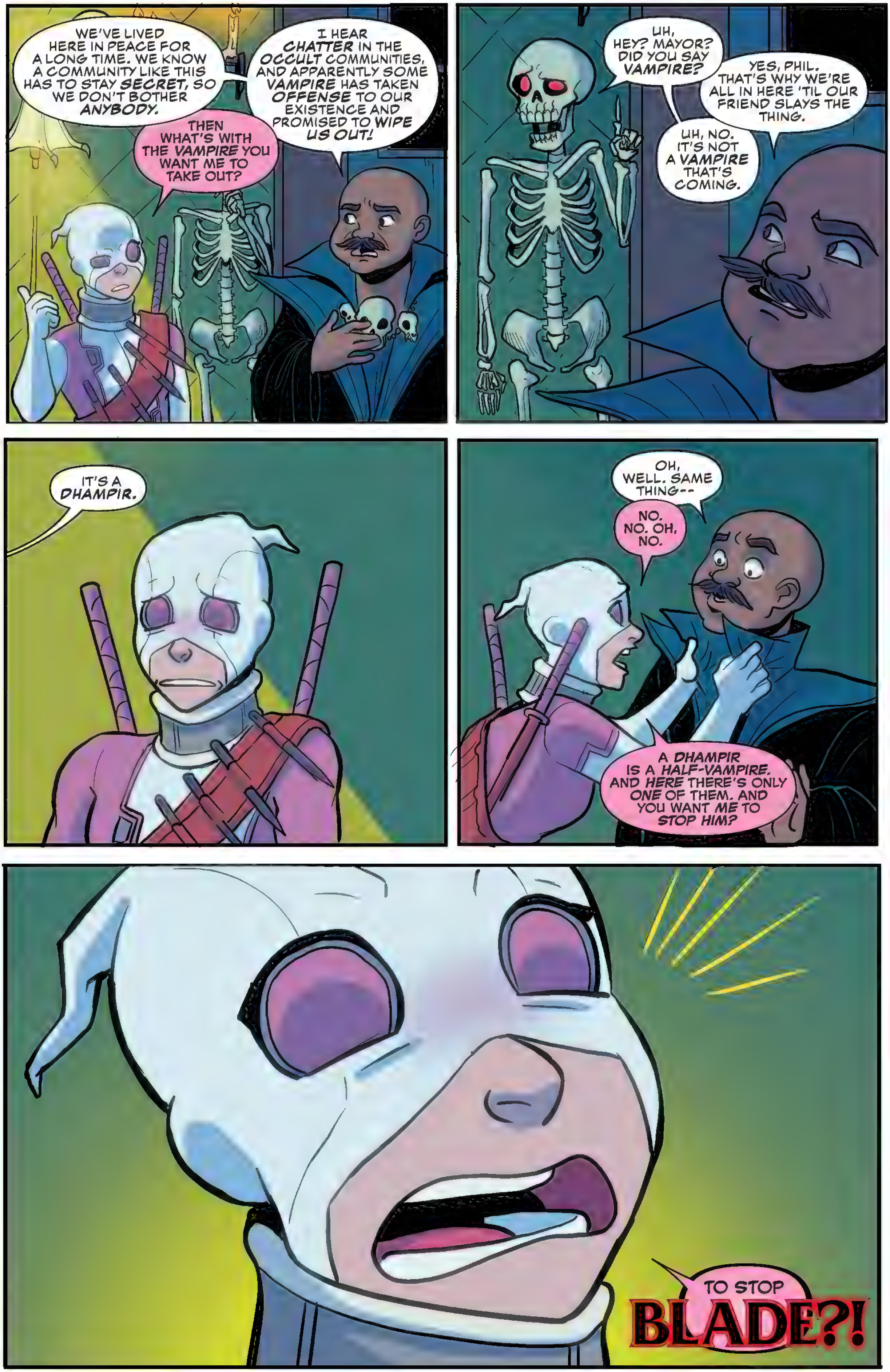

I'M-AH CHOPPIN' THESE SKELETOOOONS!
SLAM
WHACK
THWACK
NO! WAIT! NO!
THAT VAMPIRE MUST HAVE CAUGHT WISE TO YOUR "NO INVITES" SCHEME, SO IT HYPNOTIZED UP A BUNCHA DEAD BODIES TO COME DRAG YOU OUT!
MISS POOLE, STOP! I TOLD YOU, YOU ARE ONLY TO KILL A VAMPIRE TONIGHT!
MAYOR! YOU'RE...
YOU'RE A NECROMANCER?!
THIS WHOLE THING IS...
...THIS HAS ME VERY CONFUSED.

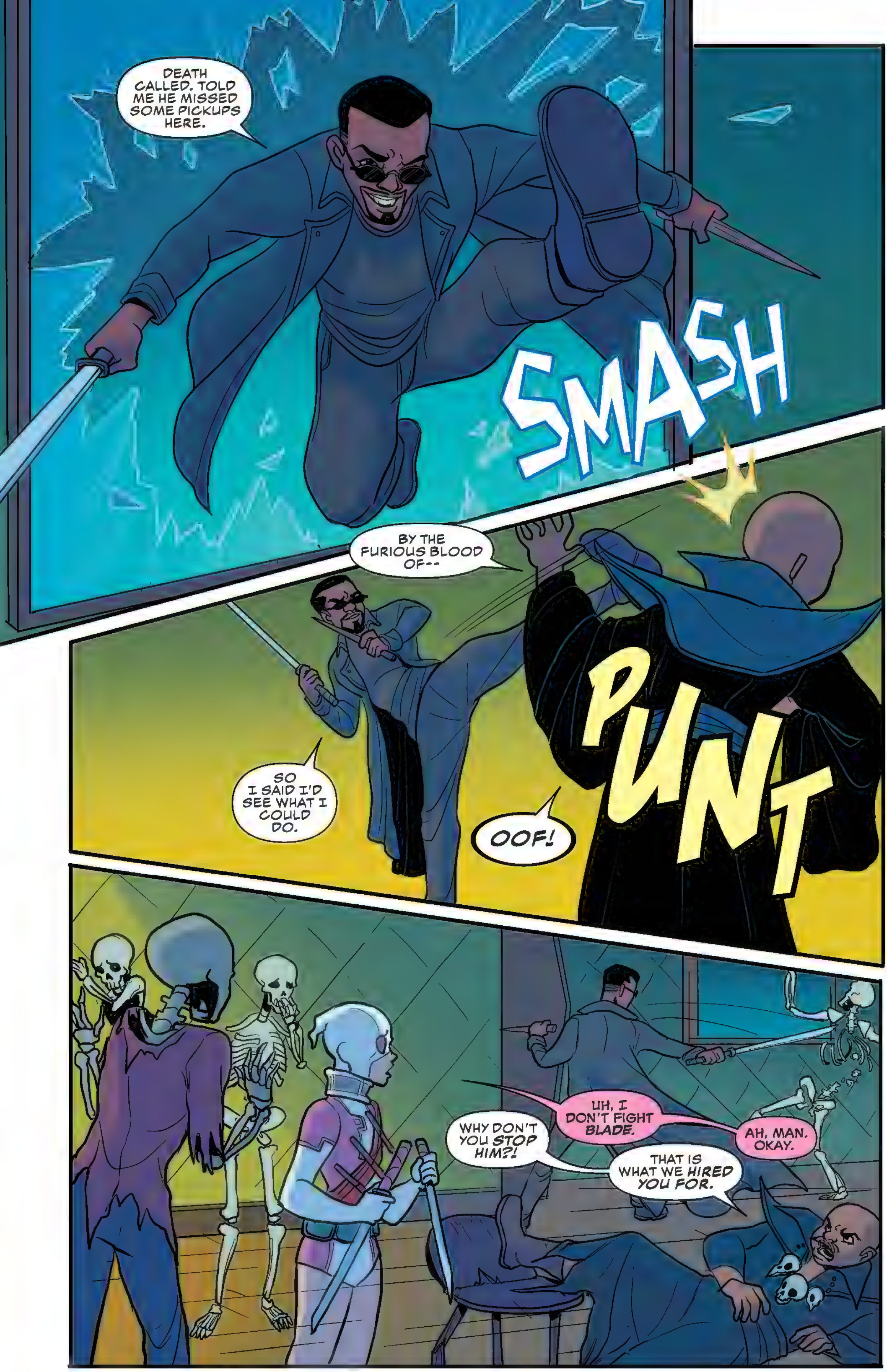

GWEN, THIS IS A VILLAGE OF THE DEAD.
THAT'S A WEIRD THING FOR A VILLAGE IN UPSTATE NEW YORK TO BE.

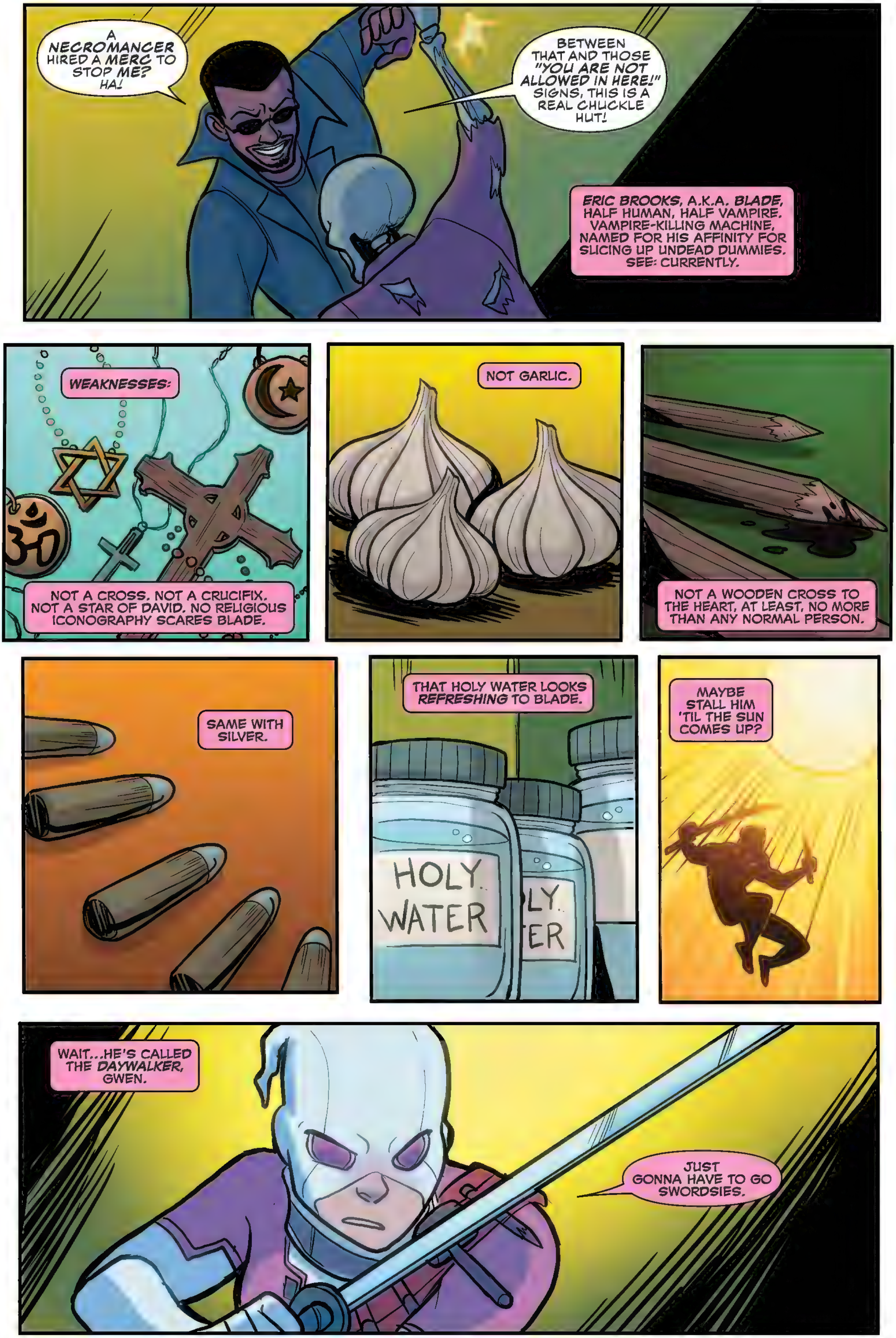

IT WASN'T ALWAYS LIKE THIS. A LONG TIME AGO EVERYONE IN HERE WAS ALIVE. IT WAS LOVELY. AND IT WAS A *GREAT* PLACE TO FIND SANCTUARY FROM *HYDRA*, WHO WAS TRYING TO RECRUIT ME FOR MY NECROMANTIC ABILITIES.
YOU TALKING GOOFY GREEN-OUTFIT HYDRA OR SCARY WORLD WAR II HYDRA?
EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM WAS ALIVE THEN, GWEN.
OLD HYDRA, THEN.

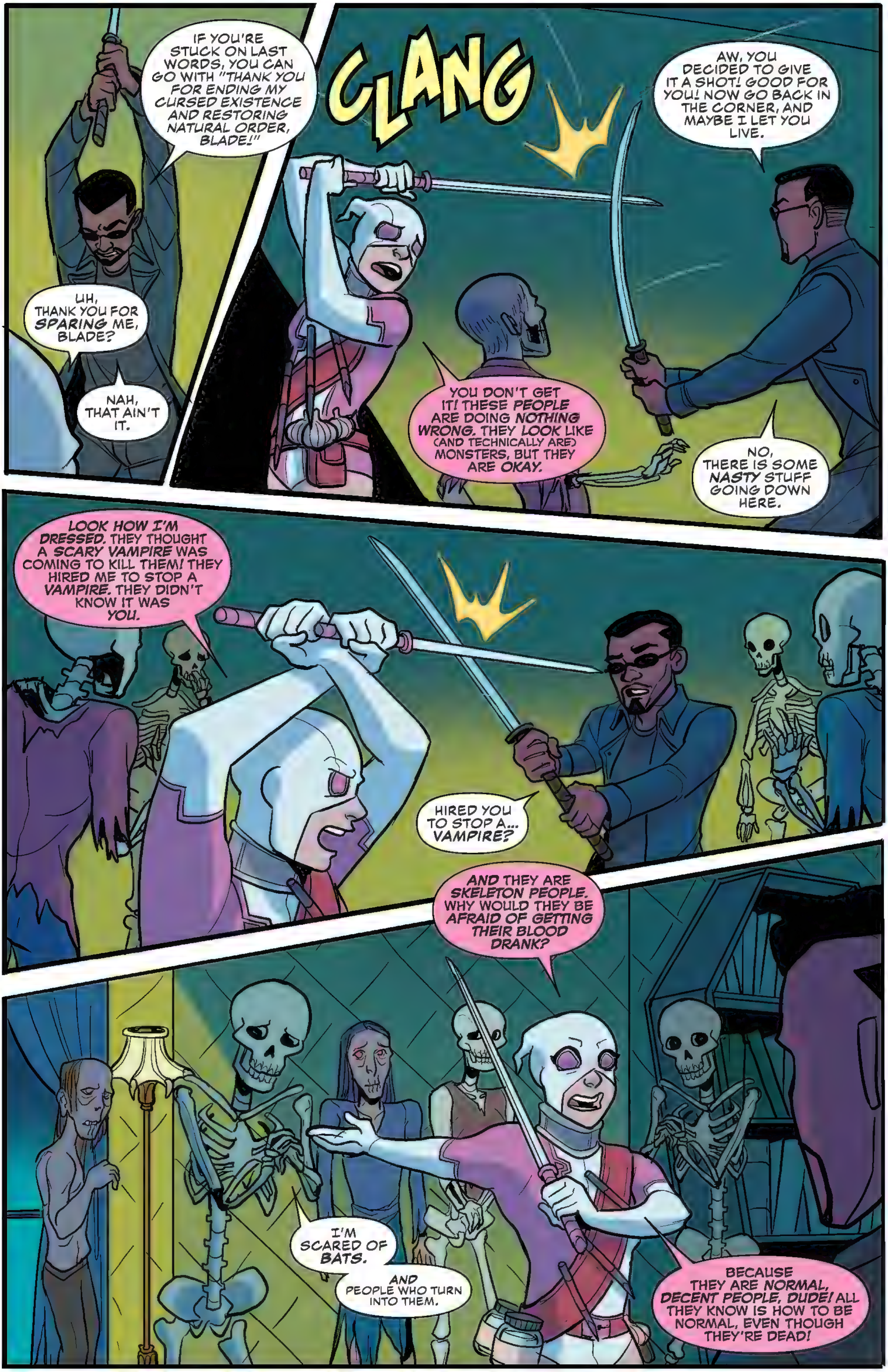

AS TIME WENT ON, PEOPLE STARTED PASSING AWAY, AS THEY DO. BUT I WANTED TO PRESERVE THE WONDERFUL COMMUNITY I'D FOUND HERE. SO I STARTED BRINGING EVERYONE BACK...

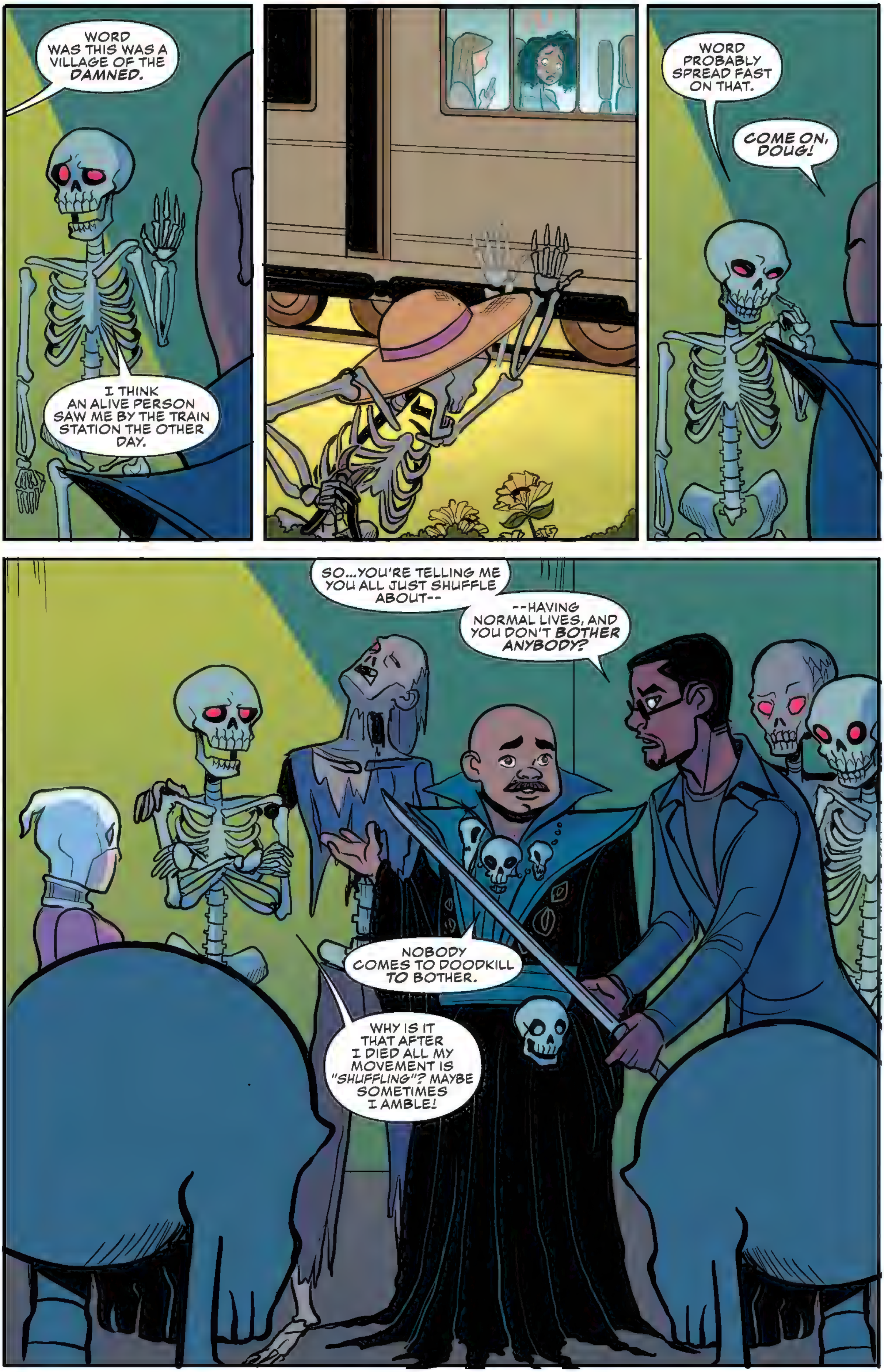

AND *WE* WERE PRETTY HAPPY ABOUT NOT HAVING TO BE *TOTALLY* DEAD, TOO.
YOU CAN TALK!

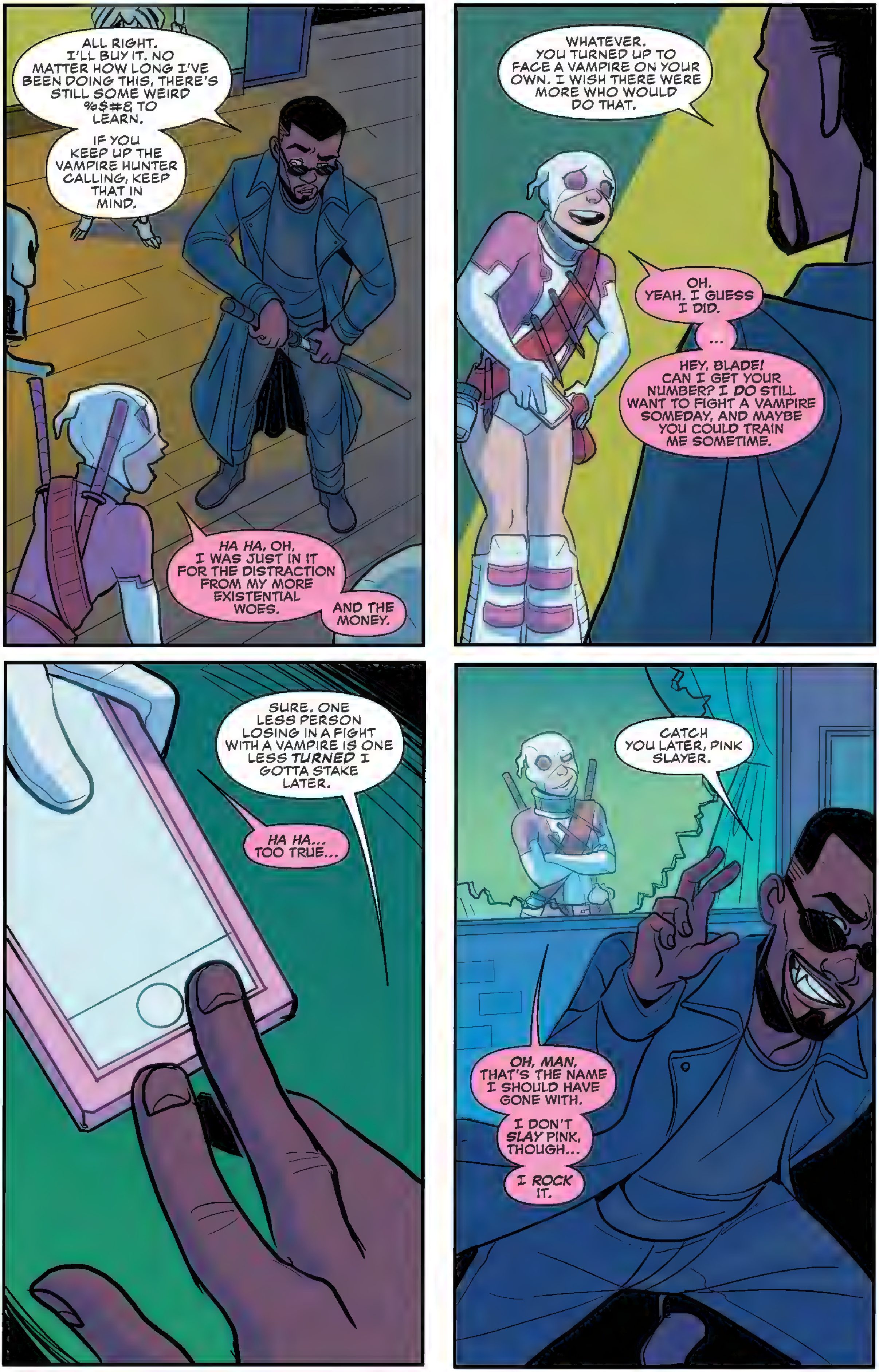

WE'VE LIVED HERE IN PEACE FOR A LONG TIME. WE KNOW A COMMUNITY LIKE THIS HAS TO STAY **SECRET**, SO WE DON'T BOTHER **ANYBODY.**
I HEAR **CHATTER** IN THE **OCCULT** COMMUNITIES, AND APPARENTLY SOME **VAMPIRE** HAS TAKEN **OFFENSE** TO OUR EXISTENCE AND PROMISED TO **WIPE US OUT!**
THEN WHAT'S WITH THE **VAMPIRE** YOU WANT ME TO TAKE OUT?
UH, HEY? MAYOR? DID YOU SAY **VAMPIRE?**
YES, PHIL. THAT'S WHY WE'RE ALL IN HERE 'TIL OUR FRIEND SLAYS THE THING.
UH, NO. IT'S NOT A **VAMPIRE** THAT'S COMING.
IT'S A **DHAMPIR.**
OH, WELL. SAME THING--
NO. NO. OH, NO.
A **DHAMPIR** IS A **HALF-VAMPIRE.** AND **HERE** THERE'S ONLY **ONE** OF THEM. AND YOU WANT **ME** TO **STOP HIM?**
TO STOP BLADE?!

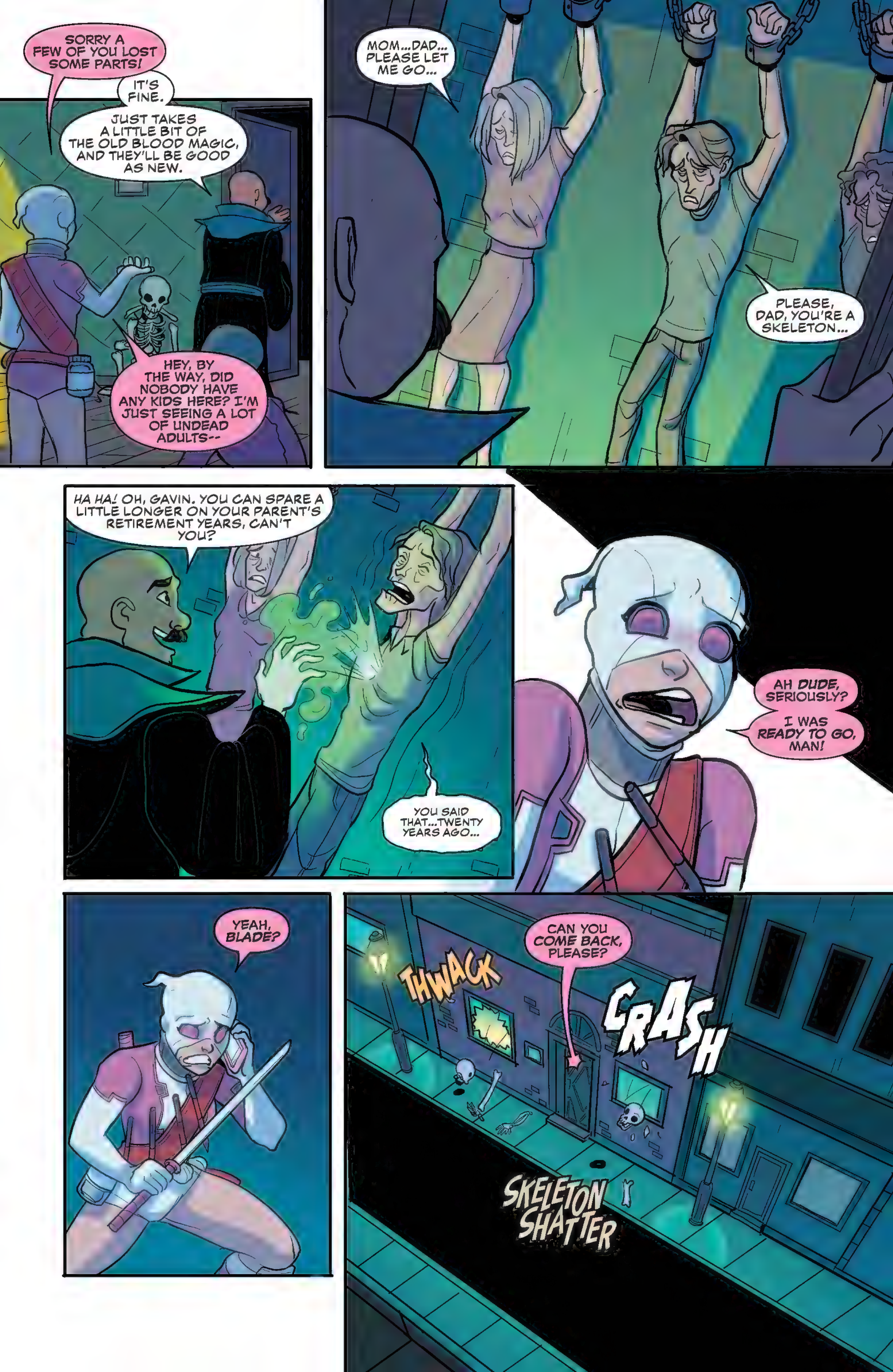

DEATH CALLED. TOLD ME HE MISSED SOME PICKUPS HERE.
SMASH
BY THE FURIOUS BLOOD OF--
SO I SAID I'D SEE WHAT I COULD DO.
PUNT
OOF!
WHY DON'T YOU *STOP* HIM?!
THAT IS WHAT WE *HIRED YOU FOR.*
UH, I DON'T FIGHT *BLADE.*
AH, MAN. OKAY.

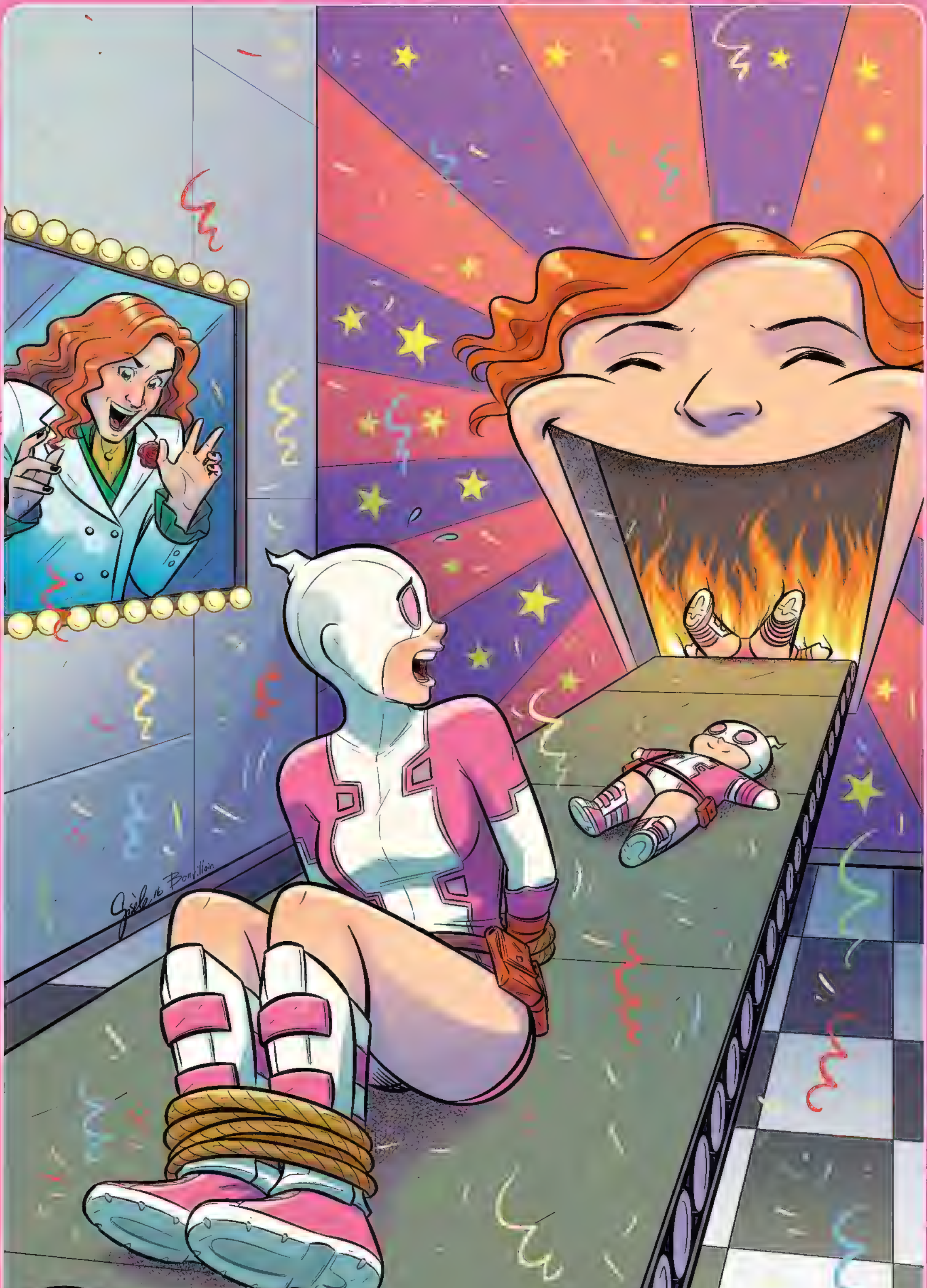

A NECROMANCER HIRED A MERC TO STOP ME? HA!
BETWEEN THAT AND THOSE "YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED IN HERE!" SIGNS, THIS IS A REAL CHUCKLE HUT!
ERIC BROOKS, A.K.A. BLADE, HALF HUMAN, HALF VAMPIRE. VAMPIRE-KILLING MACHINE, NAMED FOR HIS AFFINITY FOR SLICING UP UNDEAD DUMMIES. SEE: CURRENTLY.
WEAKNESSES:
NOT A CROSS. NOT A CRUCIFIX. NOT A STAR OF DAVID. NO RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY SCARES BLADE.
NOT GARLIC.
NOT A WOODEN CROSS TO THE HEART, AT LEAST, NO MORE THAN ANY NORMAL PERSON.
SAME WITH SILVER.
THAT HOLY WATER LOOKS REFRESHING TO BLADE.
HOLY WATER
MAYBE STALL HIM 'TIL THE SUN COMES UP?
WAIT...HE'S CALLED THE DAYWALKER, GWEN.
JUST GONNA HAVE TO GO SWORDSIES.


IF YOU'RE STUCK ON LAST WORDS, YOU CAN GO WITH "THANK YOU FOR ENDING MY CURSED EXISTENCE AND RESTORING NATURAL ORDER, BLADE!"
UH, THANK YOU FOR SPARING ME, BLADE?
NAH, THAT AIN'T IT.
CLANG
AW, YOU DECIDED TO GIVE IT A SHOT! GOOD FOR YOU! NOW GO BACK IN THE CORNER, AND MAYBE I LET YOU LIVE.
YOU DON'T GET IT! THESE PEOPLE ARE DOING NOTHING WRONG. THEY LOOK LIKE (AND TECHNICALLY ARE) MONSTERS, BUT THEY ARE OKAY.
NO, THERE IS SOME NASTY STUFF GOING DOWN HERE.
LOOK HOW I'M DRESSED. THEY THOUGHT A SCARY VAMPIRE WAS COMING TO KILL THEM! THEY HIRED ME TO STOP A VAMPIRE. THEY DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS YOU.
HIRED YOU TO STOP A... VAMPIRE?
AND THEY ARE SKELETON PEOPLE. WHY WOULD THEY BE AFRAID OF GETTING THEIR BLOOD DRANK?
I'M SCARED OF BATS.
AND PEOPLE WHO TURN INTO THEM.
BECAUSE THEY ARE NORMAL, DECENT PEOPLE, DUDE! ALL THEY KNOW IS HOW TO BE NORMAL, EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE DEAD!

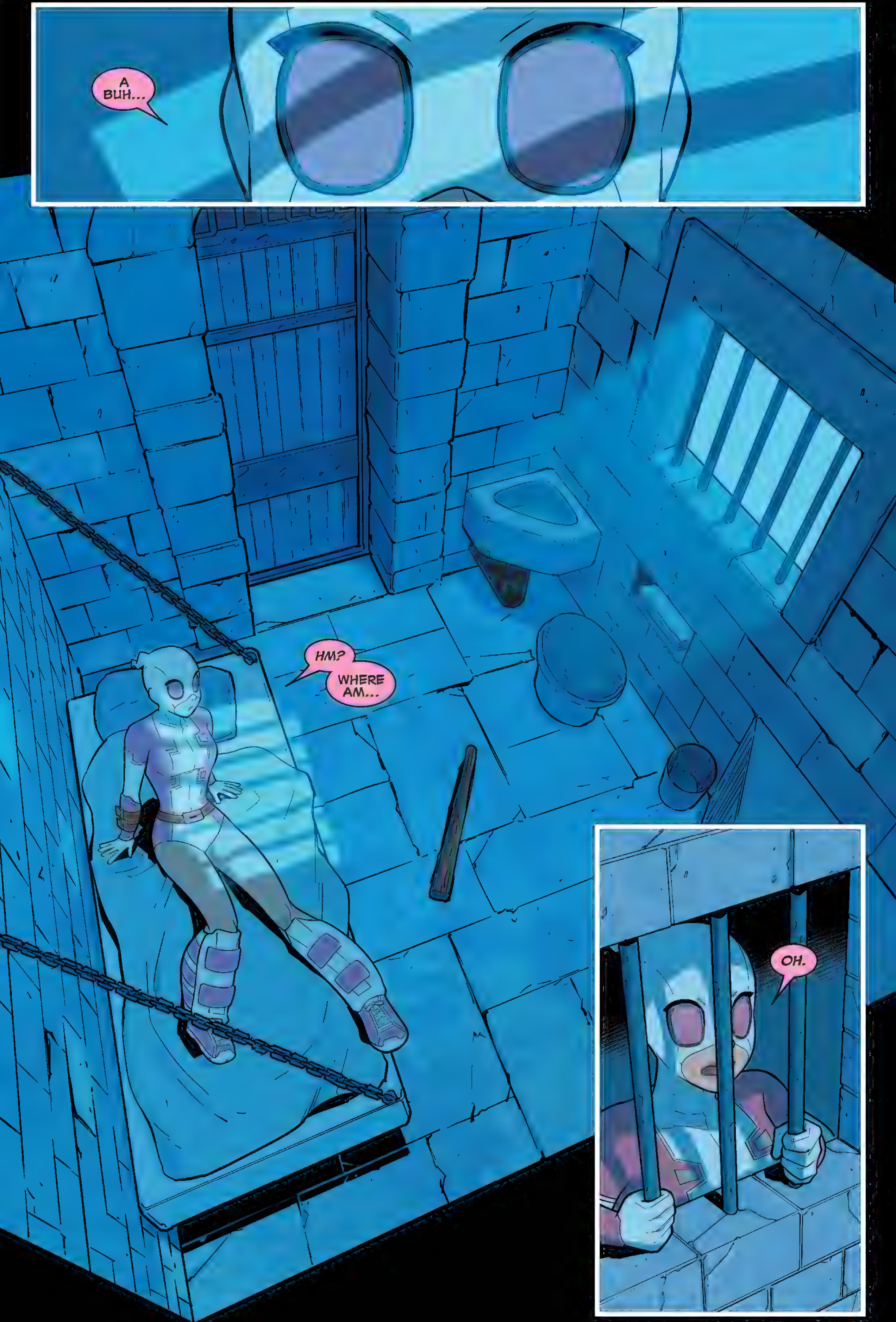

WORD WAS THIS WAS A VILLAGE OF THE *DAMNED.*
I THINK AN ALIVE PERSON SAW ME BY THE TRAIN STATION THE OTHER DAY.
WORD PROBABLY SPREAD FAST ON THAT.
COME ON, DOUG!
SO...YOU'RE TELLING ME YOU ALL JUST SHUFFLE ABOUT--
--HAVING NORMAL LIVES, AND YOU DON'T *BOTHER ANYBODY?*
NOBODY COMES TO DOODKILL *TO* BOTHER.
WHY IS IT THAT AFTER I DIED ALL MY MOVEMENT IS *"SHUFFLING"*? MAYBE SOMETIMES I AMBLE!

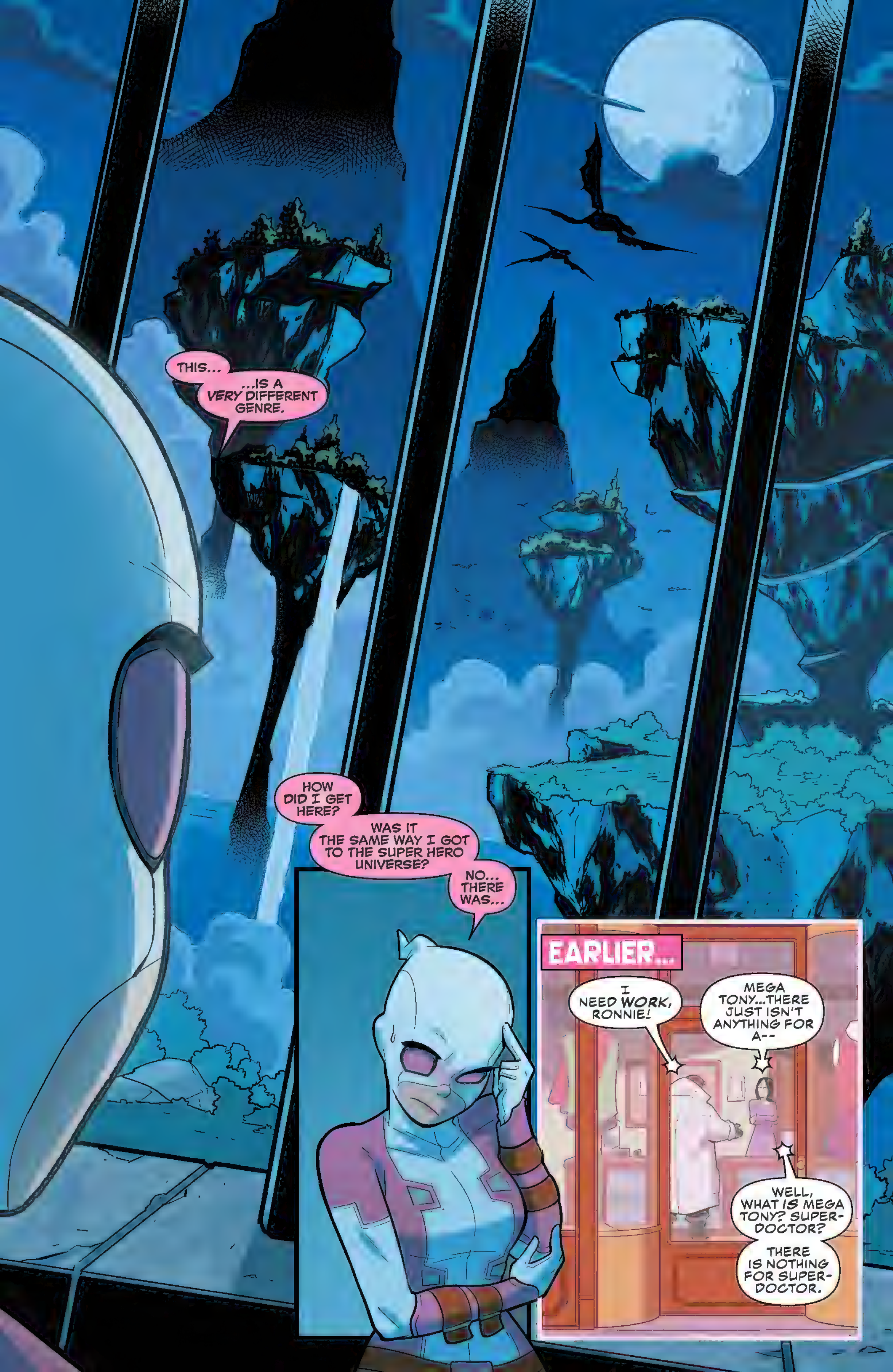

ALL RIGHT. I'LL BUY IT. NO MATTER HOW LONG I'VE BEEN DOING THIS, THERE'S STILL SOME WEIRD %$#& TO LEARN.
IF YOU KEEP UP THE VAMPIRE HUNTER CALLING, KEEP THAT IN MIND.
HA HA, OH, I WAS JUST IN IT FOR THE DISTRACTION FROM MY MORE EXISTENTIAL WOES.
AND THE MONEY.
WHATEVER. YOU TURNED UP TO FACE A VAMPIRE ON YOUR OWN. I WISH THERE WERE MORE WHO WOULD DO THAT.
OH. YEAH. I GUESS I DID.
...
HEY, BLADE! CAN I GET YOUR NUMBER? I DO STILL WANT TO FIGHT A VAMPIRE SOMEDAY, AND MAYBE YOU COULD TRAIN ME SOMETIME.
SURE. ONE LESS PERSON LOSING IN A FIGHT WITH A VAMPIRE IS ONE LESS TURNED I GOTTA STAKE LATER.
HA HA... TOO TRUE...
CATCH YOU LATER, PINK SLAYER.
OH, MAN, THAT'S THE NAME I SHOULD HAVE GONE WITH.
I DON'T SLAY PINK, THOUGH...
I ROCK IT.

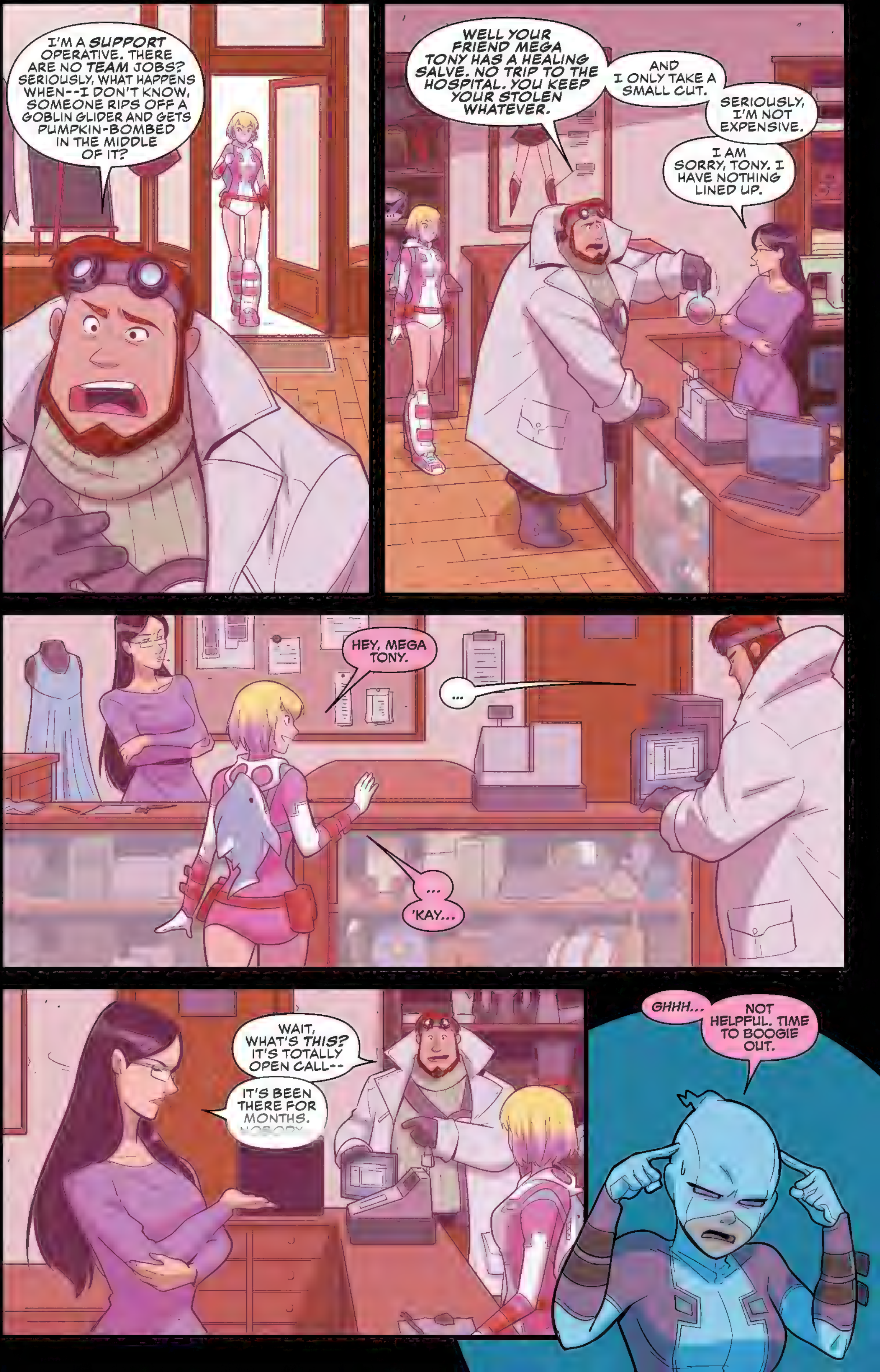

SORRY A FEW OF YOU LOST SOME PARTS!
IT'S FINE.
JUST TAKES A LITTLE BIT OF THE OLD BLOOD MAGIC, AND THEY'LL BE GOOD AS NEW.
HEY, BY THE WAY, DID NOBODY HAVE ANY KIDS HERE? I'M JUST SEEING A LOT OF UNDEAD ADULTS--
MOM...DAD... PLEASE LET ME GO...
PLEASE, DAD, YOU'RE A SKELETON...
HA HA! OH, GAVIN. YOU CAN SPARE A LITTLE LONGER ON YOUR PARENT'S RETIREMENT YEARS, CAN'T YOU?
YOU SAID THAT...TWENTY YEARS AGO...
AH DUDE, SERIOUSLY?
I WAS READY TO GO, MAN!
YEAH, BLADE?
CAN YOU COME BACK, PLEASE?
THWACK
CRASH
SKELETON SHATTER

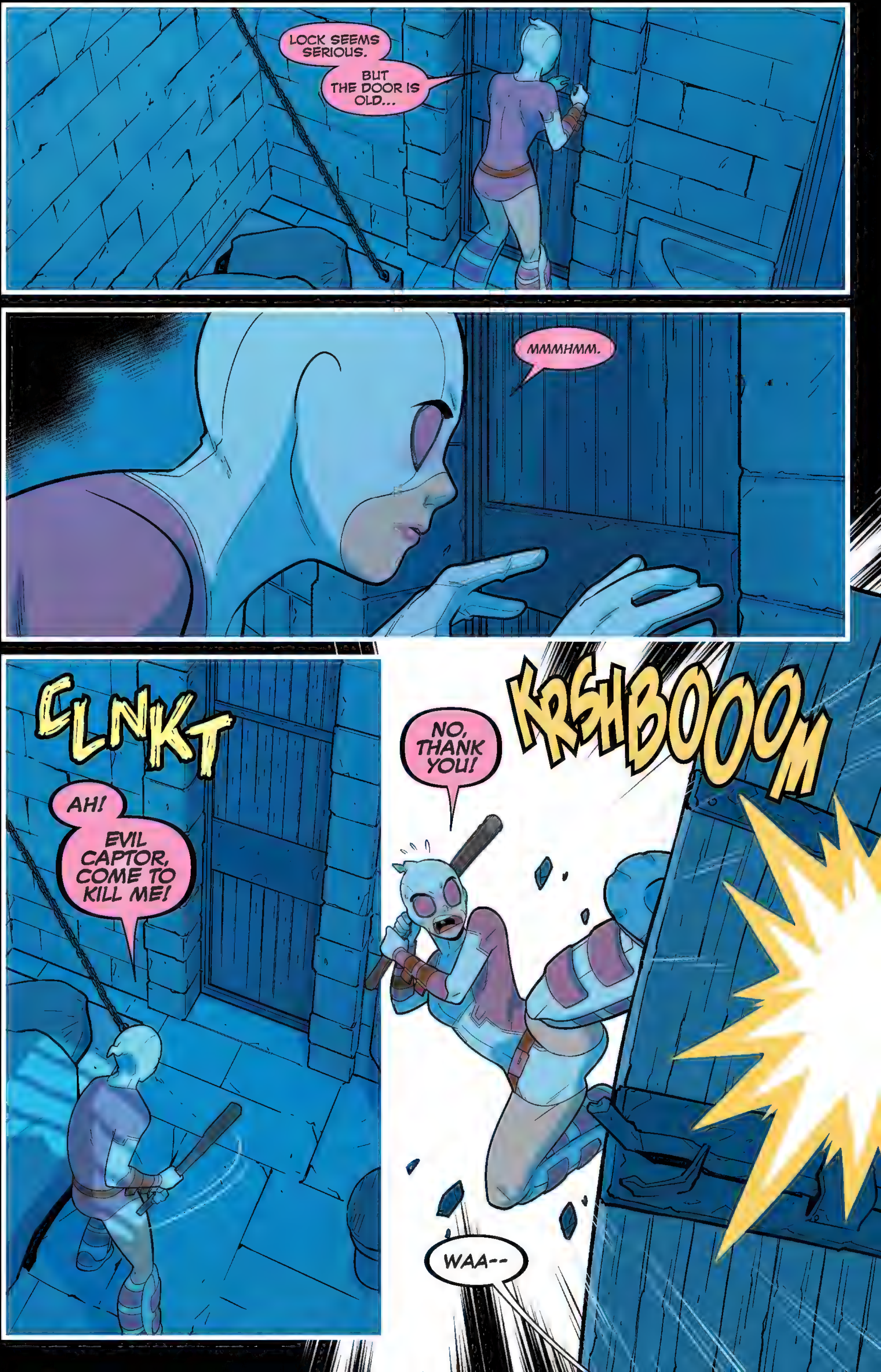


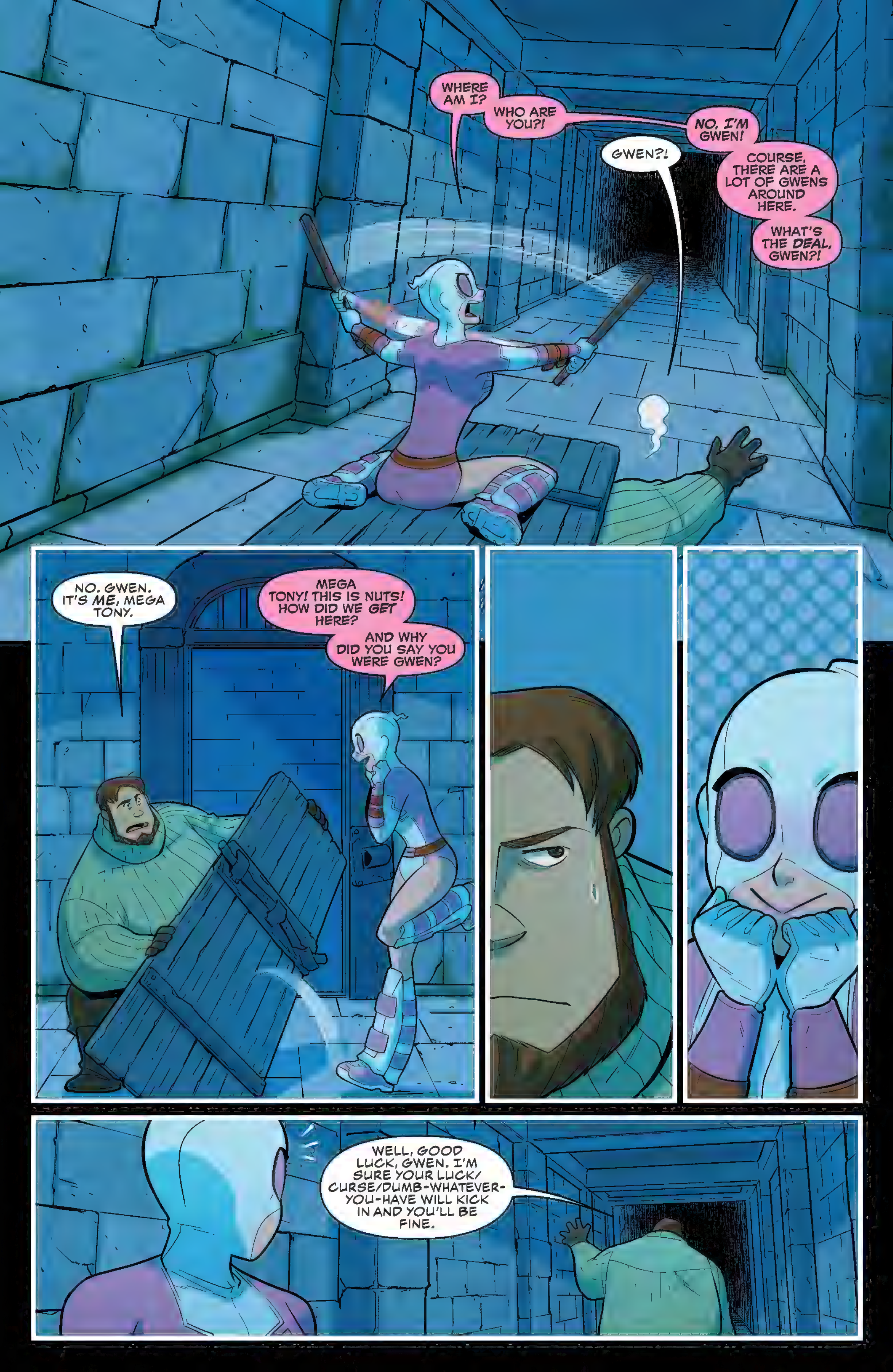
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #12

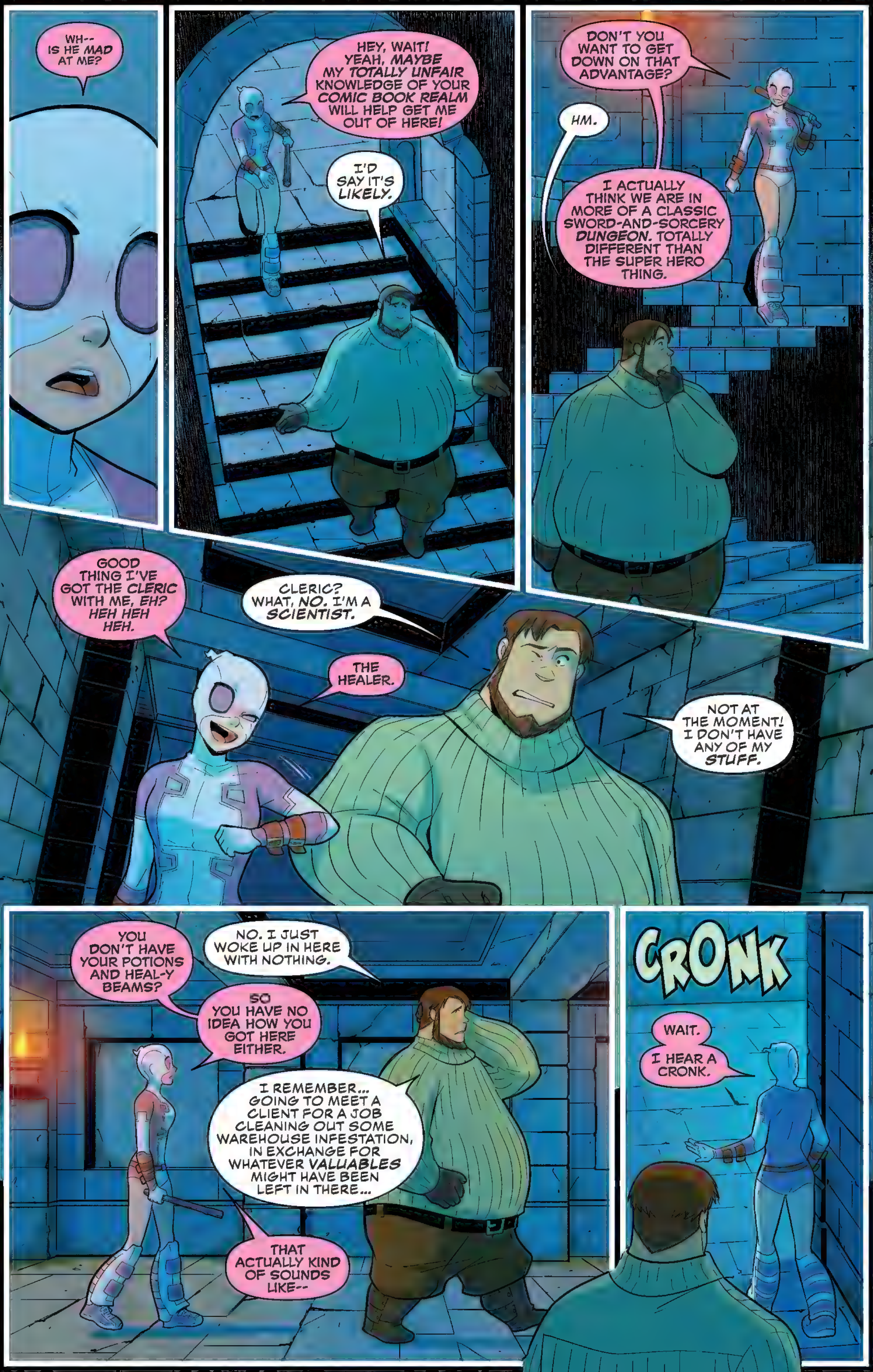

A BUH...
HM?
WHERE AM...
OH.

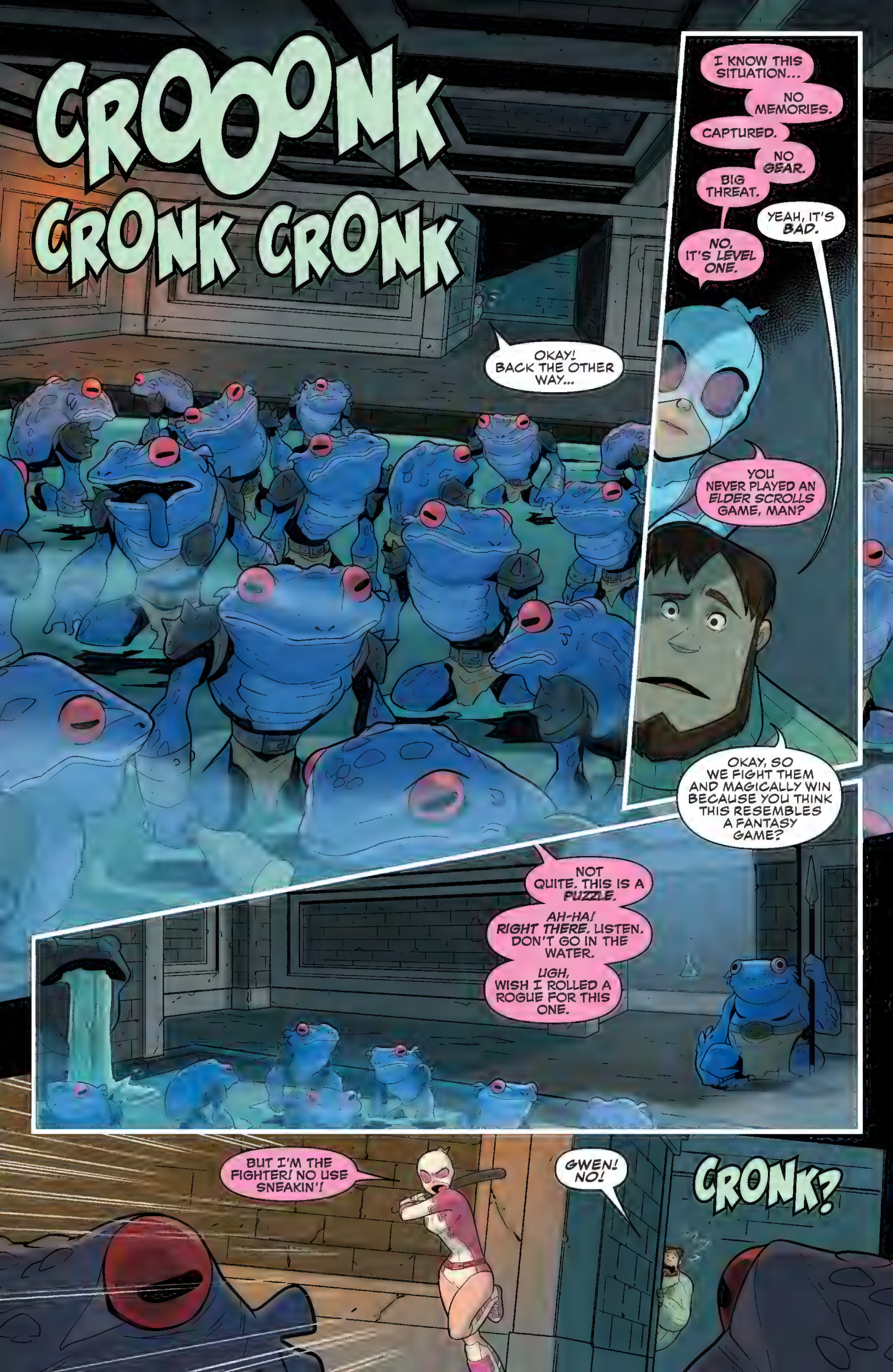

THIS... ...IS A *VERY* DIFFERENT GENRE.
HOW DID I GET HERE?
WAS IT THE SAME WAY I GOT TO THE SUPER HERO UNIVERSE?
NO... THERE WAS...
EARLIER...
I NEED *WORK*, RONNIE!
MEGA TONY...THERE JUST ISN'T ANYTHING FOR A--
WELL, WHAT *IS* MEGA TONY? SUPER-DOCTOR?
THERE IS NOTHING FOR SUPER-DOCTOR.

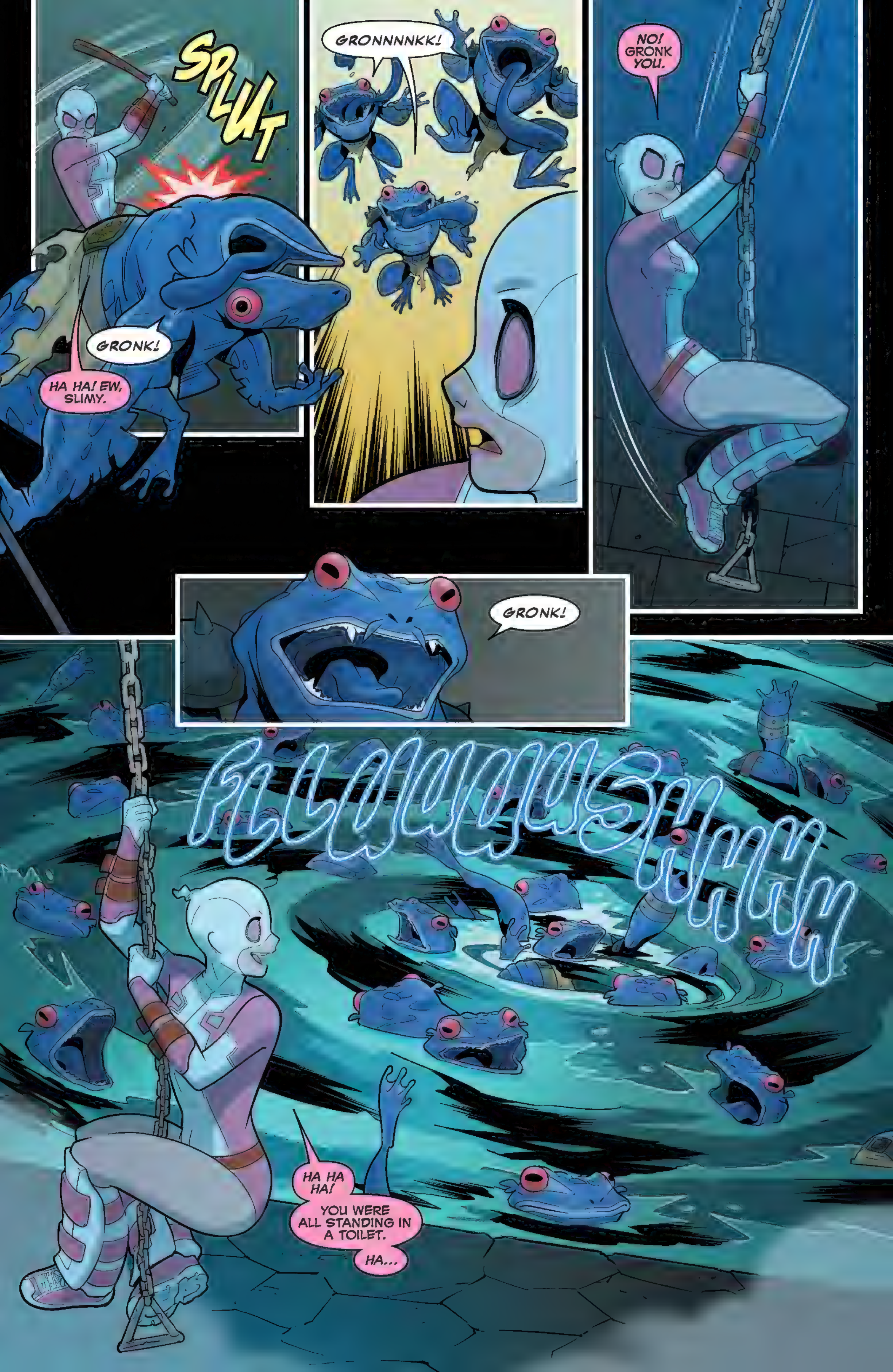

I'M A *SUPPORT* OPERATIVE. THERE ARE NO *TEAM* JOBS? SERIOUSLY, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN--I DON'T KNOW, SOMEONE RIPS OFF A GOBLIN GLIDER AND GETS PUMPKIN-BOMBED IN THE MIDDLE OF IT?
WELL YOUR FRIEND MEGA TONY HAS A HEALING SALVE. NO TRIP TO THE HOSPITAL. YOU KEEP YOUR STOLEN WHATEVER.
AND I ONLY TAKE A SMALL CUT.
SERIOUSLY, I'M NOT EXPENSIVE.
I AM SORRY, TONY. I HAVE NOTHING LINED UP.
HEY, MEGA TONY.
...
...
'KAY...
WAIT, WHAT'S *THIS?* IT'S TOTALLY OPEN CALL--
IT'S BEEN THERE FOR *MONTHS.* NOBODY
GHHH...
NOT HELPFUL. TIME TO BOOGIE OUT.

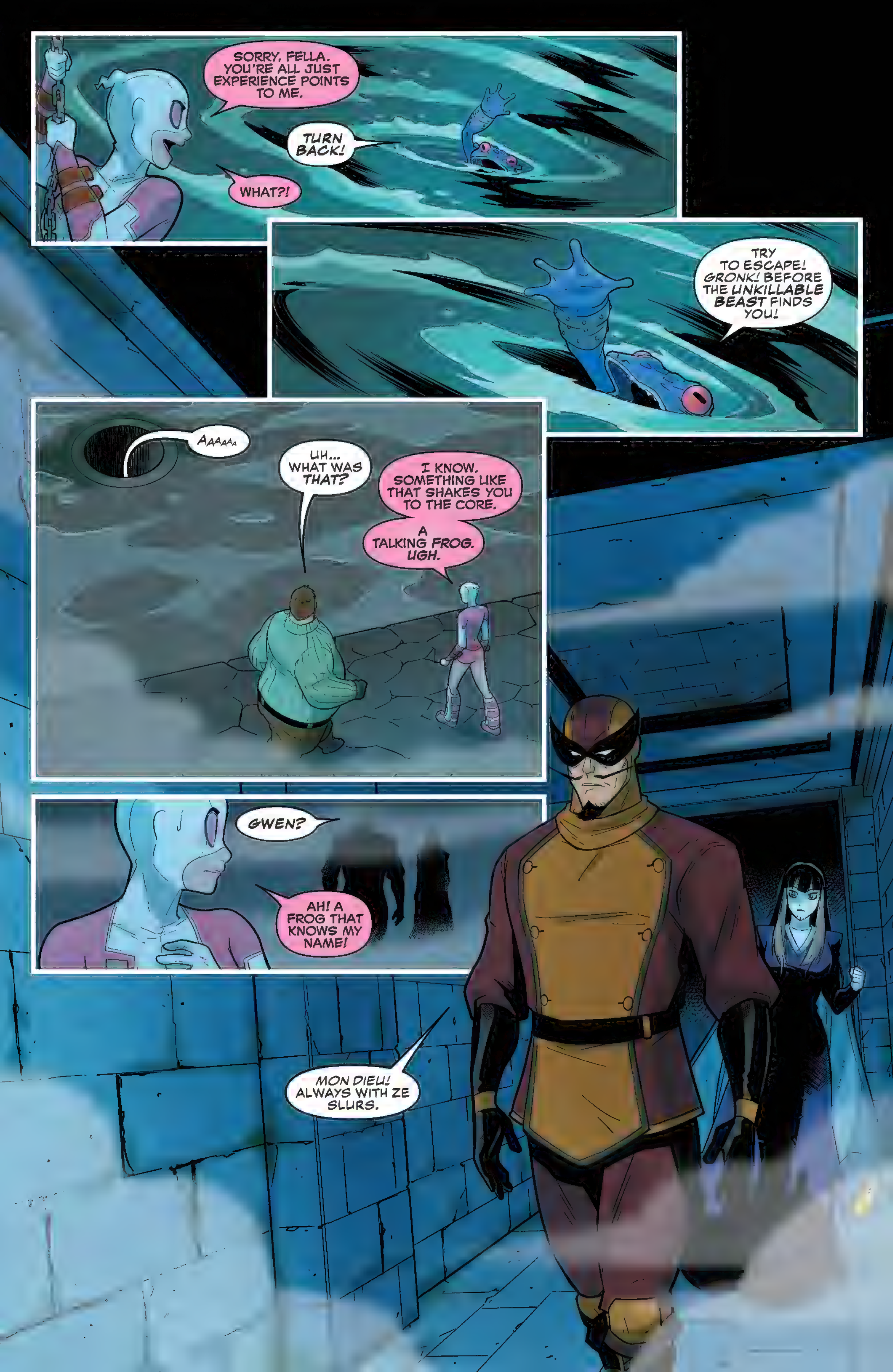

LOCK SEEMS SERIOUS.
BUT THE DOOR IS OLD...
MMMHMM.
CLNKT
AH!
EVIL CAPTOR, COME TO KILL ME!
NO, THANK YOU!
KRSHBOOOM
WAA--

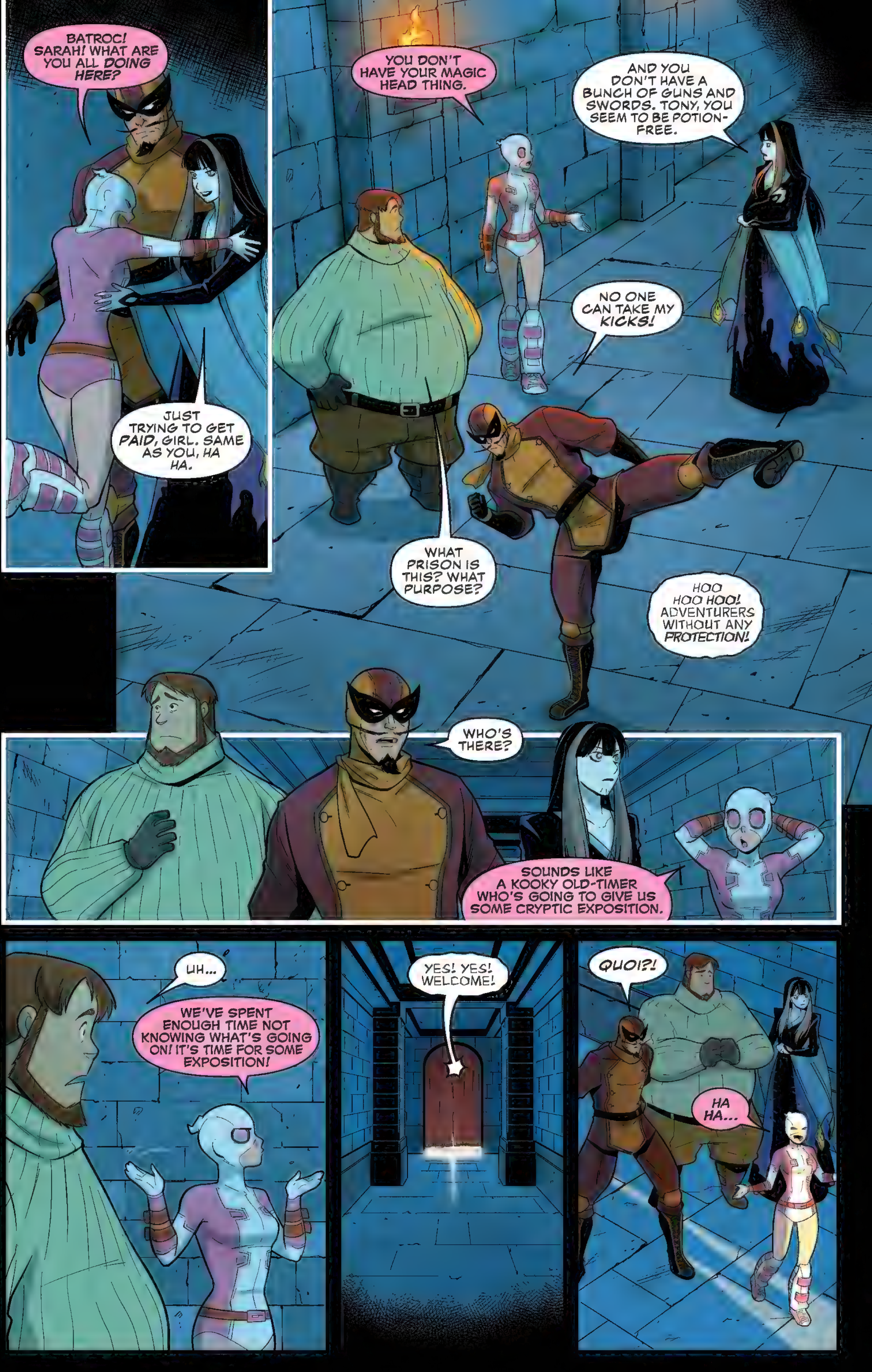

WHERE AM I?
WHO ARE YOU?!
NO, I'M GWEN!
GWEN?!
COURSE, THERE ARE A LOT OF GWENS AROUND HERE.
WHAT'S THE *DEAL*, GWEN?!
NO. GWEN. IT'S *ME*, MEGA TONY.
MEGA TONY! THIS IS NUTS! HOW DID WE *GET* HERE?
AND WHY DID YOU SAY YOU WERE GWEN?
WELL, GOOD LUCK, GWEN. I'M SURE YOUR LUCK/CURSE/DUMB-WHATEVER-YOU-HAVE WILL KICK IN AND YOU'LL BE FINE.

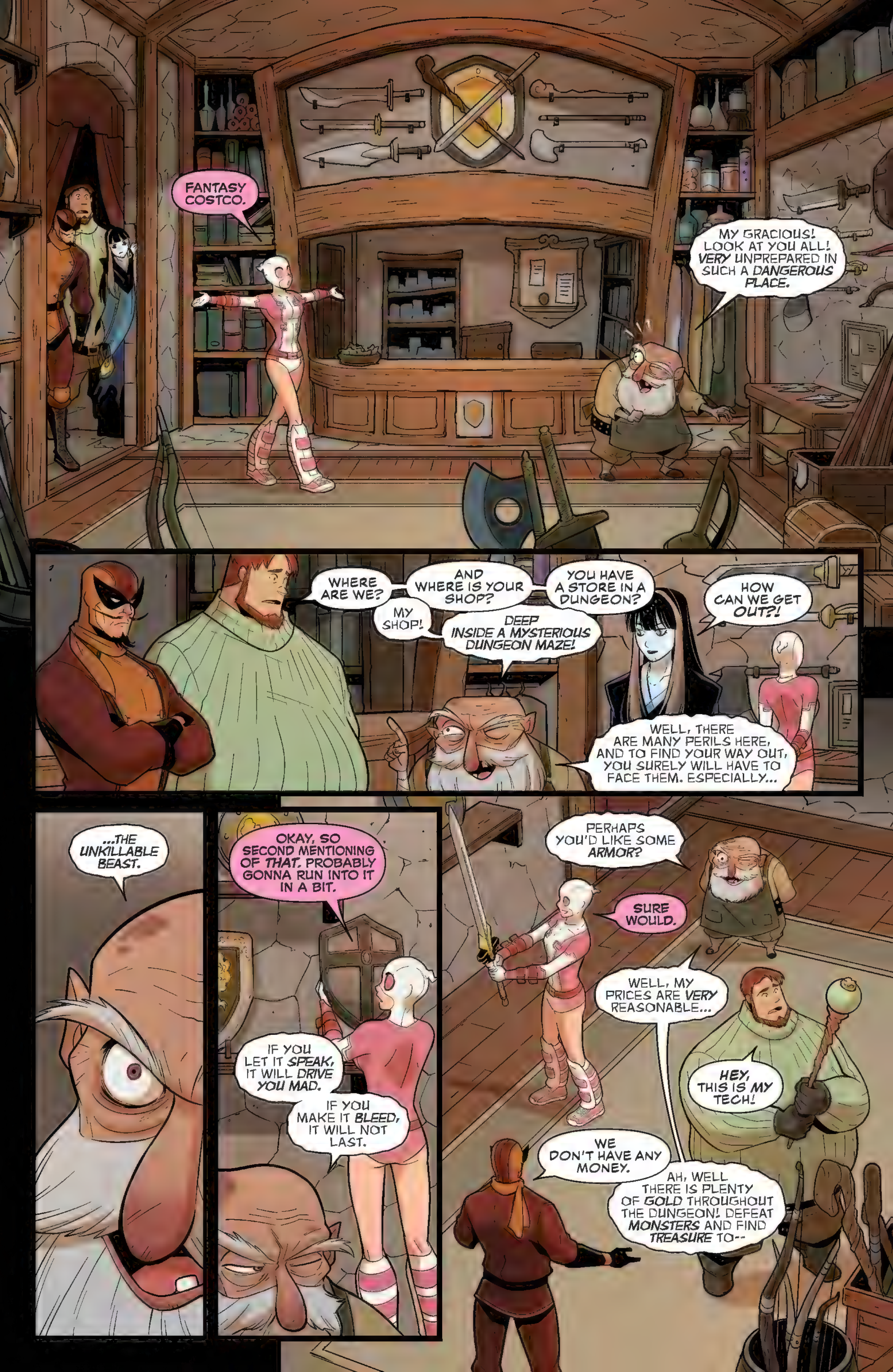

WH-- IS HE *MAD* AT ME?
HEY, WAIT! YEAH, *MAYBE* MY *TOTALLY UNFAIR* KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR *COMIC BOOK REALM* WILL HELP GET ME OUT OF HERE!
I'D SAY IT'S *LIKELY.*
DON'T YOU WANT TO GET DOWN ON THAT ADVANTAGE?
HM.
I ACTUALLY THINK WE ARE IN MORE OF A CLASSIC SWORD-AND-SORCERY *DUNGEON.* TOTALLY DIFFERENT THAN THE SUPER HERO THING.
GOOD THING I'VE GOT THE *CLERIC* WITH ME, *EH?* HEH HEH HEH.
CLERIC? WHAT, *NO.* I'M A *SCIENTIST.*
THE HEALER.
NOT AT THE MOMENT! I DON'T HAVE ANY OF MY *STUFF.*
YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR POTIONS AND HEAL-Y BEAMS?
NO. I JUST WOKE UP IN HERE WITH NOTHING.
SO YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW YOU GOT HERE EITHER.
I REMEMBER... GOING TO MEET A CLIENT FOR A JOB CLEANING OUT SOME WAREHOUSE INFESTATION, IN EXCHANGE FOR WHATEVER *VALUABLES* MIGHT HAVE BEEN LEFT IN THERE...
THAT ACTUALLY KIND OF SOUNDS LIKE--
CRONK
WAIT.
I HEAR A CRONK.

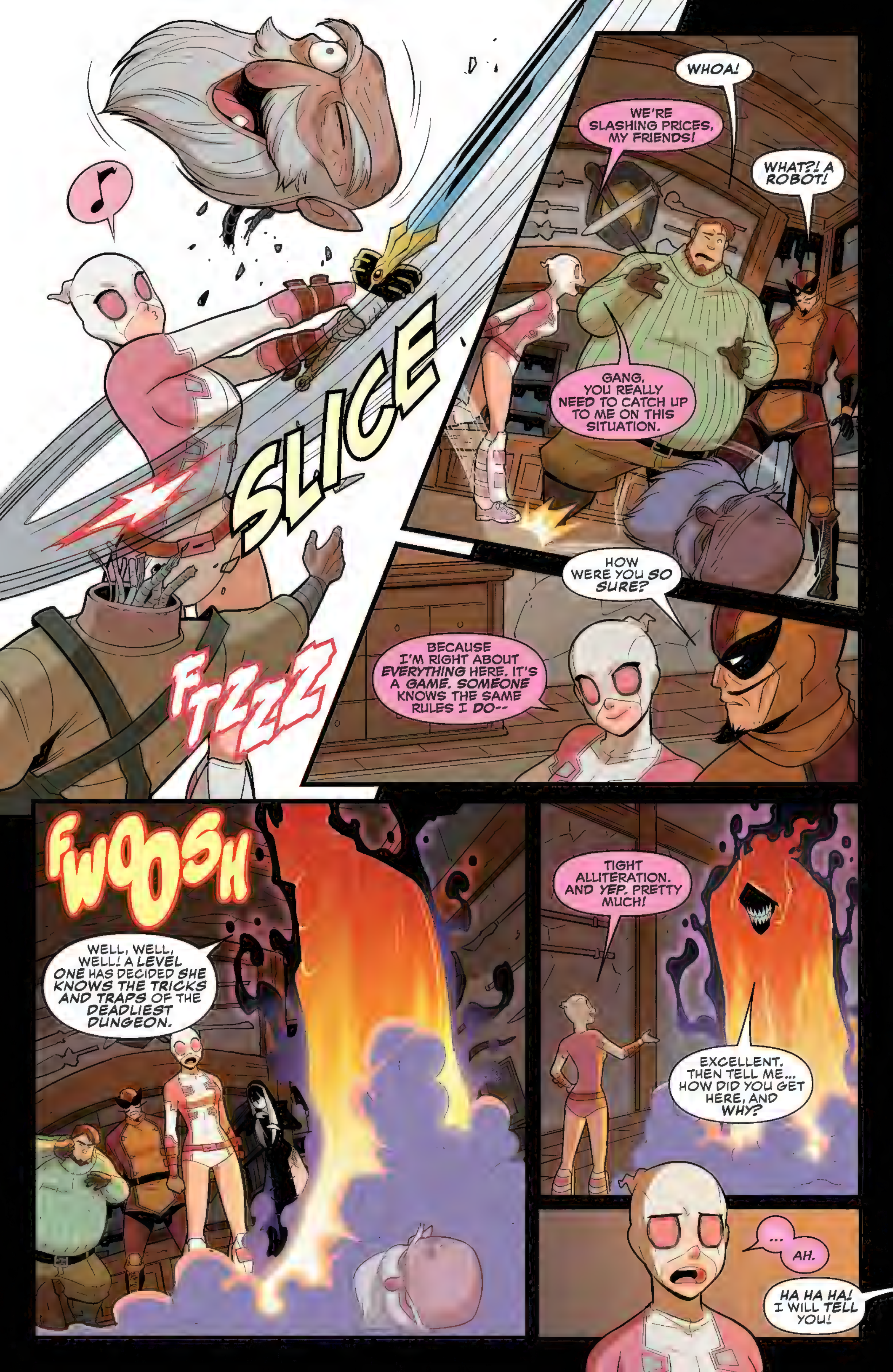

CROOONK
CRONK CRONK
I KNOW THIS SITUATION...
NO MEMORIES.
CAPTURED.
NO GEAR.
BIG THREAT.
YEAH, IT'S BAD.
NO, IT'S LEVEL ONE.
OKAY! BACK THE OTHER WAY...
YOU NEVER PLAYED AN ELDER SCROLLS GAME, MAN?
OKAY, SO WE FIGHT THEM AND MAGICALLY WIN BECAUSE YOU THINK THIS RESEMBLES A FANTASY GAME?
NOT QUITE. THIS IS A PUZZLE.
AH-HA! RIGHT THERE. LISTEN. DON'T GO IN THE WATER.
UGH, WISH I ROLLED A ROGUE FOR THIS ONE.
BUT I'M THE FIGHTER! NO USE SNEAKIN'!
GWEN! NO!
CRONK?

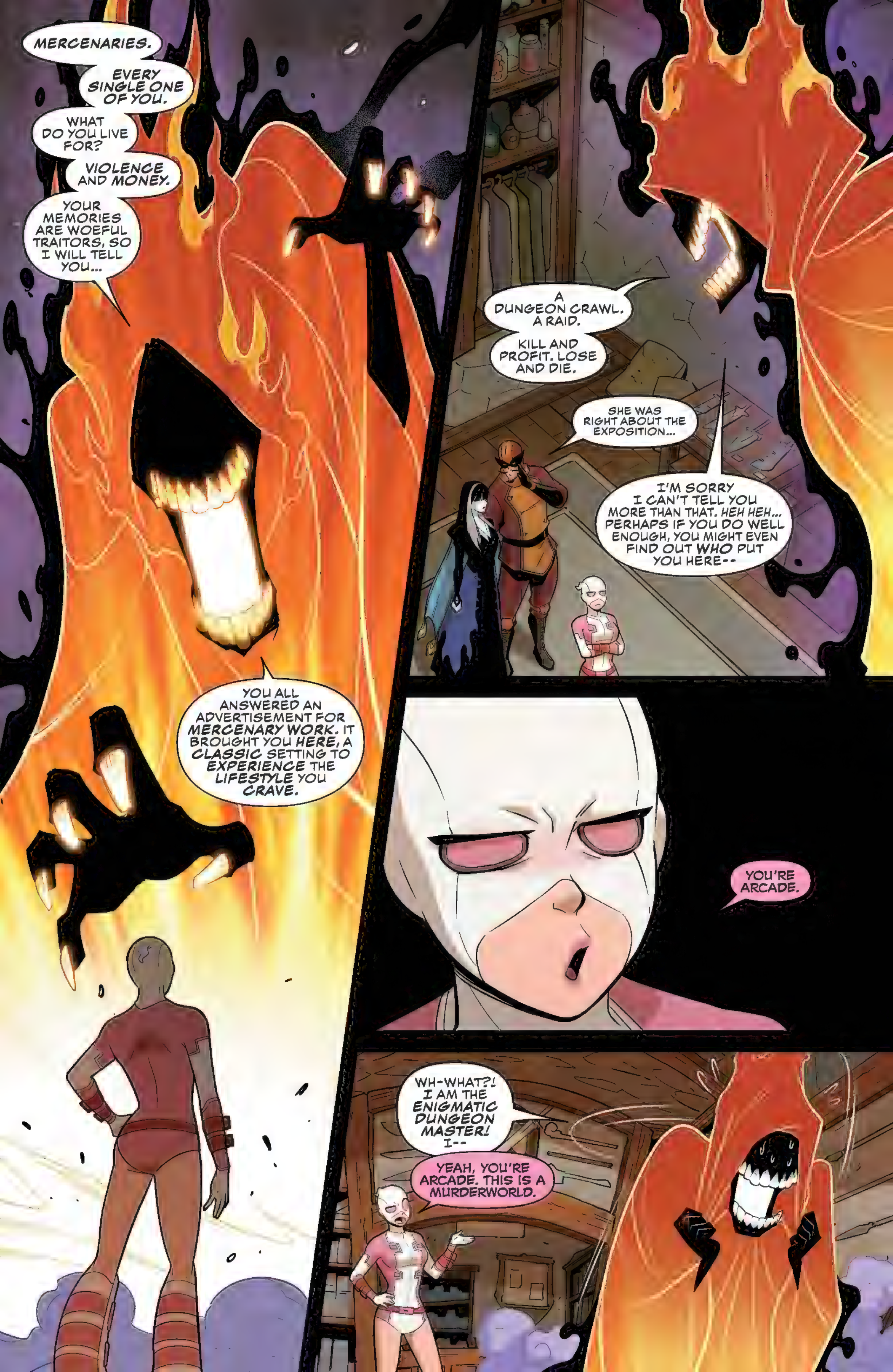

SPLUT
GRONK!
HA HA! EW, SLIMY.
GRONNNNKK!
NO! GRONK YOU.
GRONK!
FLLWWWWSHHH
HA HA HA!
YOU WERE ALL STANDING IN A TOILET.
HA...

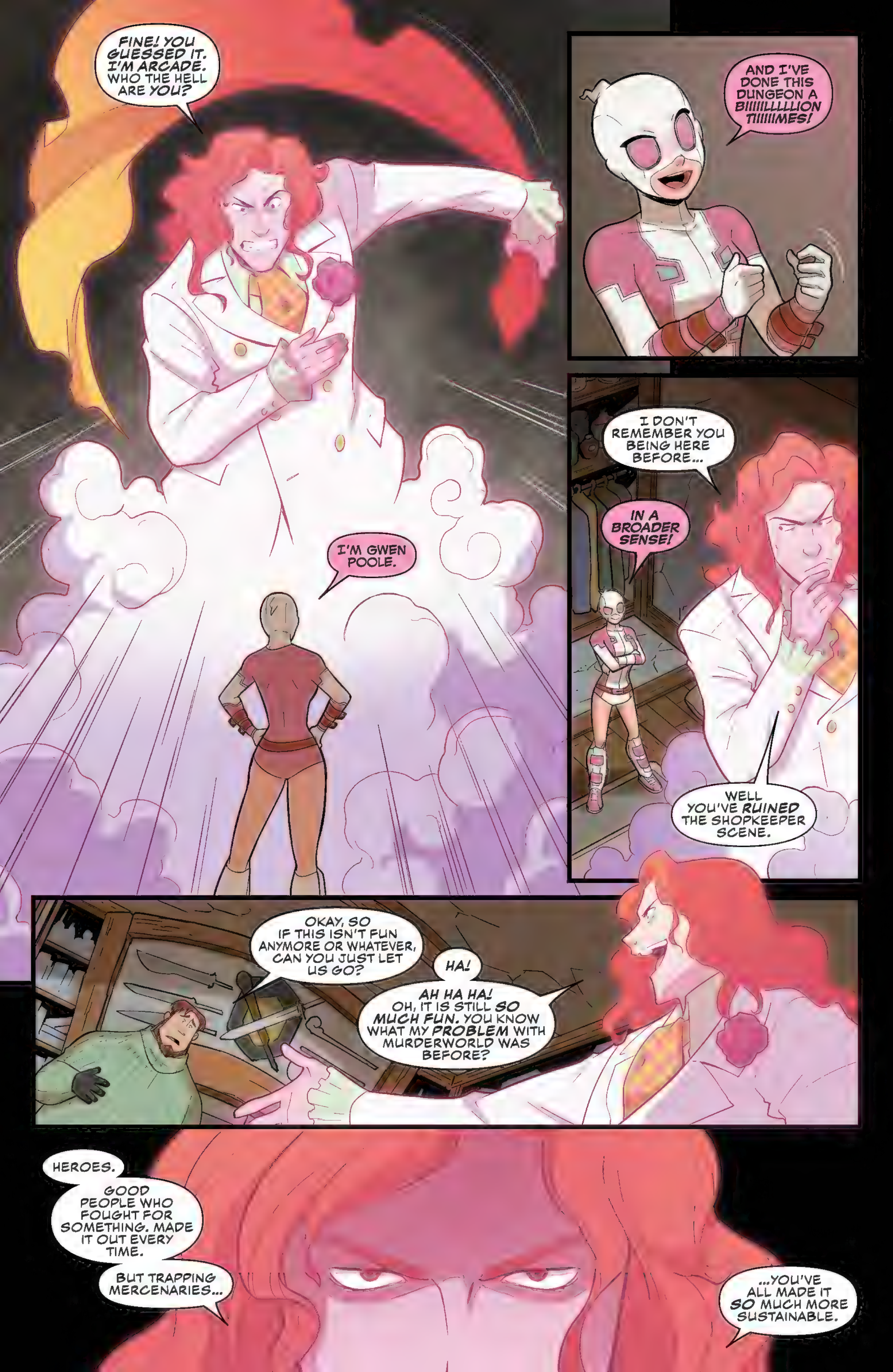

SORRY, FELLA. YOU'RE ALL JUST EXPERIENCE POINTS TO ME.
TURN BACK!
WHAT?!
TRY TO ESCAPE! GRONK! BEFORE THE UNKILLABLE BEAST FINDS YOU!
AAAAAA
UH... WHAT WAS THAT?
I KNOW. SOMETHING LIKE THAT SHAKES YOU TO THE CORE.
A TALKING FROG. UGH.
GWEN?
AH! A FROG THAT KNOWS MY NAME!
MON DIEU! ALWAYS WITH ZE SLURS.

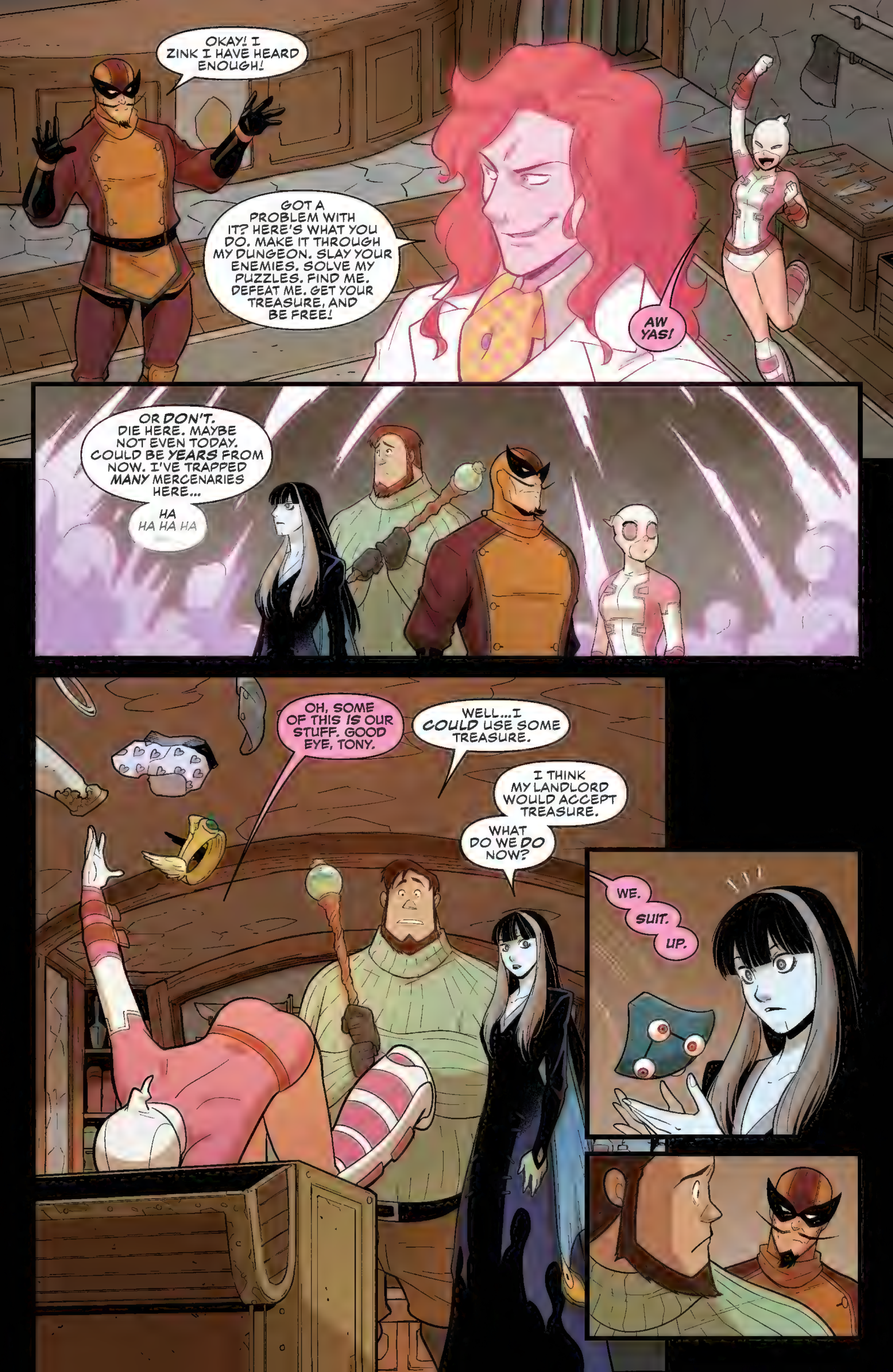

BATROC! SARAH! WHAT ARE YOU ALL *DOING* HERE?
JUST TRYING TO GET *PAID*, GIRL. SAME AS YOU, HA HA.
YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR MAGIC HEAD THING.
AND YOU DON'T HAVE A BUNCH OF GUNS AND SWORDS. TONY, YOU SEEM TO BE POTION-FREE.
NO ONE CAN TAKE MY *KICKS!*
WHAT PRISON IS THIS? WHAT PURPOSE?
HOO HOO *HOO!* ADVENTURERS WITHOUT ANY *PROTECTION!*
WHO'S THERE?
SOUNDS LIKE A KOOKY OLD-TIMER WHO'S GOING TO GIVE US SOME CRYPTIC EXPOSITION.
UH...
WE'VE SPENT ENOUGH TIME NOT KNOWING WHAT'S GOING ON! IT'S TIME FOR SOME EXPOSITION!
YES! YES! WELCOME!
QUOI?!
HA HA...

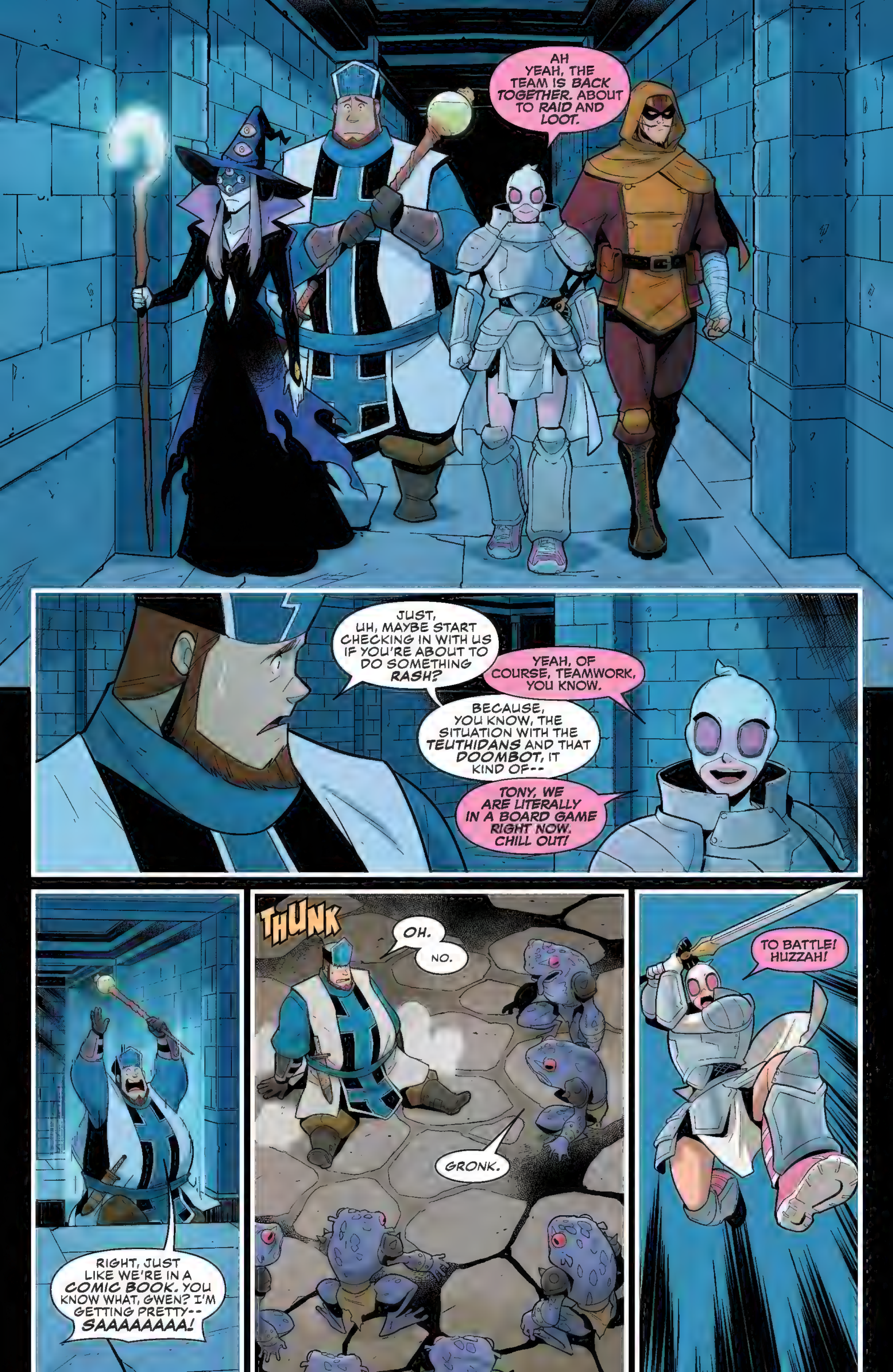

FANTASY COSTCO.
MY GRACIOUS! LOOK AT YOU ALL! *VERY* UNPREPARED IN SUCH A *DANGEROUS PLACE.*
WHERE ARE WE?
AND WHERE IS YOUR SHOP?
YOU HAVE A STORE IN A DUNGEON?
HOW CAN WE GET *OUT?!*
MY SHOP!
DEEP INSIDE A MYSTERIOUS DUNGEON MAZE!
WELL, THERE ARE MANY PERILS HERE, AND TO FIND YOUR WAY OUT, YOU SURELY WILL HAVE TO FACE THEM. ESPECIALLY...
...THE UNKILLABLE BEAST.
OKAY, SO SECOND MENTIONING OF *THAT.* PROBABLY GONNA RUN INTO IT IN A BIT.
IF YOU LET IT *SPEAK,* IT WILL *DRIVE YOU MAD.*
IF YOU MAKE IT *BLEED,* IT WILL NOT LAST.
PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE SOME *ARMOR?*
SURE WOULD.
WELL, MY PRICES ARE *VERY* REASONABLE...
HEY, THIS IS *MY* TECH!
WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.
AH, WELL THERE IS PLENTY OF *GOLD* THROUGHOUT THE DUNGEON! DEFEAT *MONSTERS* AND FIND *TREASURE* TO--

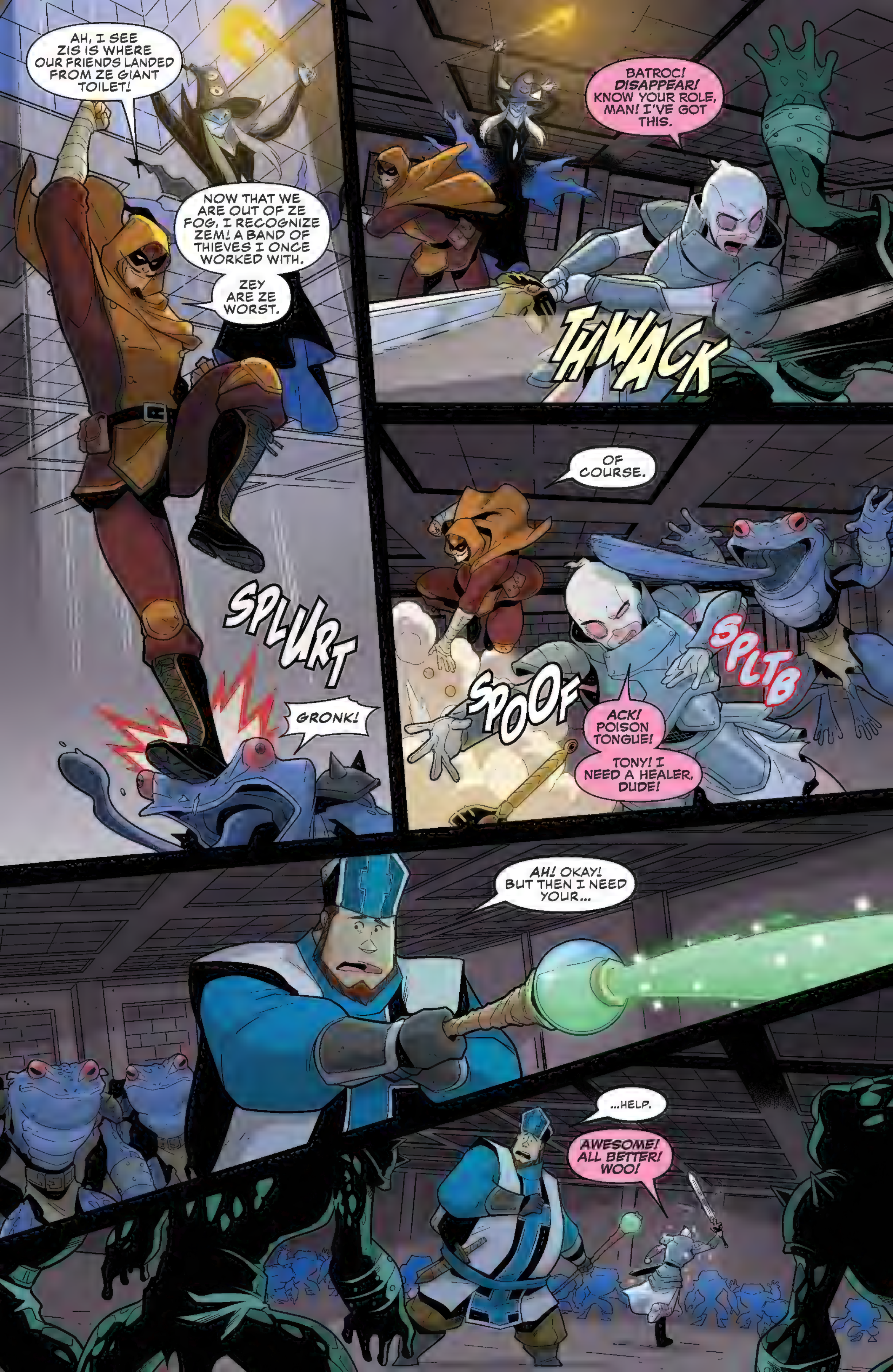

♪
SLICE
FTZZZZ
WE'RE SLASHING PRICES, MY FRIENDS!
WHOA!
WHAT?! A ROBOT!
GANG, YOU REALLY NEED TO CATCH UP TO ME ON THIS SITUATION.
HOW WERE YOU SO SURE?
BECAUSE I'M RIGHT ABOUT EVERYTHING HERE. IT'S A GAME. SOMEONE KNOWS THE SAME RULES I DO--
FWOOSH
WELL, WELL, WELL! A LEVEL ONE HAS DECIDED SHE KNOWS THE TRICKS AND TRAPS OF THE DEADLIEST DUNGEON.
TIGHT ALLITERATION. AND YEP. PRETTY MUCH!
EXCELLENT. THEN TELL ME... HOW DID YOU GET HERE, AND WHY?
... AH.
HA HA HA! I WILL TELL YOU!

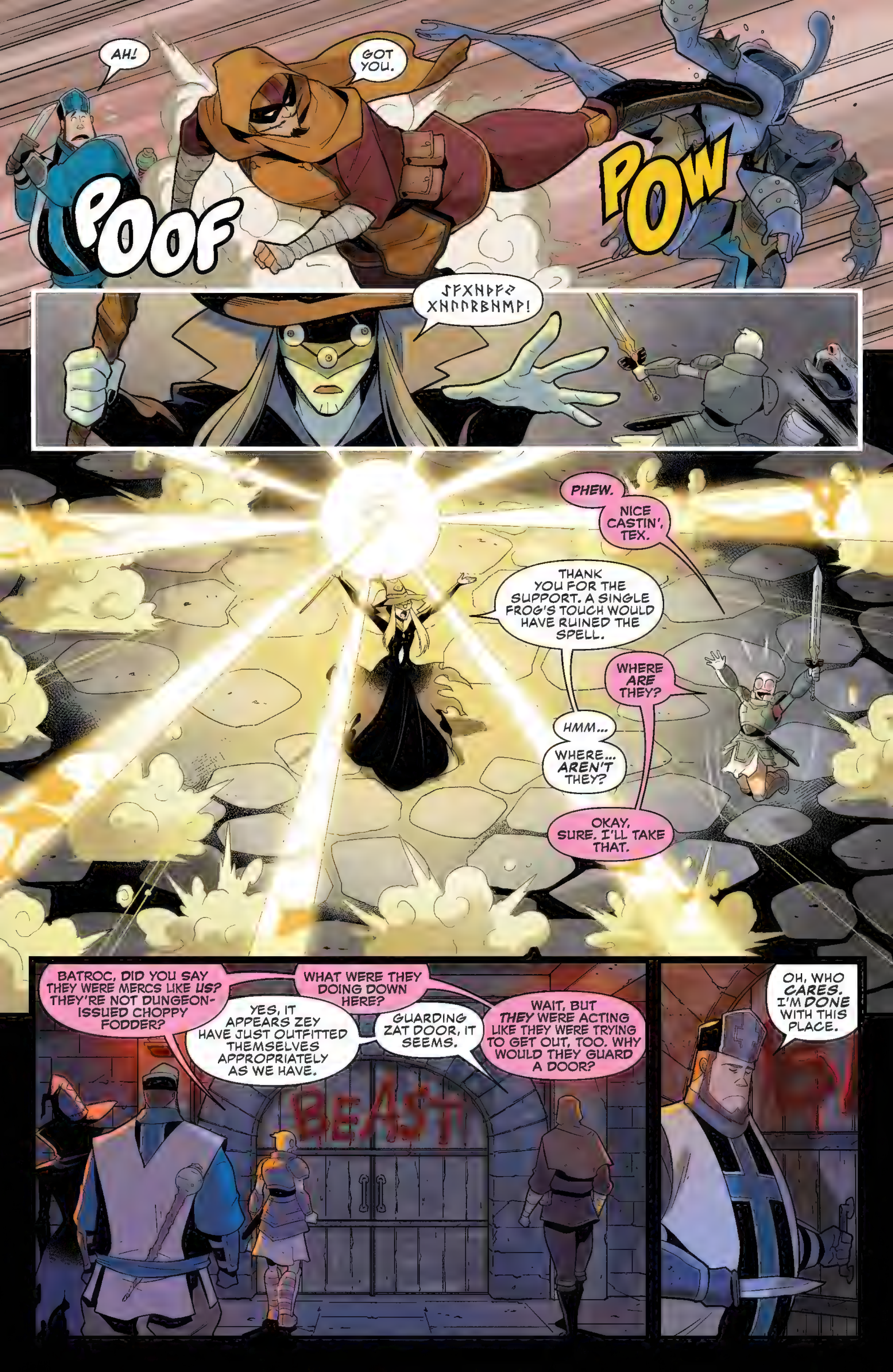

MERCENARIES.
EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU.
WHAT DO YOU LIVE FOR?
VIOLENCE AND MONEY.
YOUR MEMORIES ARE WOEFUL TRAITORS, SO I WILL TELL YOU...
YOU ALL ANSWERED AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR MERCENARY WORK. IT BROUGHT YOU HERE, A CLASSIC SETTING TO EXPERIENCE THE LIFESTYLE YOU CRAVE.
A DUNGEON CRAWL. A RAID.
KILL AND PROFIT. LOSE AND DIE.
SHE WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE EXPOSITION...
I'M SORRY I CAN'T TELL YOU MORE THAN THAT. HEH HEH... PERHAPS IF YOU DO WELL ENOUGH, YOU MIGHT EVEN FIND OUT WHO PUT YOU HERE--
YOU'RE ARCADE.
WH-WHAT?! I AM THE ENIGMATIC DUNGEON MASTER! I--
YEAH, YOU'RE ARCADE. THIS IS A MURDERWORLD.

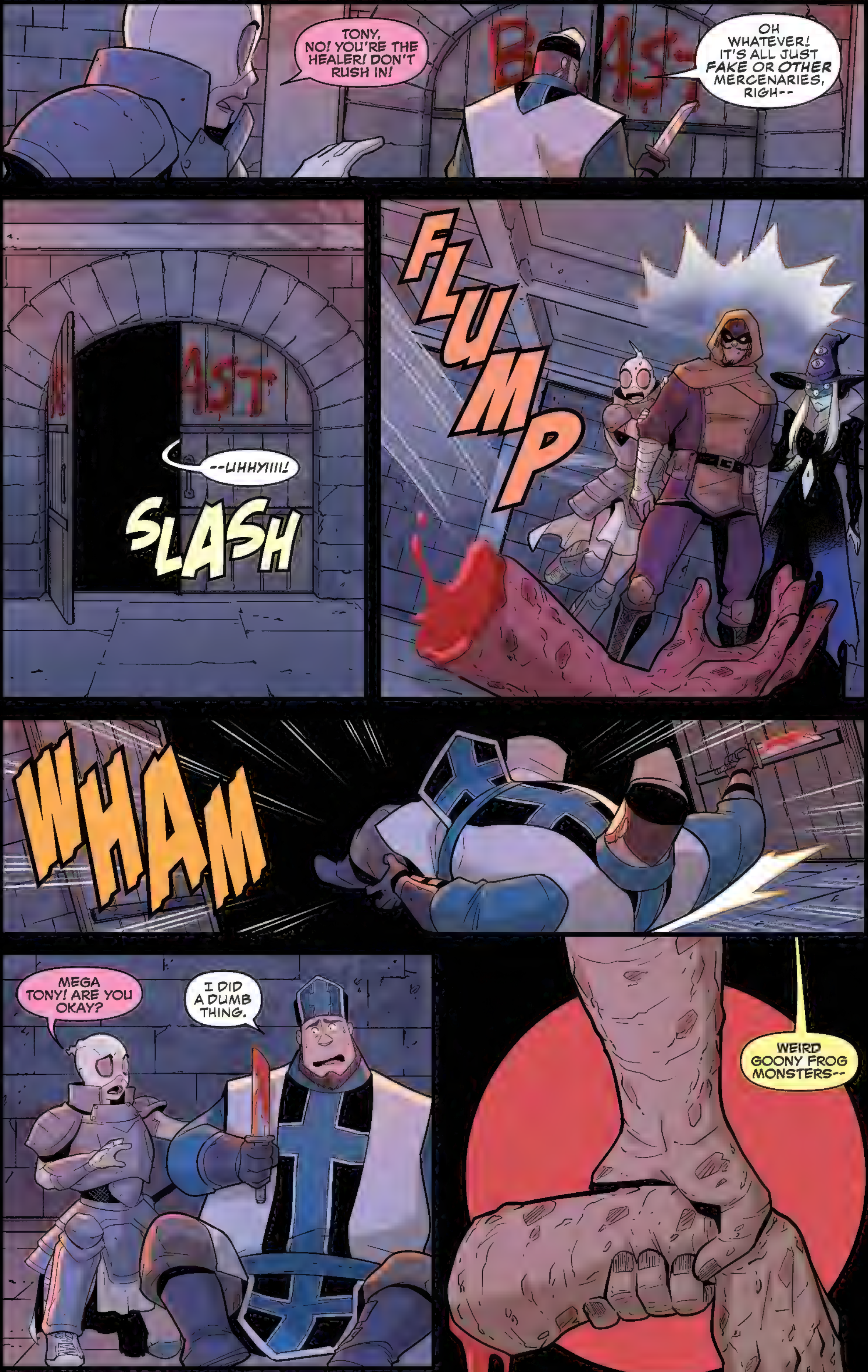

FINE! YOU GUESSED IT. I'M ARCADE. WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
I'M GWEN POOLE.
AND I'VE DONE THIS DUNGEON A BIIIIILLLLLLION TIIIIIIMES!
I DON'T REMEMBER YOU BEING HERE BEFORE...
IN A BROADER SENSE!
WELL YOU'VE RUINED THE SHOPKEEPER SCENE.
OKAY, SO IF THIS ISN'T FUN ANYMORE OR WHATEVER, CAN YOU JUST LET US GO?
HA!
AH HA HA! OH, IT IS STILL SO MUCH FUN. YOU KNOW WHAT MY PROBLEM WITH MURDERWORLD WAS BEFORE?
HEROES.
GOOD PEOPLE WHO FOUGHT FOR SOMETHING. MADE IT OUT EVERY TIME.
BUT TRAPPING MERCENARIES...
...YOU'VE ALL MADE IT SO MUCH MORE SUSTAINABLE.

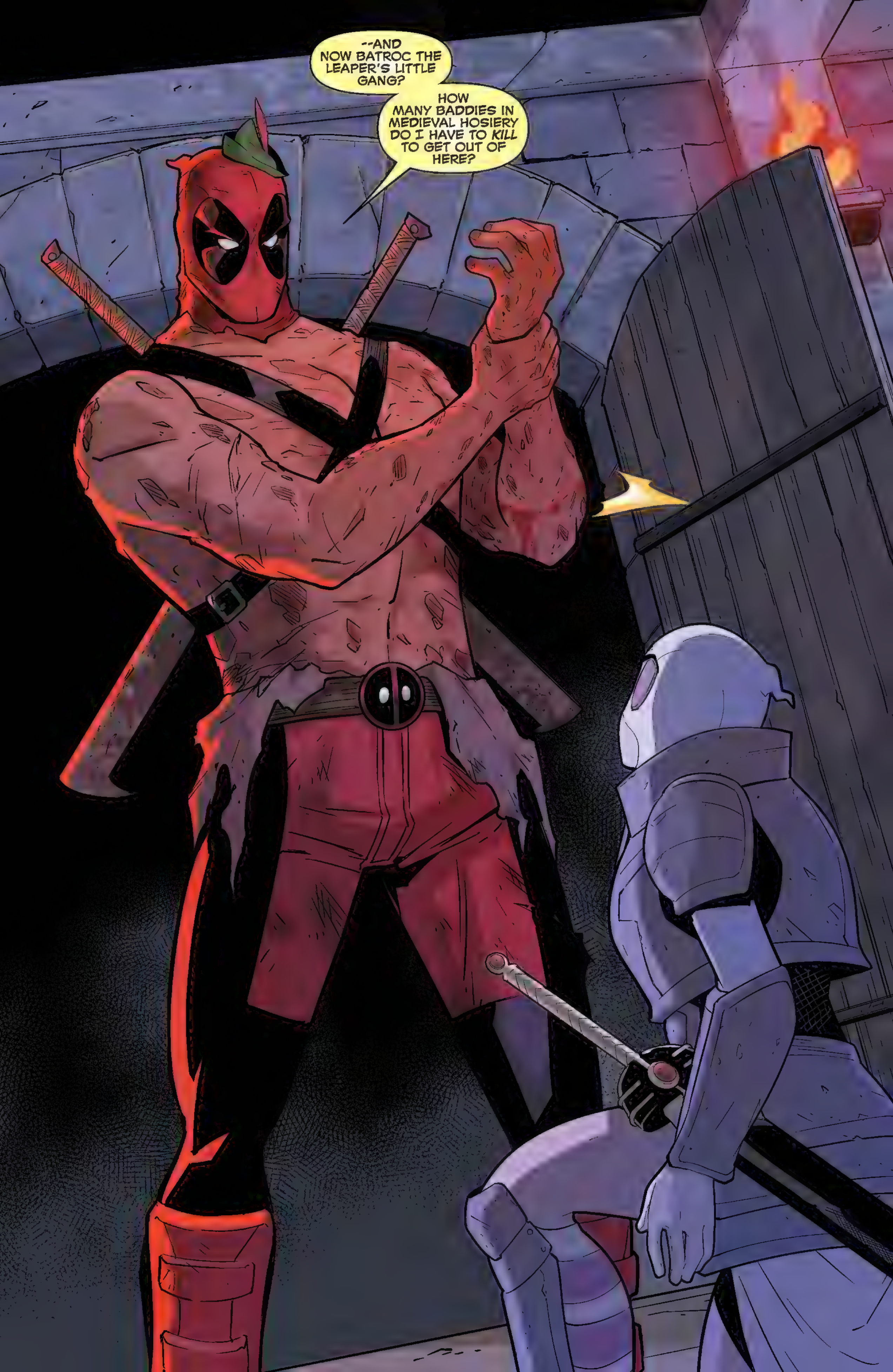

OKAY! I ZINK I HAVE HEARD ENOUGH!
GOT A PROBLEM WITH IT? HERE'S WHAT YOU DO. MAKE IT THROUGH MY DUNGEON. SLAY YOUR ENEMIES. SOLVE MY PUZZLES. FIND ME. DEFEAT ME. GET YOUR TREASURE, AND BE FREE!
AW YAS!
OR *DON'T*. DIE HERE. MAYBE NOT EVEN TODAY. COULD BE *YEARS* FROM NOW. I'VE TRAPPED *MANY* MERCENARIES HERE...
HA HA HA HA
OH, SOME OF THIS *IS* OUR STUFF. GOOD EYE, TONY.
WELL...I *COULD* USE SOME TREASURE.
I THINK MY LANDLORD WOULD ACCEPT TREASURE.
WHAT DO WE *DO* NOW?
WE. SUIT. UP.


AH YEAH, THE TEAM IS *BACK TOGETHER.* ABOUT TO *RAID* AND *LOOT.*
JUST, UH, MAYBE START CHECKING IN WITH US IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING *RASH?*
YEAH, OF COURSE, TEAMWORK, YOU KNOW.
BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, THE SITUATION WITH THE *TEUTHIDANS* AND THAT *DOOMBOT,* IT KIND OF--
TONY, WE ARE LITERALLY IN A BOARD GAME RIGHT NOW. CHILL OUT!
RIGHT, JUST LIKE WE'RE IN A *COMIC BOOK.* YOU KNOW WHAT, GWEN? I'M GETTING PRETTY--
SAAAAAAAA!
THUNK
OH.
NO.
GRONK.
TO BATTLE! HUZZAH!


AH, I SEE ZIS IS WHERE OUR FRIENDS LANDED FROM ZE GIANT TOILET!
NOW THAT WE ARE OUT OF ZE FOG, I RECOGNIZE ZEM! A BAND OF THIEVES I ONCE WORKED WITH.
ZEY ARE ZE WORST.
SPLURT
GRONK!
BATROC! DISAPPEAR! KNOW YOUR ROLE, MAN! I'VE GOT THIS.
THWACK
OF COURSE.
SPOOF
SPLTB
ACK! POISON TONGUE!
TONY! I NEED A HEALER, DUDE!
AH! OKAY! BUT THEN I NEED YOUR...
...HELP.
AWESOME! ALL BETTER! WOO!

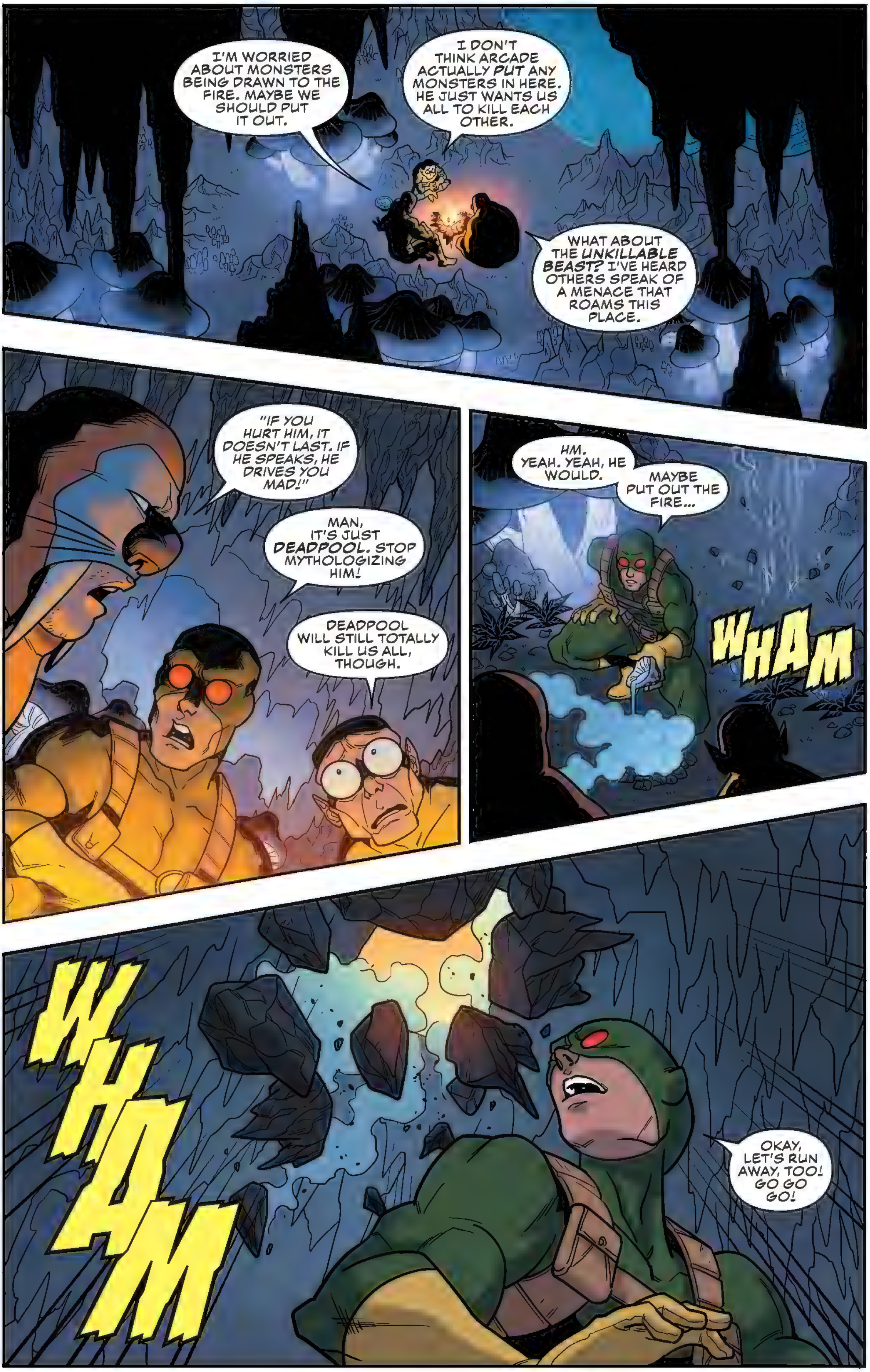

AH!
GOT YOU.
POOF
POW
ᛊᚠᚷᚺᚦᚠᛃ ᚷᚺᚢᚢᚱᛒᚺᛗᚹ!
PHEW.
NICE CASTIN', TEX.
THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT. A SINGLE FROG'S TOUCH WOULD HAVE RUINED THE SPELL.
WHERE ARE THEY?
HMM...
WHERE... AREN'T THEY?
OKAY, SURE. I'LL TAKE THAT.
BATROC, DID YOU SAY THEY WERE MERCS LIKE US? THEY'RE NOT DUNGEON-ISSUED CHOPPY FODDER?
WHAT WERE THEY DOING DOWN HERE?
YES, IT APPEARS ZEY HAVE JUST OUTFITTED THEMSELVES APPROPRIATELY AS WE HAVE.
GUARDING ZAT DOOR, IT SEEMS.
WAIT, BUT THEY WERE ACTING LIKE THEY WERE TRYING TO GET OUT, TOO. WHY WOULD THEY GUARD A DOOR?
BEAST
OH, WHO CARES. I'M DONE WITH THIS PLACE.

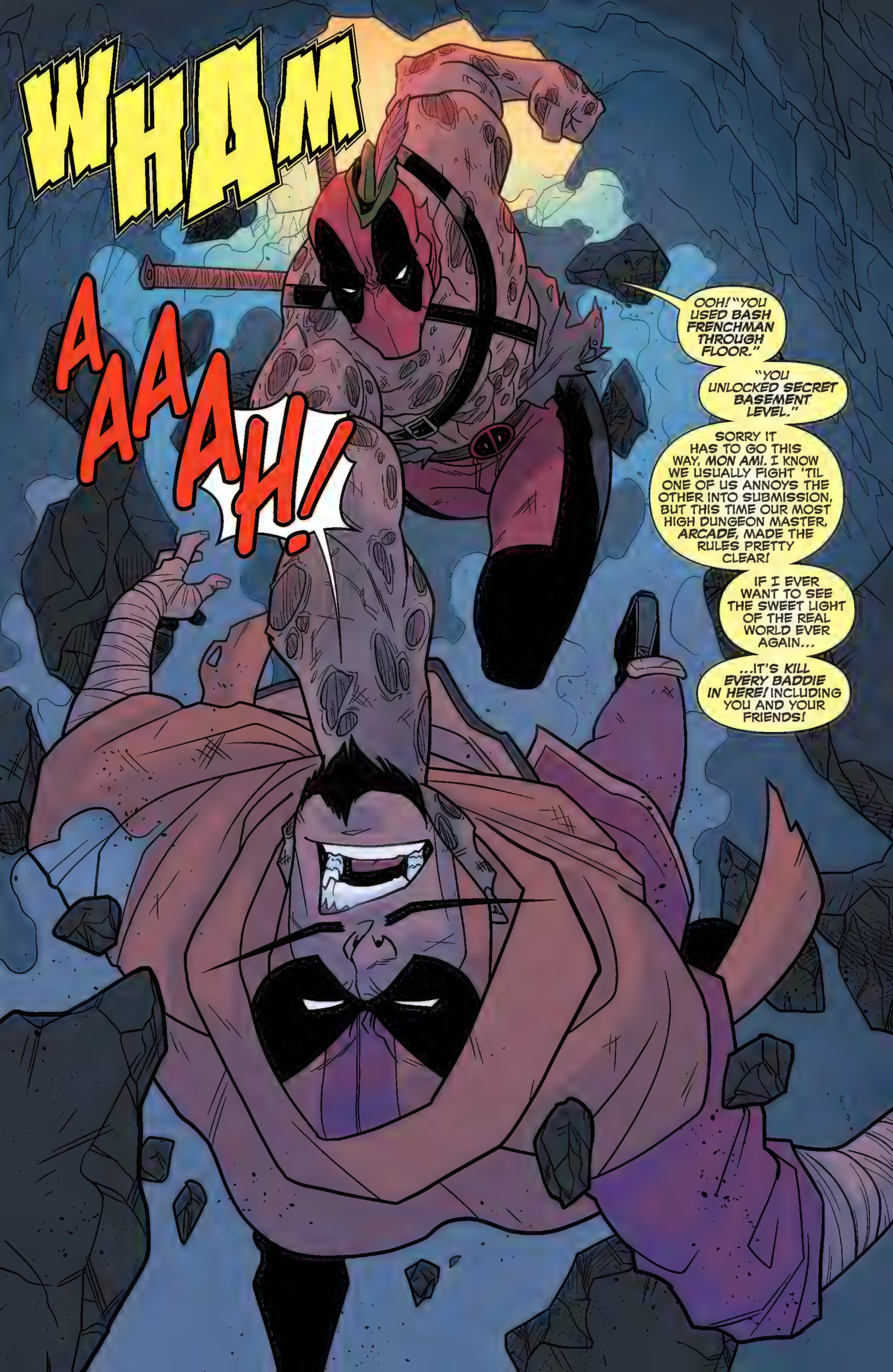

TONY, NO! YOU'RE THE HEALER! DON'T RUSH IN!
B AST
OH WHATEVER! IT'S ALL JUST *FAKE* OR *OTHER* MERCENARIES, RIGH--
AST
--UHHYIIII!
SLASH
FLUMP
WHAM
MEGA TONY! ARE YOU OKAY?
I DID A DUMB THING.
WEIRD GOONY FROG MONSTERS--

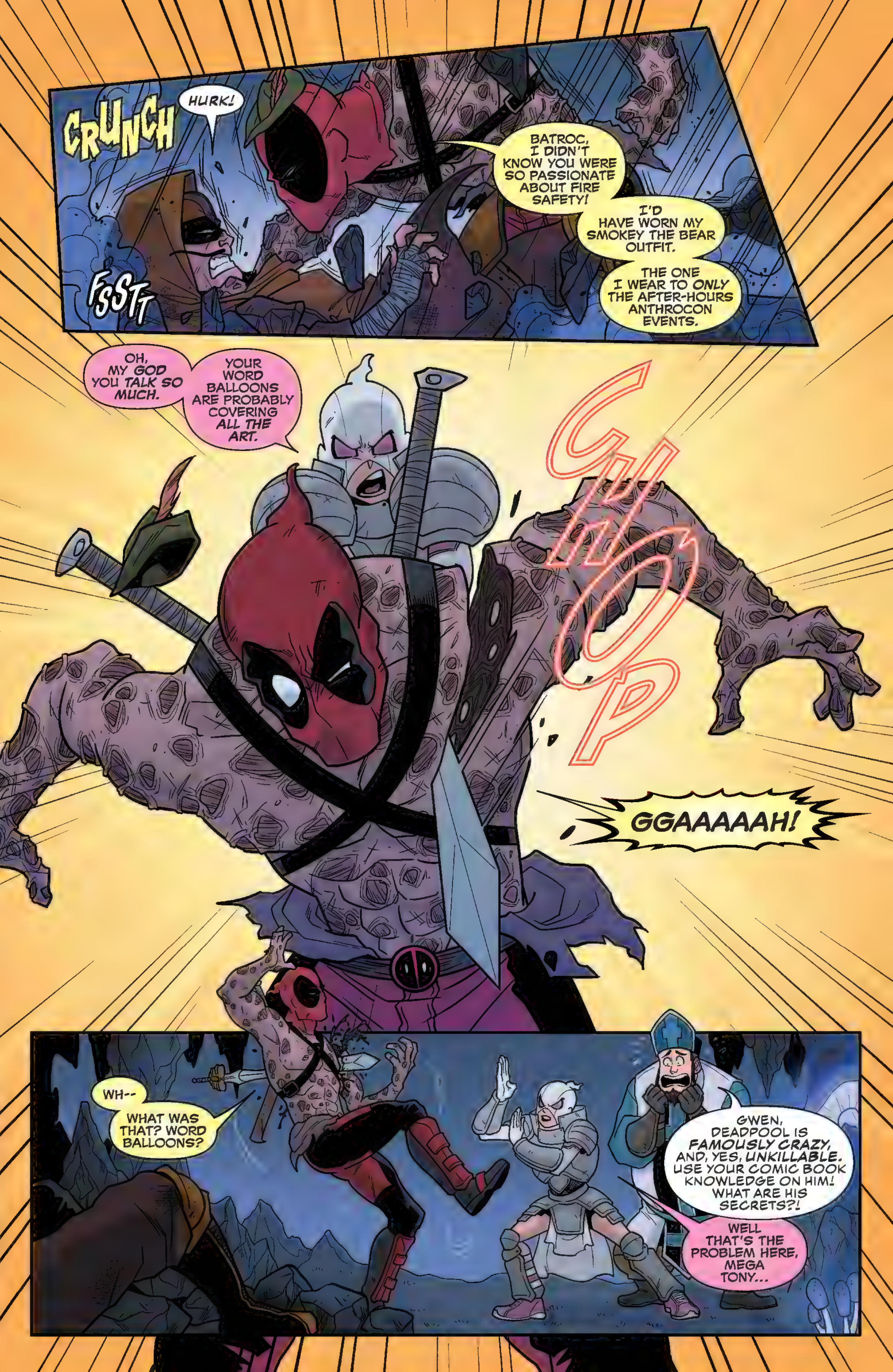

--AND NOW BATROC THE LEAPER'S LITTLE GANG?
HOW MANY BADDIES IN MEDIEVAL HOSIERY DO I HAVE TO *KILL* TO GET OUT OF HERE?

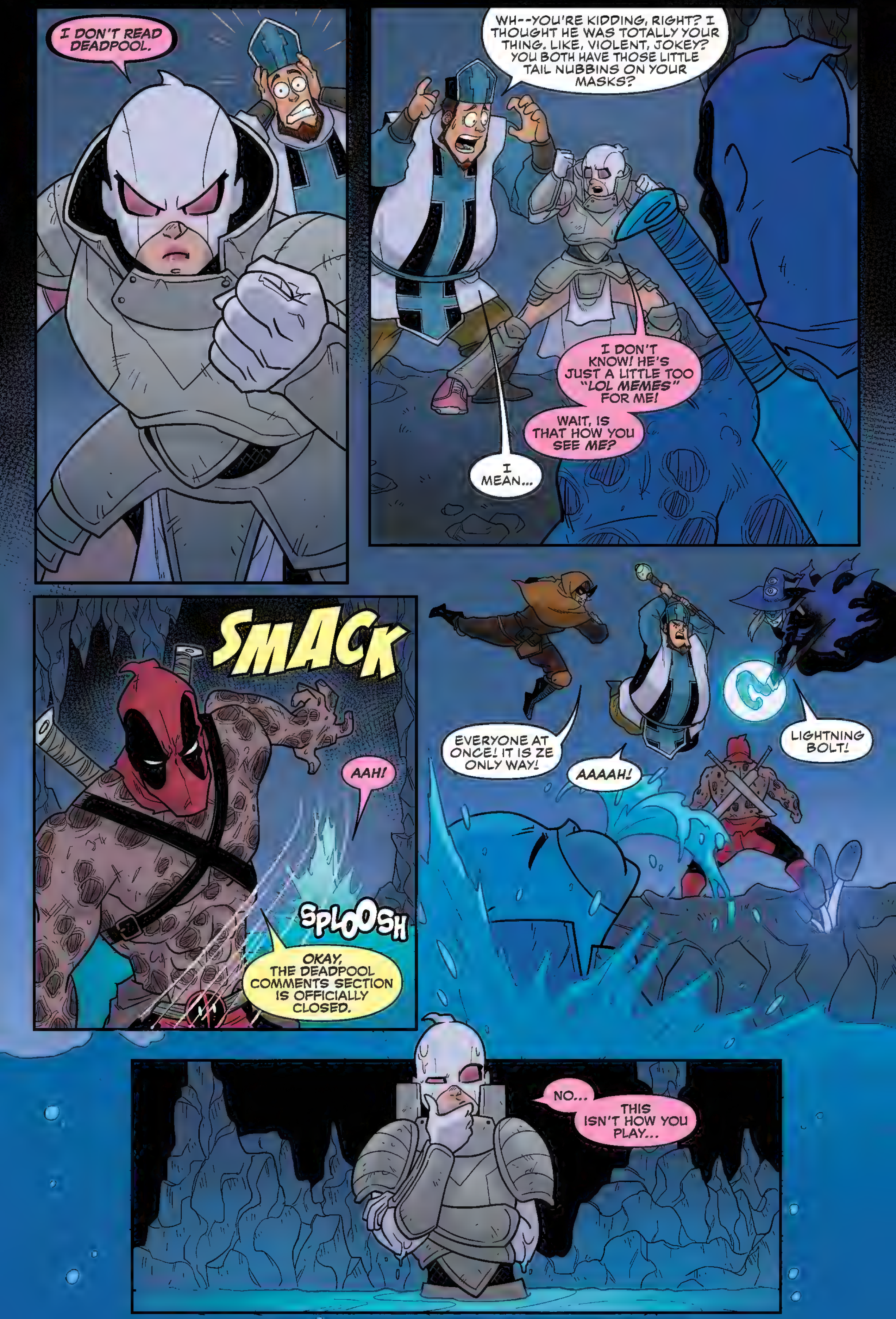
A LITTLE HELP?!?!
Sisk '16

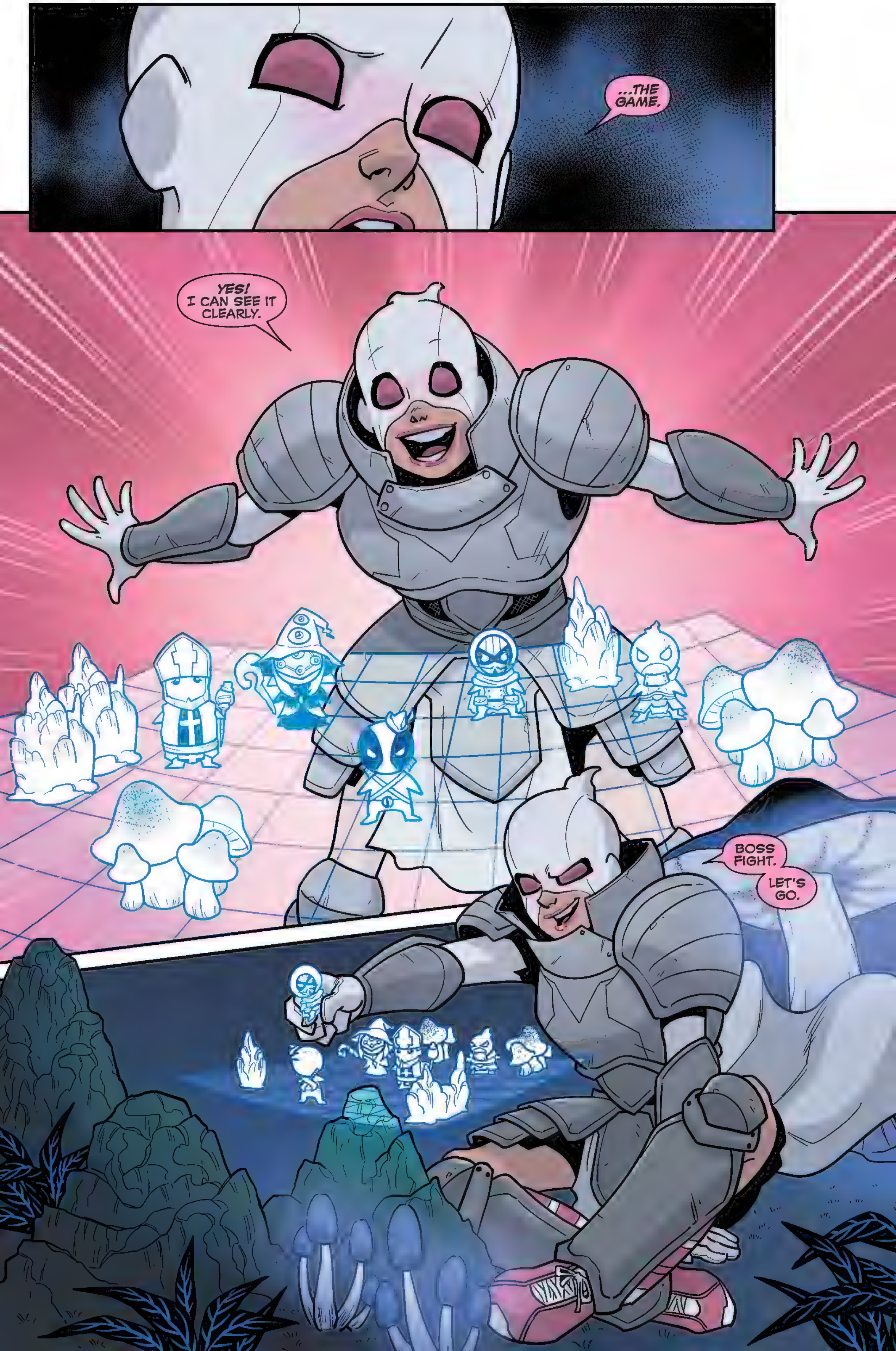
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #13

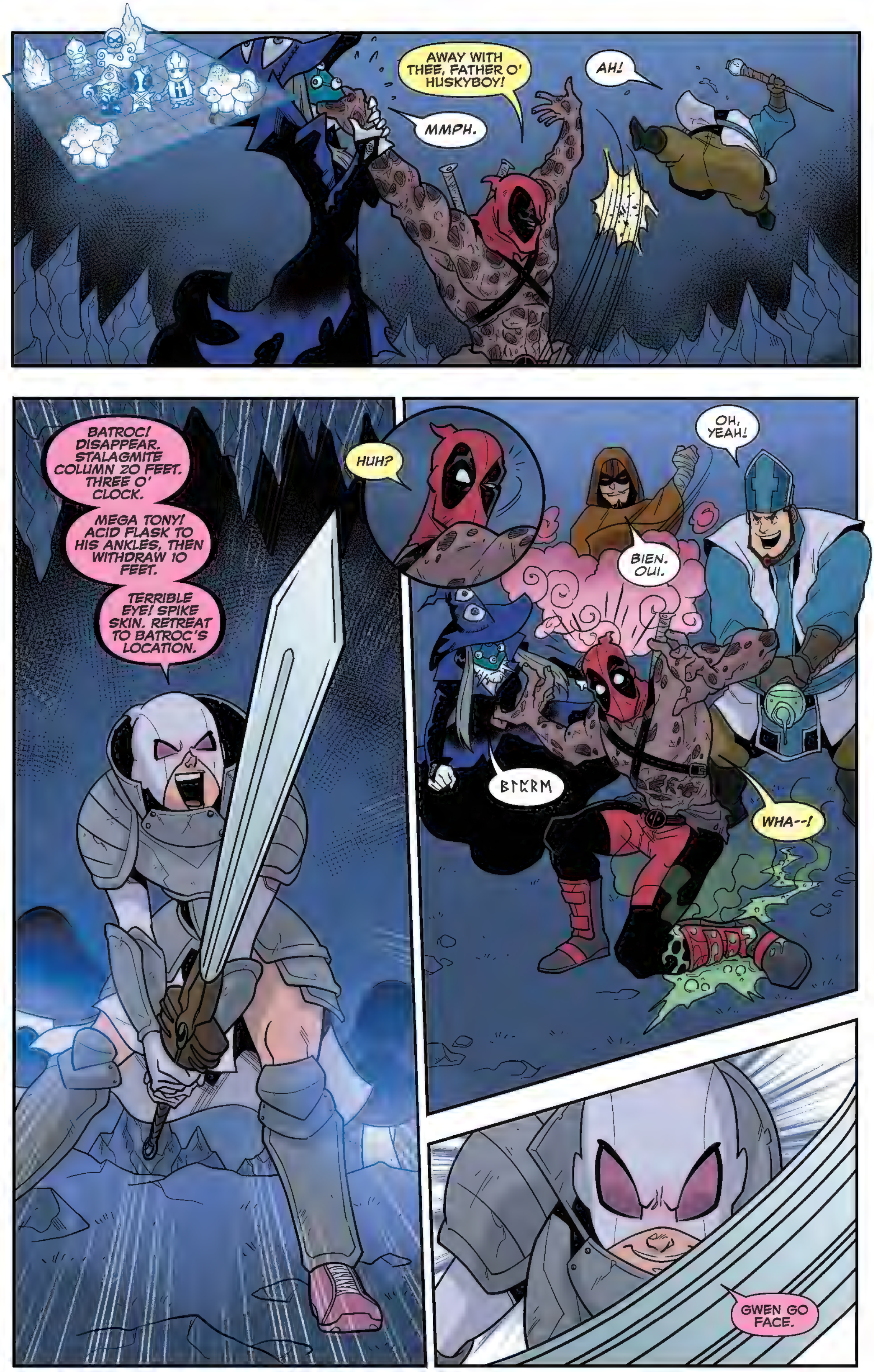

I'M WORRIED ABOUT MONSTERS BEING DRAWN TO THE FIRE. MAYBE WE SHOULD PUT IT OUT.
I DON'T THINK ARCADE ACTUALLY *PUT* ANY MONSTERS IN HERE. HE JUST WANTS US ALL TO KILL EACH OTHER.
WHAT ABOUT THE ***UNKILLABLE BEAST?*** I'VE HEARD OTHERS SPEAK OF A MENACE THAT ROAMS THIS PLACE.
"IF YOU HURT HIM, IT DOESN'T LAST. IF HE SPEAKS, HE DRIVES YOU MAD!"
MAN, IT'S JUST ***DEADPOOL.*** STOP MYTHOLOGIZING HIM!
DEADPOOL WILL STILL TOTALLY KILL US ALL, THOUGH.
HM. YEAH. YEAH, HE WOULD.
MAYBE PUT OUT THE FIRE...
WHAM
WHAM
OKAY, LET'S RUN AWAY, TOO! GO GO GO!

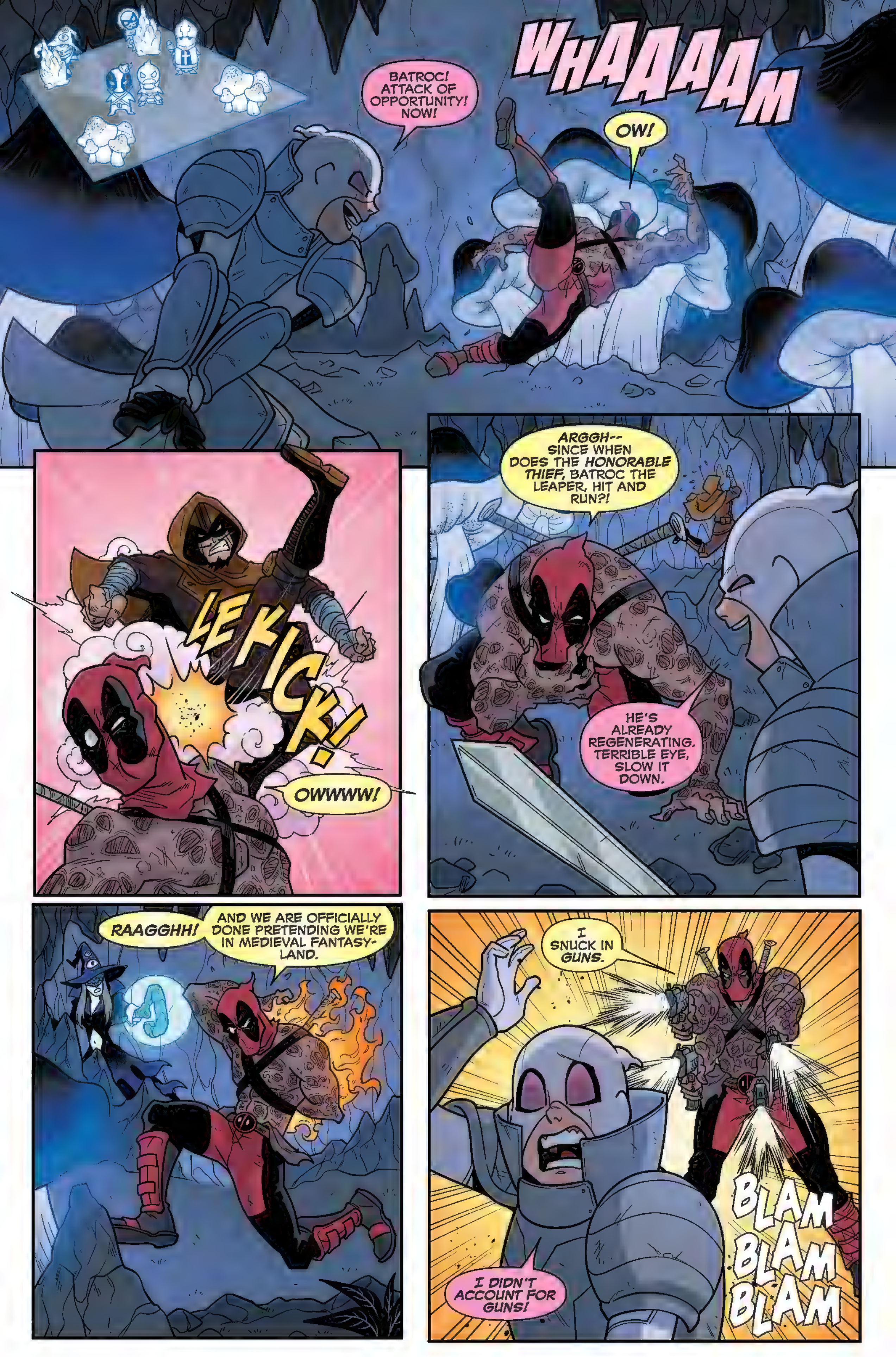

WHAM
AAAAH!!
OOH! "YOU USED BASH FRENCHMAN THROUGH FLOOR."
"YOU UNLOCKED SECRET BASEMENT LEVEL."
SORRY IT HAS TO GO THIS WAY, *MON AMI*. I KNOW WE USUALLY FIGHT 'TIL ONE OF US ANNOYS THE OTHER INTO SUBMISSION, BUT THIS TIME OUR MOST HIGH DUNGEON MASTER, *ARCADE*, MADE THE RULES PRETTY CLEAR!
IF I EVER WANT TO SEE THE SWEET LIGHT OF THE REAL WORLD EVER AGAIN...
...IT'S *KILL EVERY BADDIE IN HERE!* INCLUDING YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS!

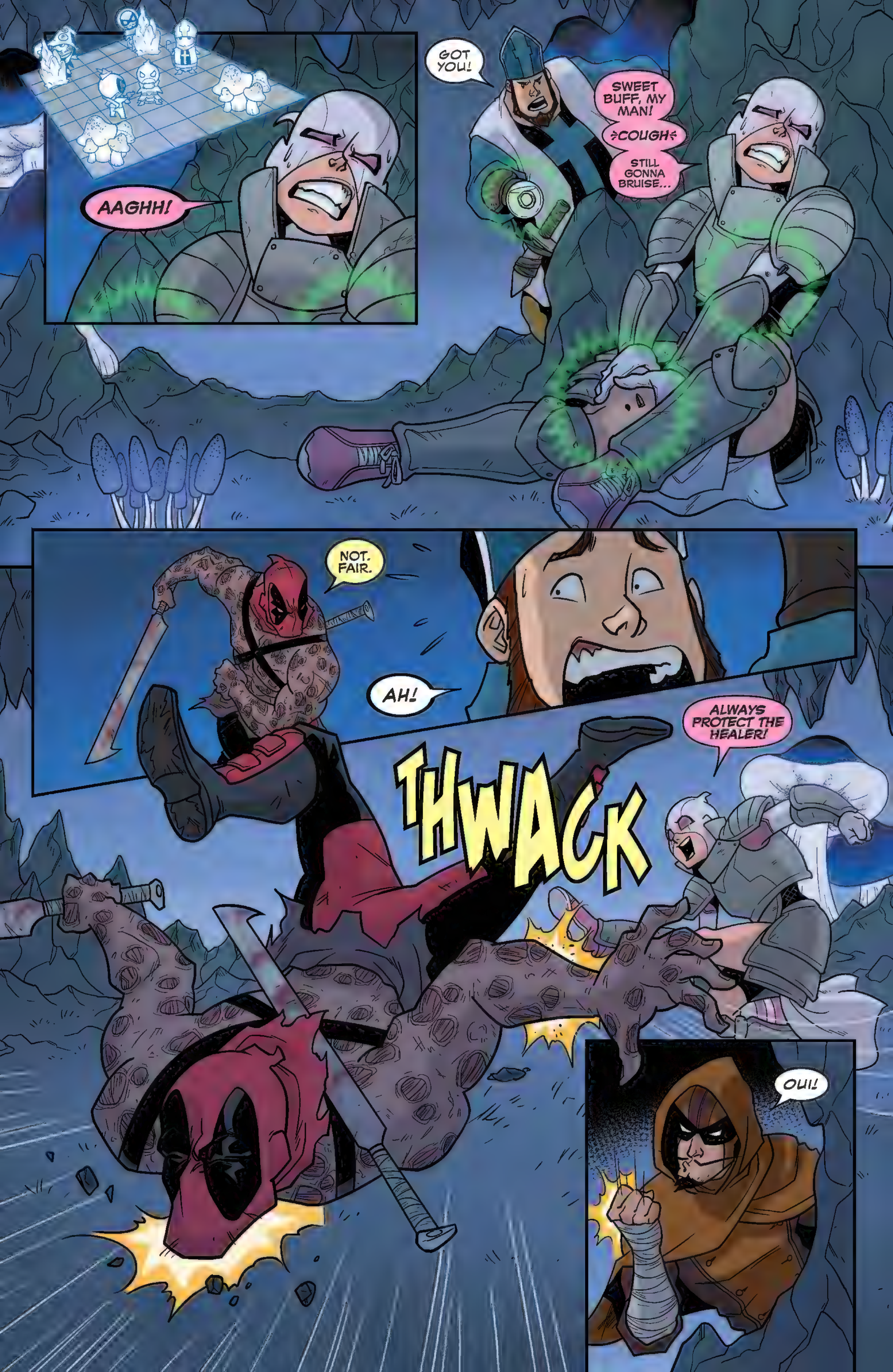

CRUNCH
HURK!
FSSTT
BATROC, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE SO PASSIONATE ABOUT FIRE SAFETY!
I'D HAVE WORN MY SMOKEY THE BEAR OUTFIT.
THE ONE I WEAR TO ONLY THE AFTER-HOURS ANTHROCON EVENTS.
OH, MY GOD YOU TALK SO MUCH.
YOUR WORD BALLOONS ARE PROBABLY COVERING ALL THE ART.
CHOP
GGAAAAAH!
WH--
WHAT WAS THAT? WORD BALLOONS?
GWEN, DEADPOOL IS FAMOUSLY CRAZY, AND, YES, UNKILLABLE. USE YOUR COMIC BOOK KNOWLEDGE ON HIM! WHAT ARE HIS SECRETS?!
WELL THAT'S THE PROBLEM HERE, MEGA TONY...

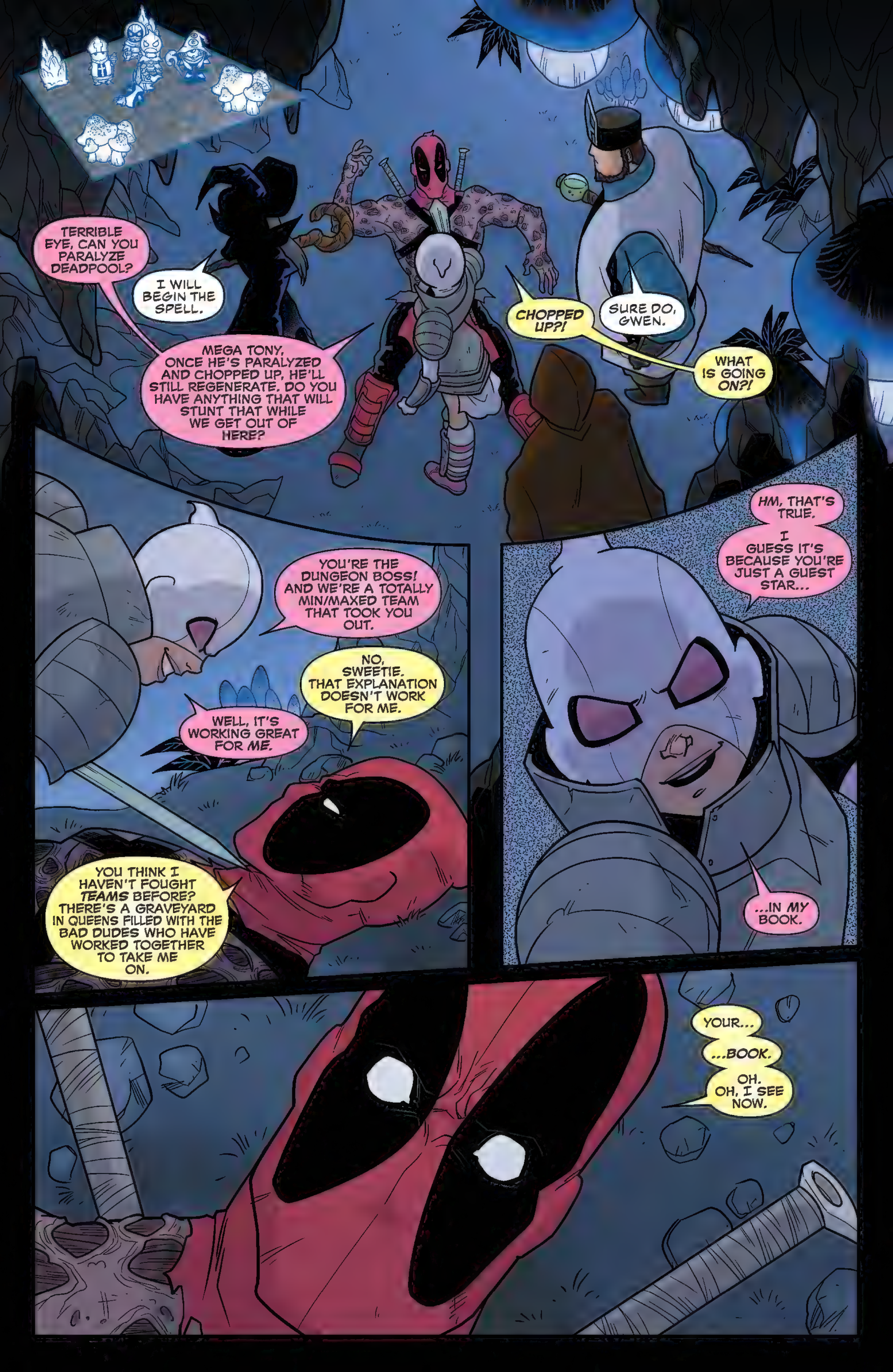

I DON'T READ DEADPOOL.
WH--YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT? I THOUGHT HE WAS TOTALLY YOUR THING. LIKE, VIOLENT, JOKEY? YOU BOTH HAVE THOSE LITTLE TAIL NUBBINS ON YOUR MASKS?
I DON'T KNOW! HE'S JUST A LITTLE TOO "LOL MEMES" FOR ME!
WAIT, IS THAT HOW YOU SEE ME?
I MEAN...
SMACK
AAH!
SPLOOSH
OKAY, THE DEADPOOL COMMENTS SECTION IS OFFICIALLY CLOSED.
EVERYONE AT ONCE! IT IS ZE ONLY WAY!
AAAAH!
LIGHTNING BOLT!
NO...
THIS ISN'T HOW YOU PLAY...

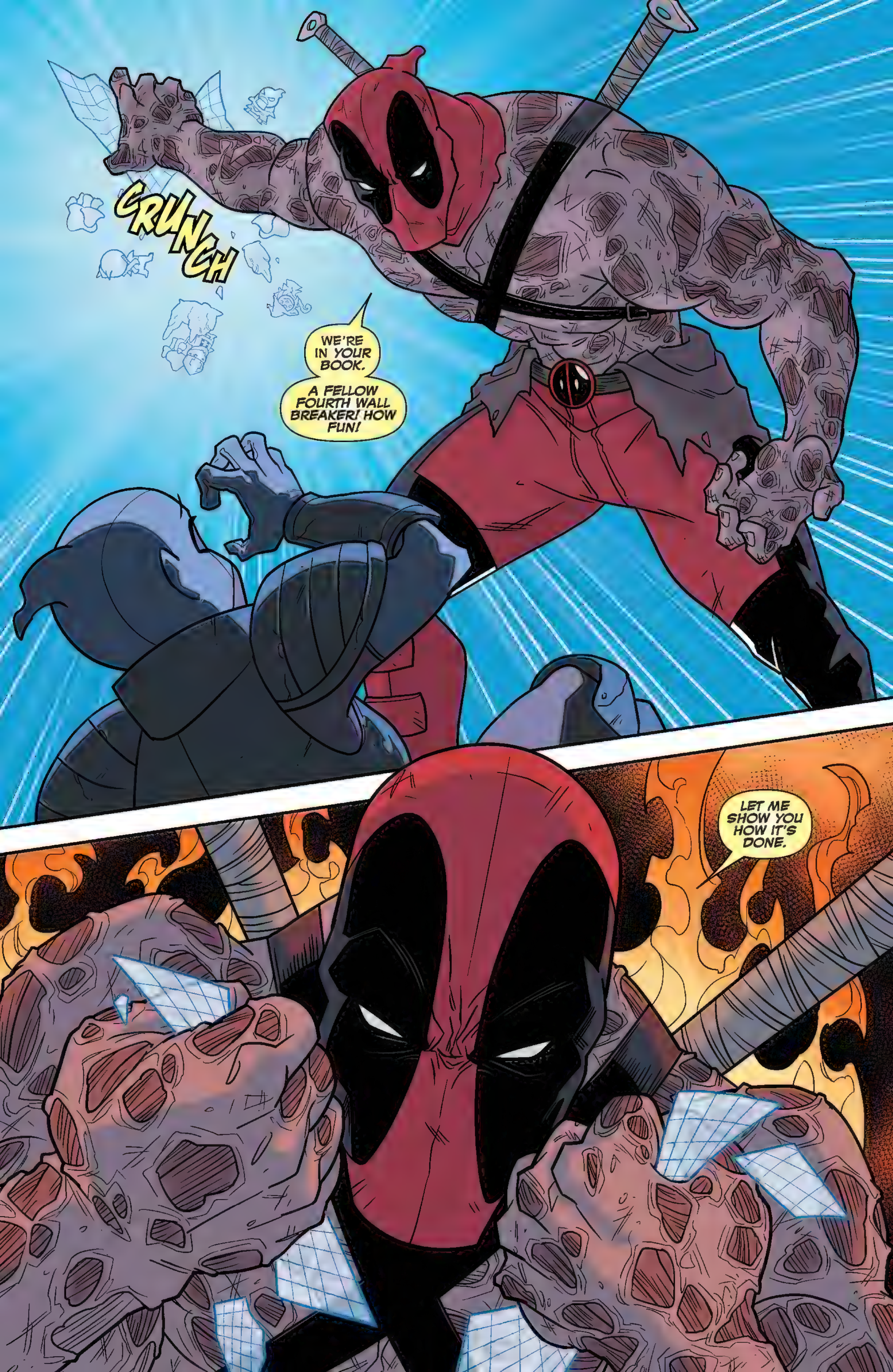

...THE GAME.
YES! I CAN SEE IT CLEARLY.
BOSS FIGHT.
LET'S GO.

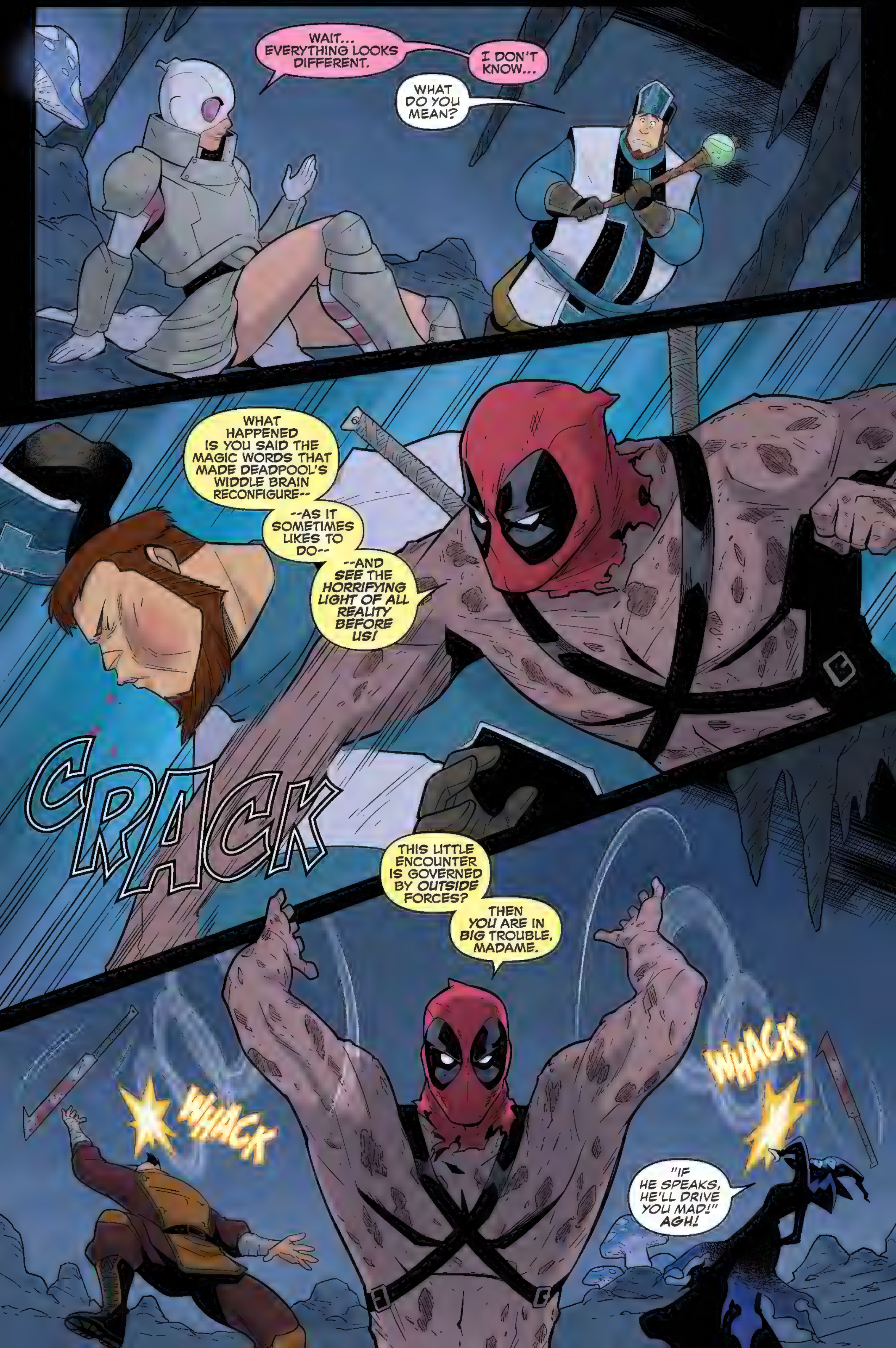

AWAY WITH THEE, FATHER O' HUSKYBOY!
MMPH.
AH!
BATROC! DISAPPEAR. STALAGMITE COLUMN 20 FEET. THREE O' CLOCK.
MEGA TONY! ACID FLASK TO HIS ANKLES, THEN WITHDRAW 10 FEET.
TERRIBLE EYE! SPIKE SKIN. RETREAT TO BATROC'S LOCATION.
HUH?
OH, YEAH!
BIEN. OUI.
ᛒᛚᚴᚱᛗ
WHA--!
GWEN GO FACE.

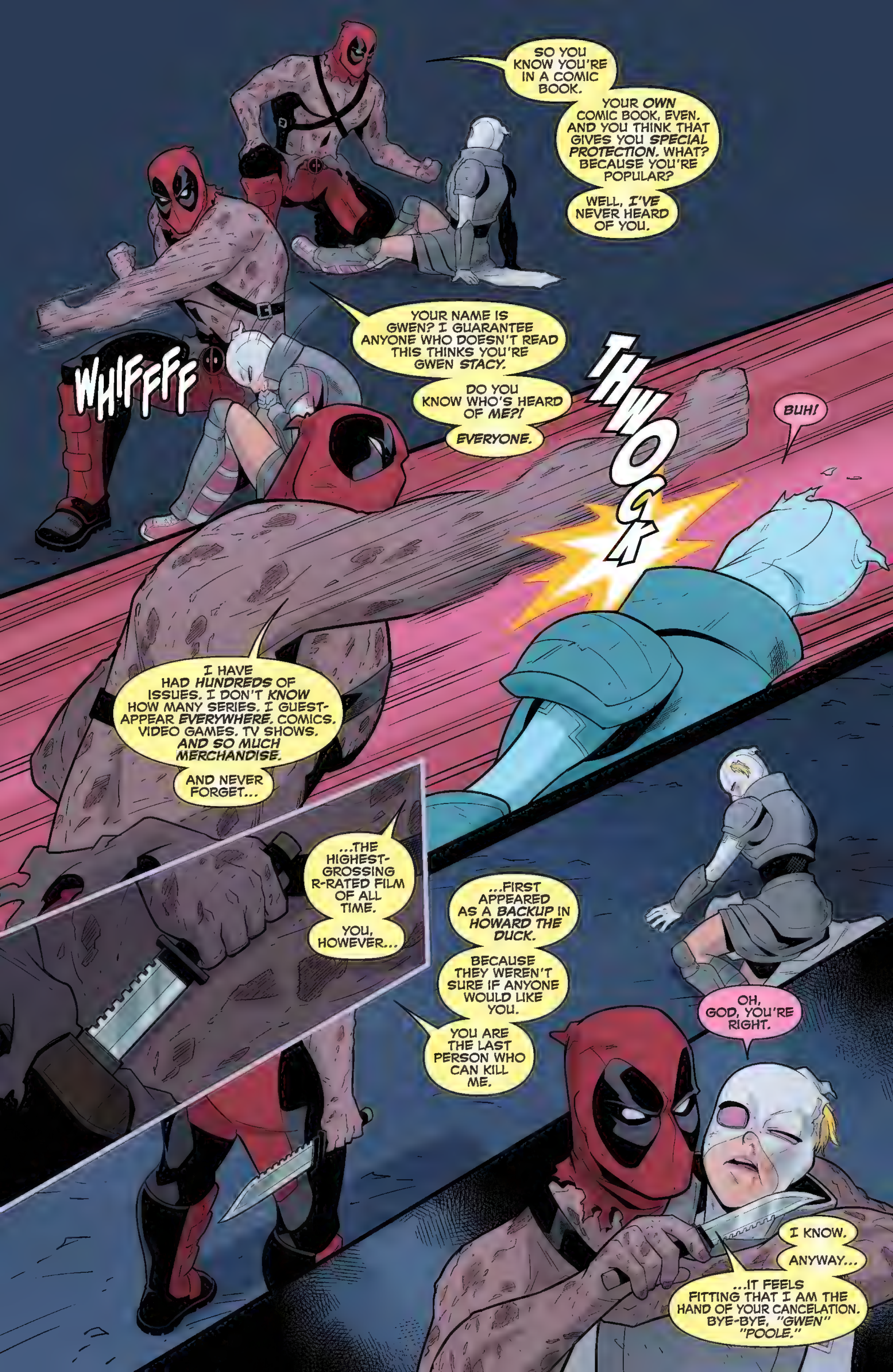

BATROC! ATTACK OF OPPORTUNITY! NOW!
WHAAAAAM
OW!
LE KICK!
OWWWW!
ARGGH-- SINCE WHEN DOES THE *HONORABLE THIEF*, BATROC THE LEAPER, HIT AND RUN?!
HE'S ALREADY REGENERATING. TERRIBLE EYE, SLOW IT DOWN.
RAAGGHH!
AND WE ARE OFFICIALLY DONE PRETENDING WE'RE IN MEDIEVAL FANTASY-LAND.
I SNUCK IN *GUNS.*
BLAM BLAM BLAM
I DIDN'T ACCOUNT FOR GUNS!

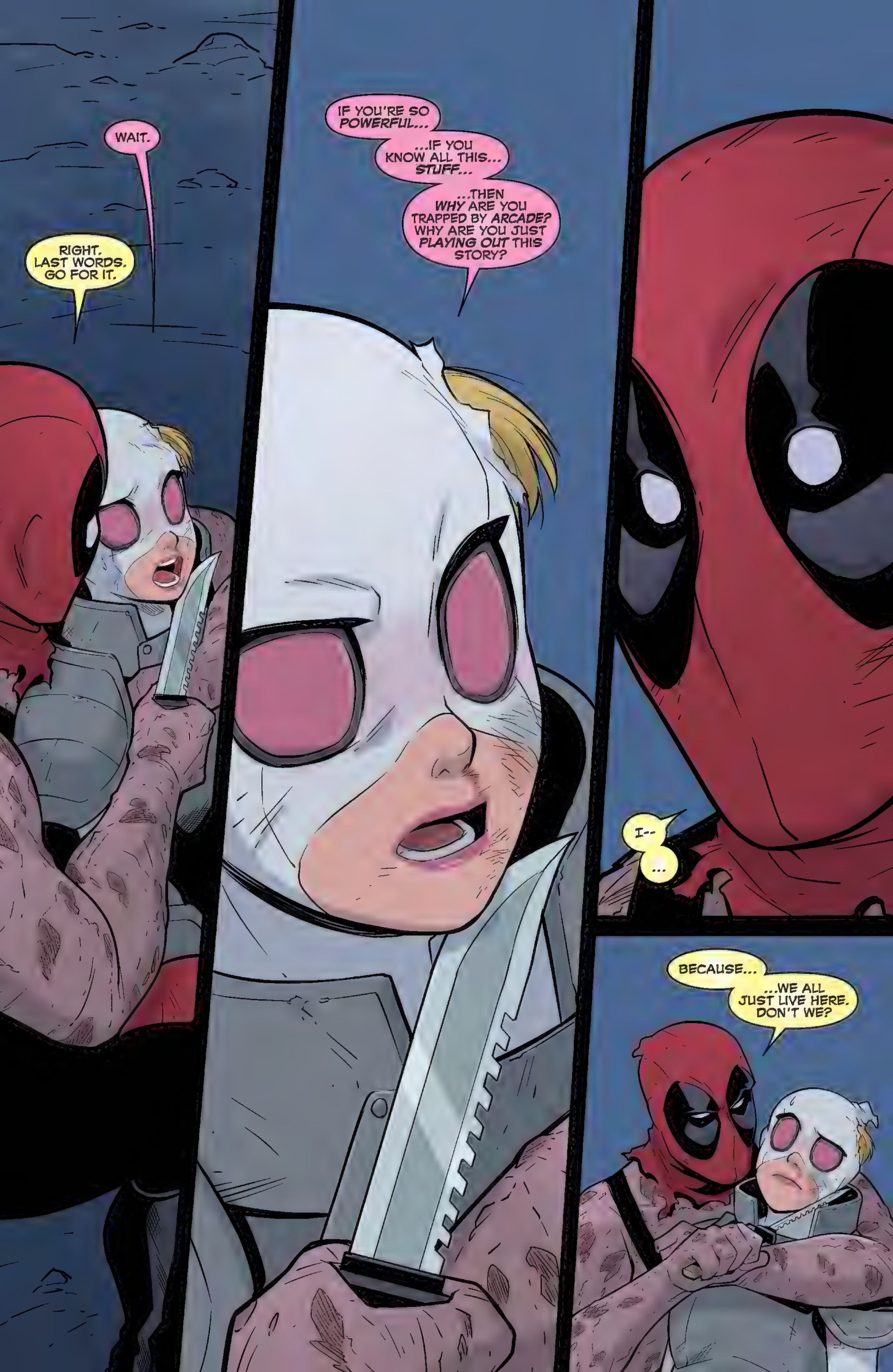

AAGHH!
GOT YOU!
SWEET BUFF, MY MAN!
COUGH
STILL GONNA BRUISE...
NOT. FAIR.
AH!
THWACK
ALWAYS PROTECT THE HEALER!
OUI!

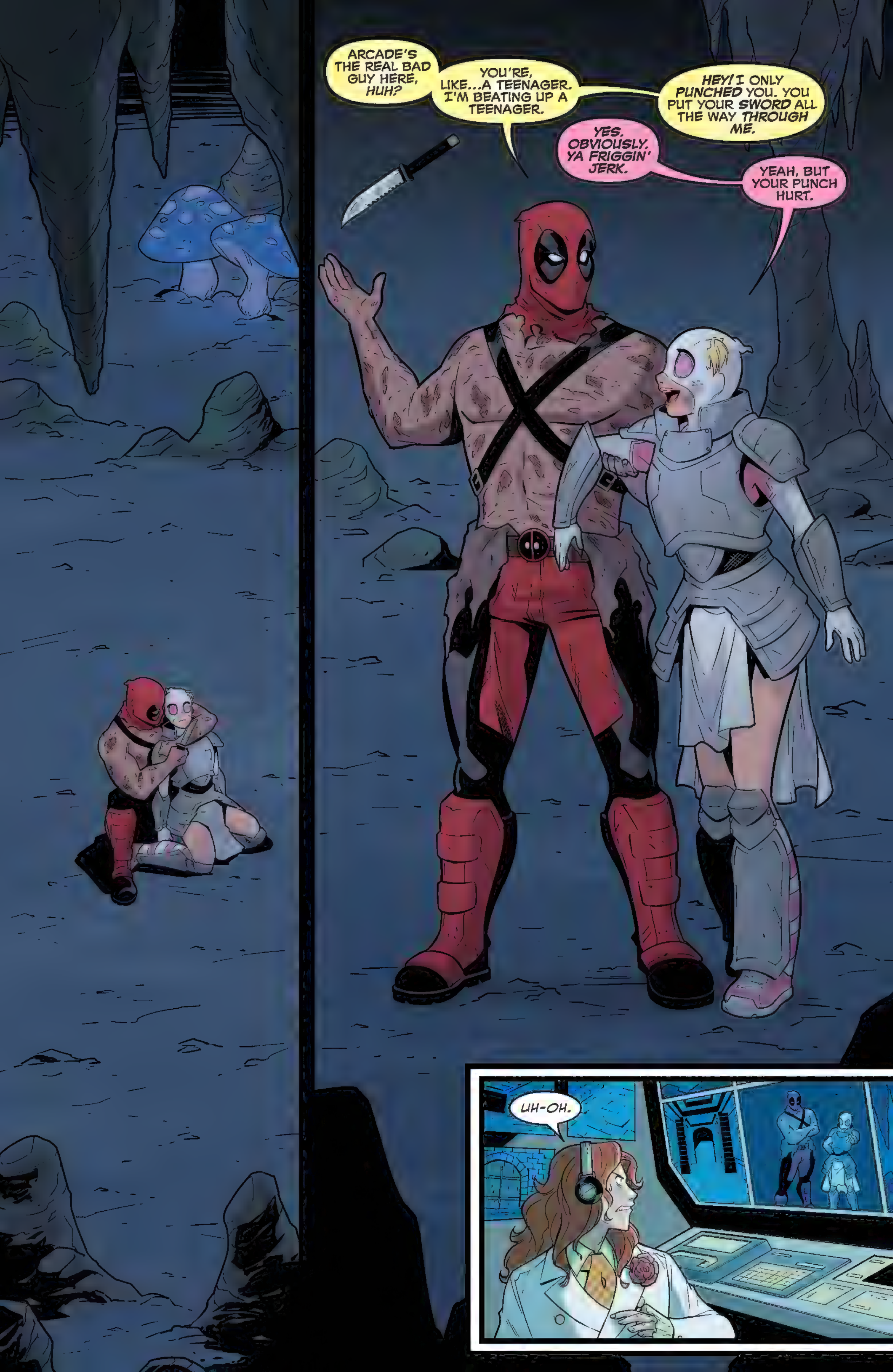

TERRIBLE EYE, CAN YOU PARALYZE DEADPOOL?
I WILL BEGIN THE SPELL.
MEGA TONY, ONCE HE'S PARALYZED AND CHOPPED UP, HE'LL STILL REGENERATE. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING THAT WILL STUNT THAT WHILE WE GET OUT OF HERE?
SURE DO, GWEN.
CHOPPED UP?!
WHAT IS GOING *ON?!*
YOU'RE THE DUNGEON BOSS! AND WE'RE A TOTALLY MIN/MAXED TEAM THAT TOOK YOU OUT.
NO, SWEETIE. THAT EXPLANATION DOESN'T WORK FOR ME.
WELL, IT'S WORKING GREAT FOR *ME.*
YOU THINK I HAVEN'T FOUGHT *TEAMS* BEFORE? THERE'S A GRAVEYARD IN QUEENS FILLED WITH THE BAD DUDES WHO HAVE WORKED TOGETHER TO TAKE ME ON.
HM, THAT'S TRUE.
I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE JUST A GUEST STAR...
...IN *MY* BOOK.
YOUR...
...BOOK.
OH. OH, I SEE NOW.

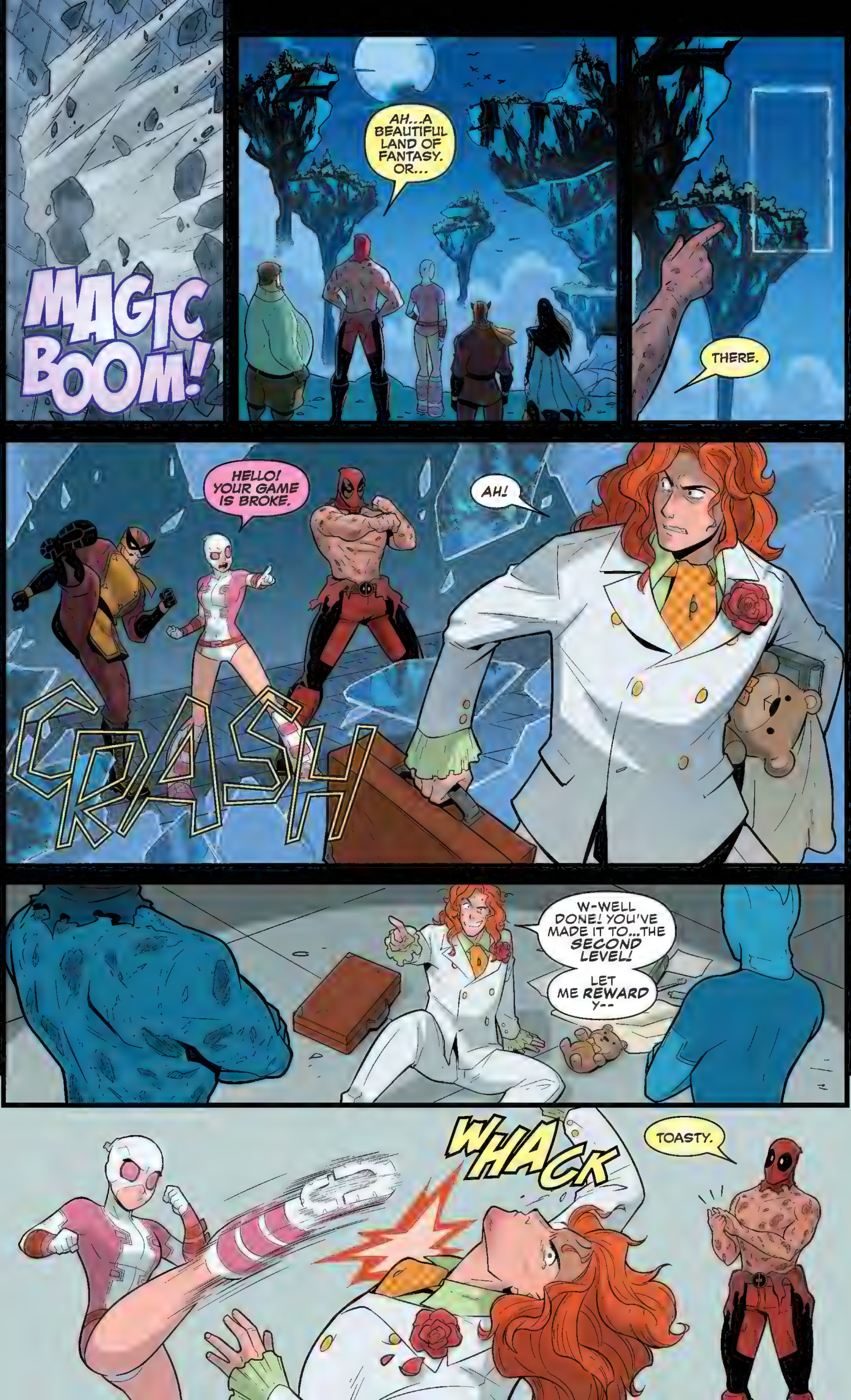

CRUNCH
WE'RE IN YOUR BOOK.
A FELLOW FOURTH WALL BREAKER! HOW FUN!
LET ME SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE.

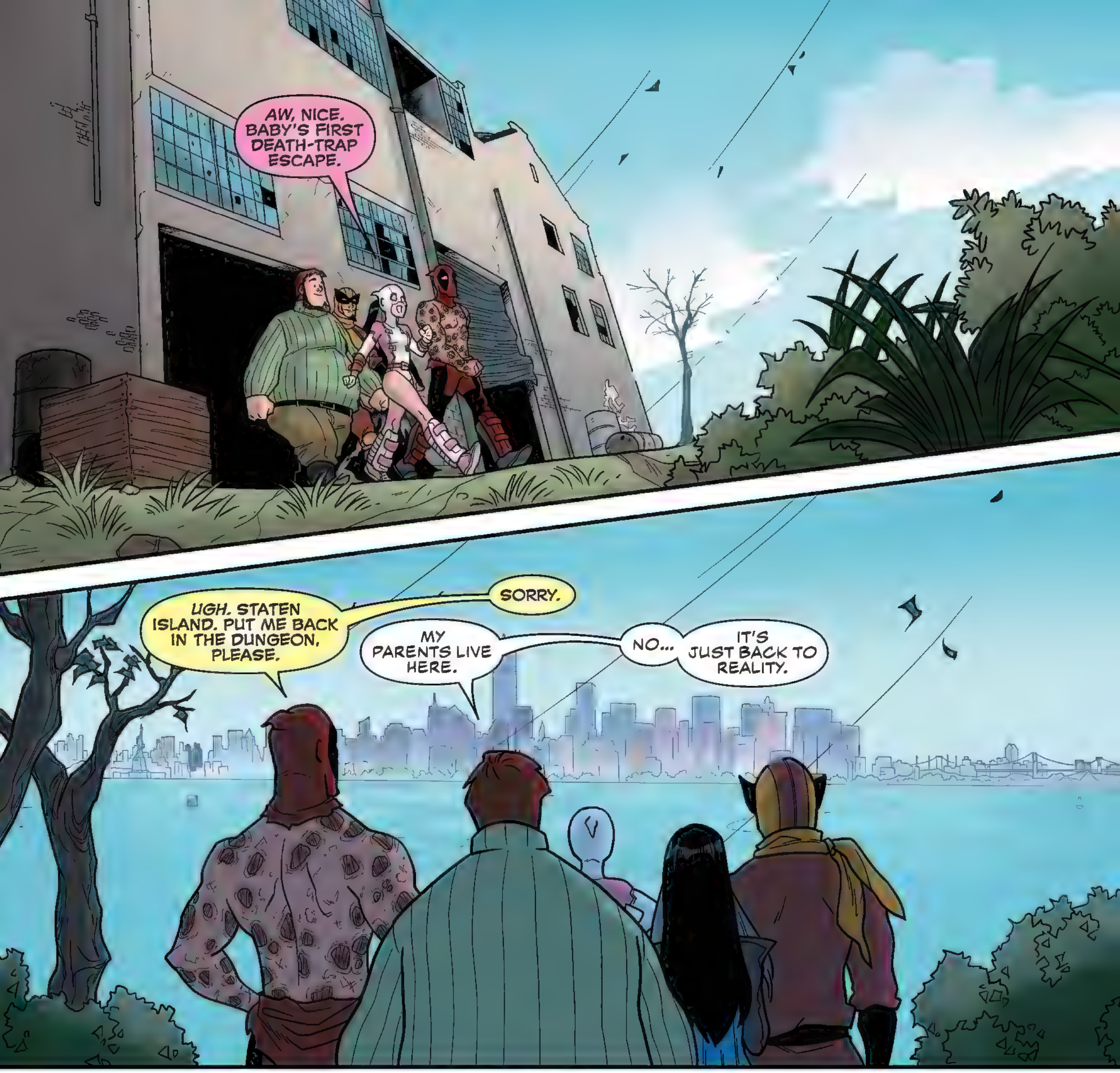

WAIT... EVERYTHING LOOKS DIFFERENT.
I DON'T KNOW...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT HAPPENED IS YOU SAID THE MAGIC WORDS THAT MADE DEADPOOL'S WIDDLE BRAIN RECONFIGURE--
--AS IT SOMETIMES LIKES TO DO--
--AND *SEE* THE *HORRIFYING LIGHT OF ALL REALITY BEFORE US!*
CRACK
THIS LITTLE ENCOUNTER IS GOVERNED BY *OUTSIDE* FORCES?
THEN *YOU* ARE IN *BIG* TROUBLE, MADAME.
WHACK
WHACK
"IF HE SPEAKS, HE'LL DRIVE YOU MAD!" AGH!

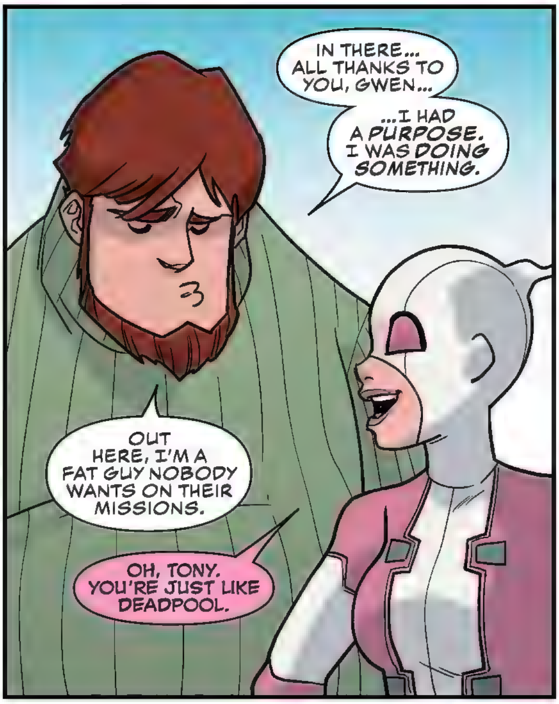

SO YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN A COMIC BOOK.
YOUR *OWN* COMIC BOOK, EVEN. AND YOU THINK THAT GIVES YOU *SPECIAL PROTECTION*. WHAT? BECAUSE YOU'RE POPULAR?
WELL, *I'VE* NEVER HEARD OF YOU.
YOUR NAME IS GWEN? I GUARANTEE ANYONE WHO DOESN'T READ THIS THINKS YOU'RE GWEN *STACY*.
DO YOU KNOW WHO'S HEARD OF *ME?!*
EVERYONE.
WHIFFFF
THWOCK
BUH!
I HAVE HAD *HUNDREDS* OF ISSUES. I DON'T *KNOW* HOW MANY SERIES. I GUEST-APPEAR *EVERYWHERE*. COMICS. VIDEO GAMES. TV SHOWS. ***AND SO MUCH MERCHANDISE.***
AND NEVER FORGET...
...THE HIGHEST-GROSSING R-RATED FILM OF ALL TIME.
YOU, HOWEVER...
...FIRST APPEARED AS A *BACKUP* IN *HOWARD THE DUCK*.
BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T SURE IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE YOU.
YOU ARE THE LAST PERSON WHO CAN KILL ME.
OH, GOD, YOU'RE RIGHT.
I KNOW.
ANYWAY...
...IT FEELS FITTING THAT I AM THE HAND OF YOUR CANCELATION. BYE-BYE, *"GWEN" "POOLE."*

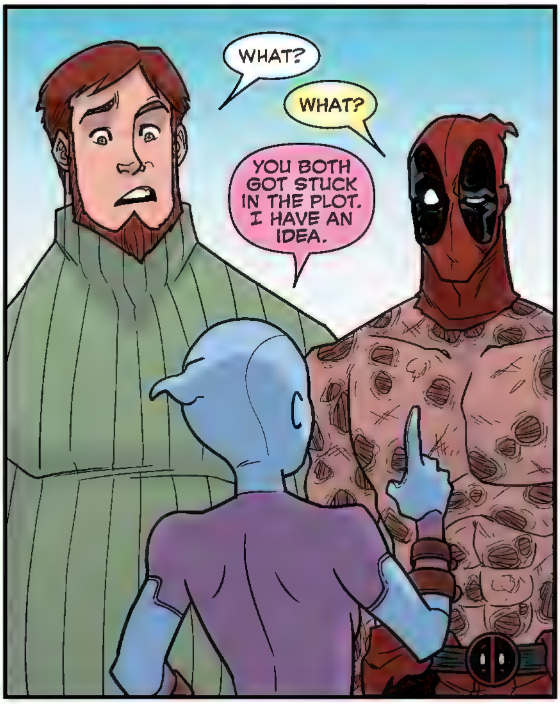

WAIT.
RIGHT. LAST WORDS. GO FOR IT.
IF YOU'RE SO *POWERFUL*...
...IF YOU KNOW ALL THIS... *STUFF*...
...THEN *WHY* ARE YOU TRAPPED BY *ARCADE?* WHY ARE YOU JUST *PLAYING OUT* THIS STORY?
I--
...
BECAUSE...
...WE ALL JUST LIVE HERE. DON'T WE?

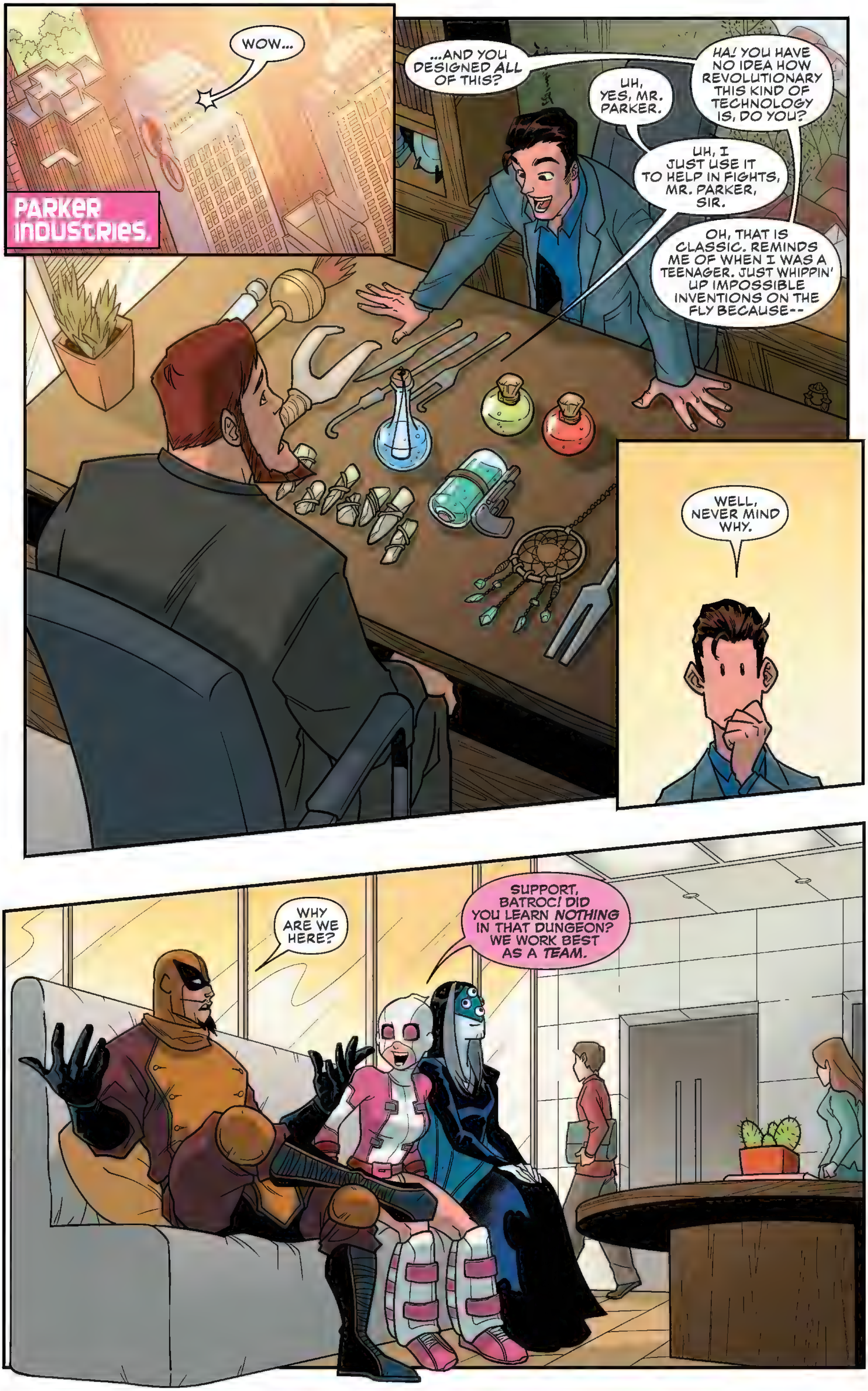

ARCADE'S THE REAL BAD GUY HERE, HUH?
YOU'RE, LIKE...A TEENAGER. I'M BEATING UP A TEENAGER.
HEY! I ONLY PUNCHED YOU. YOU PUT YOUR SWORD ALL THE WAY THROUGH ME.
YES. OBVIOUSLY. YA FRIGGIN' JERK.
YEAH, BUT YOUR PUNCH HURT.
UH-OH.

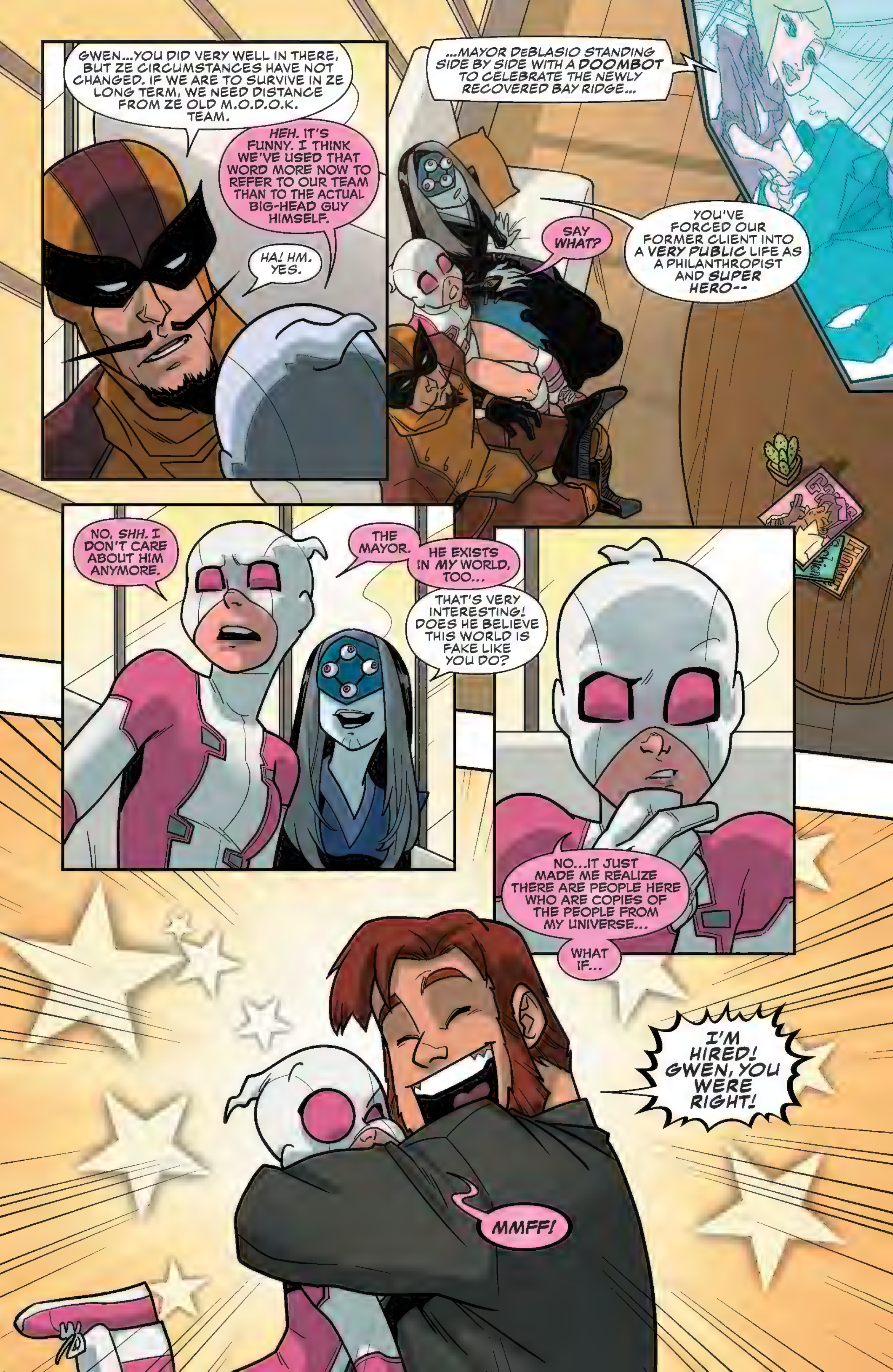

MAGIC BOOM!
AH...A BEAUTIFUL LAND OF FANTASY. OR...
THERE.
HELLO! YOUR GAME IS BROKE.
AH!
CRASH
W-WELL DONE! YOU'VE MADE IT TO...THE SECOND LEVEL!
LET ME REWARD Y--
WHACK
TOASTY.

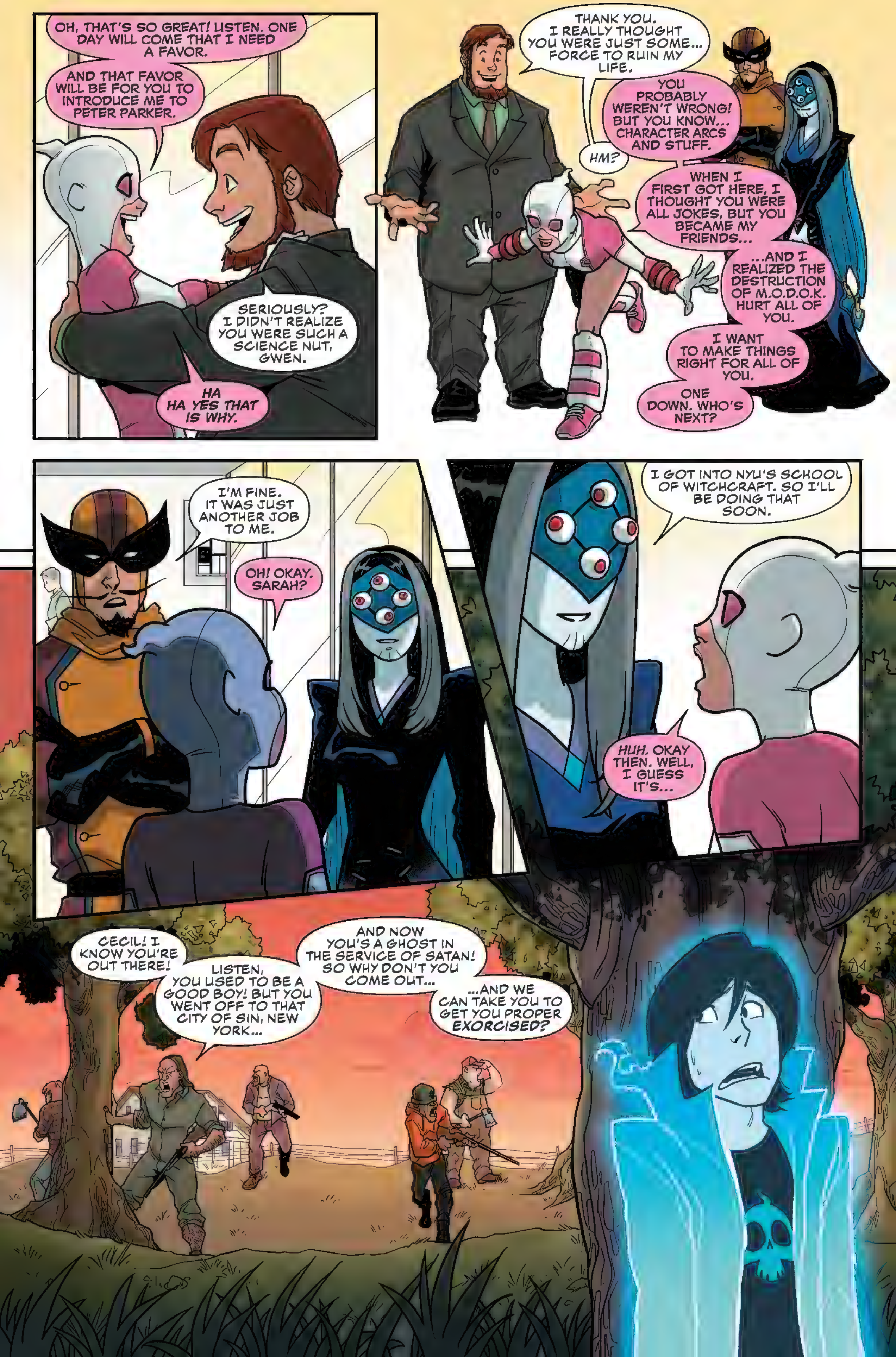

AW, NICE. BABY'S FIRST DEATH-TRAP ESCAPE.
UGH. STATEN ISLAND. PUT ME BACK IN THE DUNGEON, PLEASE.
SORRY.
MY PARENTS LIVE HERE.
NO...
IT'S JUST BACK TO REALITY.

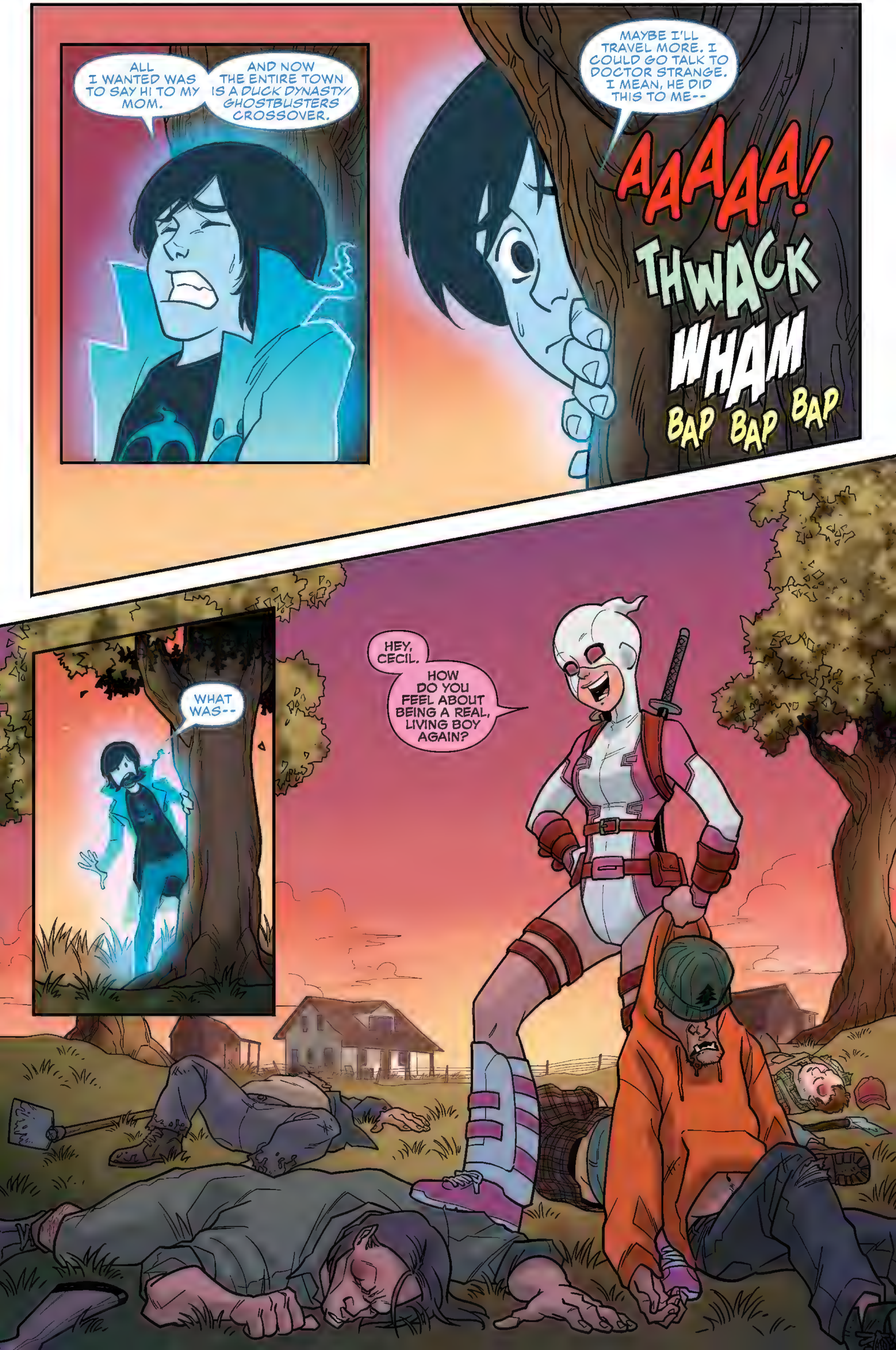

IN THERE... ALL THANKS TO YOU, GWEN...
...I HAD A *PURPOSE.* I WAS *DOING SOMETHING.*
OUT HERE, I'M A FAT GUY NOBODY WANTS ON THEIR MISSIONS.
OH, TONY. YOU'RE JUST LIKE DEADPOOL.


WHAT?
WHAT?
YOU BOTH GOT STUCK IN THE PLOT. I HAVE AN IDEA.

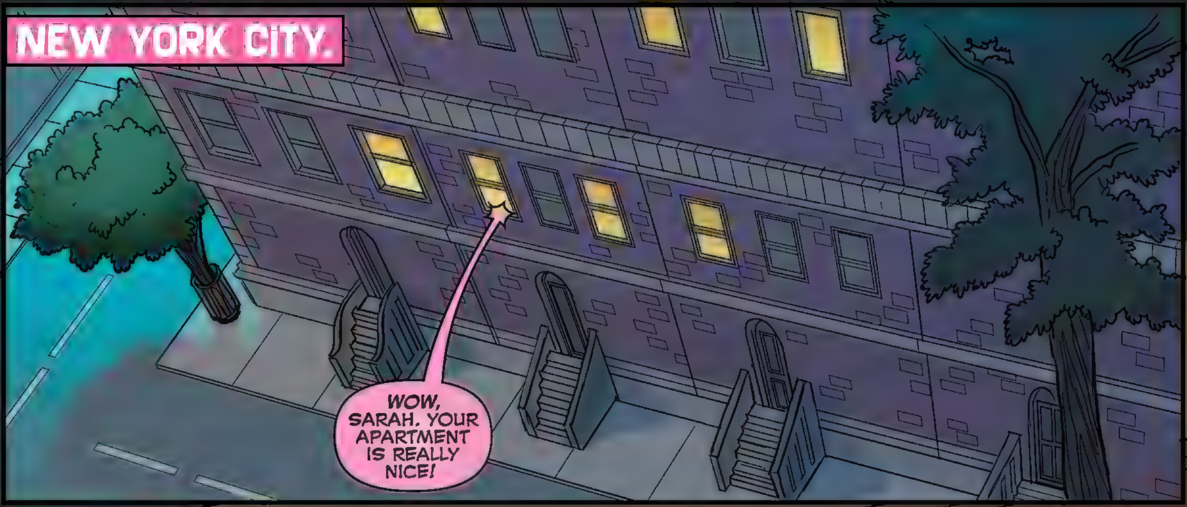

WOW...
PARKER INDUSTRIES.
...AND YOU DESIGNED ALL OF THIS?
UH, YES, MR. PARKER.
HA! YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW REVOLUTIONARY THIS KIND OF TECHNOLOGY IS, DO YOU?
UH, I JUST USE IT TO HELP IN FIGHTS, MR. PARKER, SIR.
OH, THAT IS CLASSIC. REMINDS ME OF WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER. JUST WHIPPIN' UP IMPOSSIBLE INVENTIONS ON THE FLY BECAUSE--
WELL, NEVER MIND WHY.
WHY ARE WE HERE?
SUPPORT, BATROC! DID YOU LEARN NOTHING IN THAT DUNGEON? WE WORK BEST AS A TEAM.

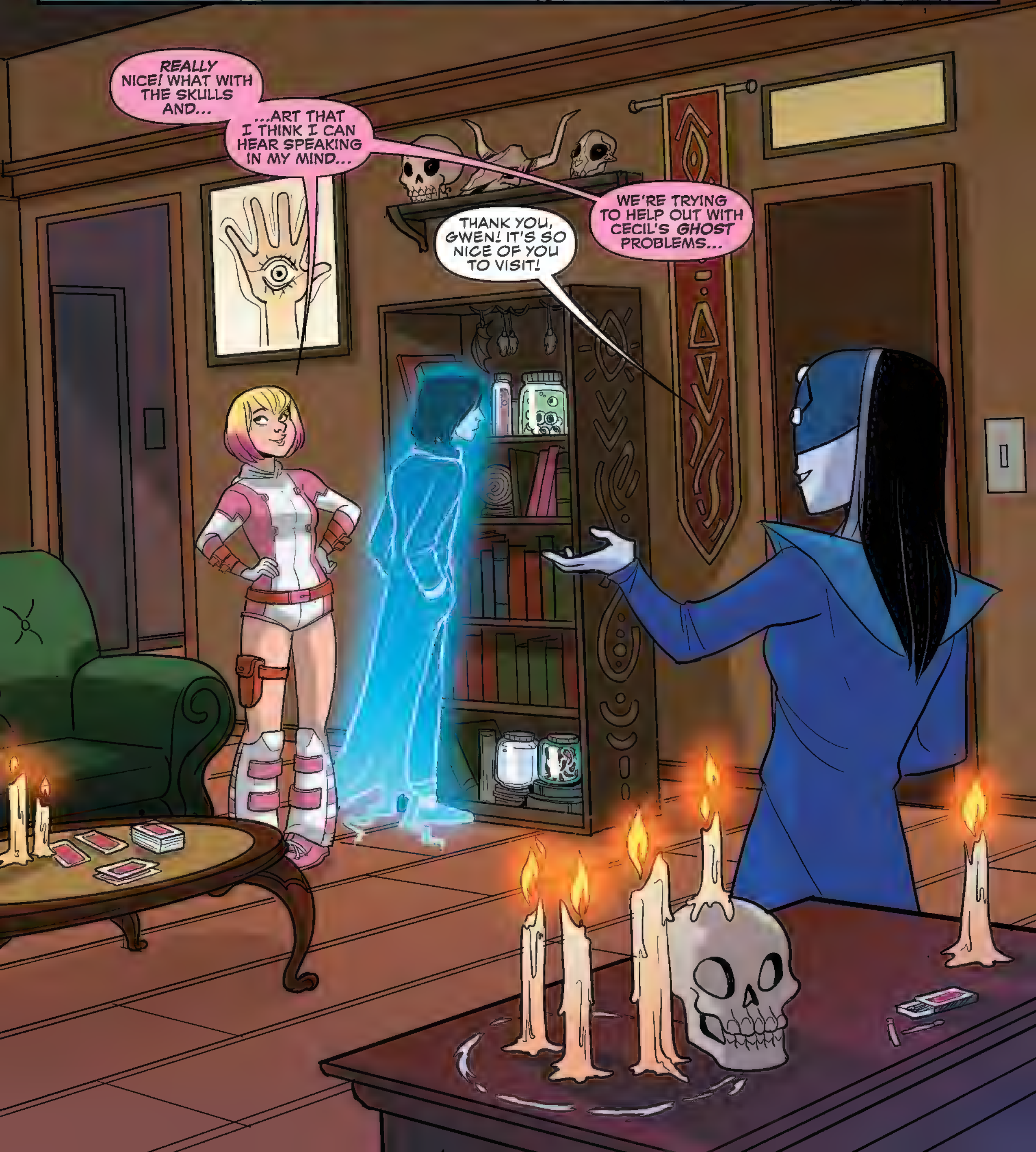

GWEN...YOU DID VERY WELL IN THERE, BUT ZE CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE NOT CHANGED. IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE IN ZE LONG TERM, WE NEED DISTANCE FROM ZE OLD M.O.D.O.K. TEAM.
HEH. IT'S FUNNY. I THINK WE'VE USED THAT WORD MORE NOW TO REFER TO OUR TEAM THAN TO THE ACTUAL BIG-HEAD GUY HIMSELF.
HA! HM. YES.
...MAYOR DEBLASIO STANDING SIDE BY SIDE WITH A DOOMBOT TO CELEBRATE THE NEWLY RECOVERED BAY RIDGE...
YOU'VE FORCED OUR FORMER CLIENT INTO A VERY PUBLIC LIFE AS A PHILANTHROPIST AND SUPER HERO--
SAY WHAT?
NO, SHH. I DON'T CARE ABOUT HIM ANYMORE.
THE MAYOR.
HE EXISTS IN MY WORLD, TOO...
THAT'S VERY INTERESTING! DOES HE BELIEVE THIS WORLD IS FAKE LIKE YOU DO?
NO...IT JUST MADE ME REALIZE THERE ARE PEOPLE HERE WHO ARE COPIES OF THE PEOPLE FROM MY UNIVERSE...
WHAT IF...
I'M HIRED! GWEN, YOU WERE RIGHT!
MMFF!

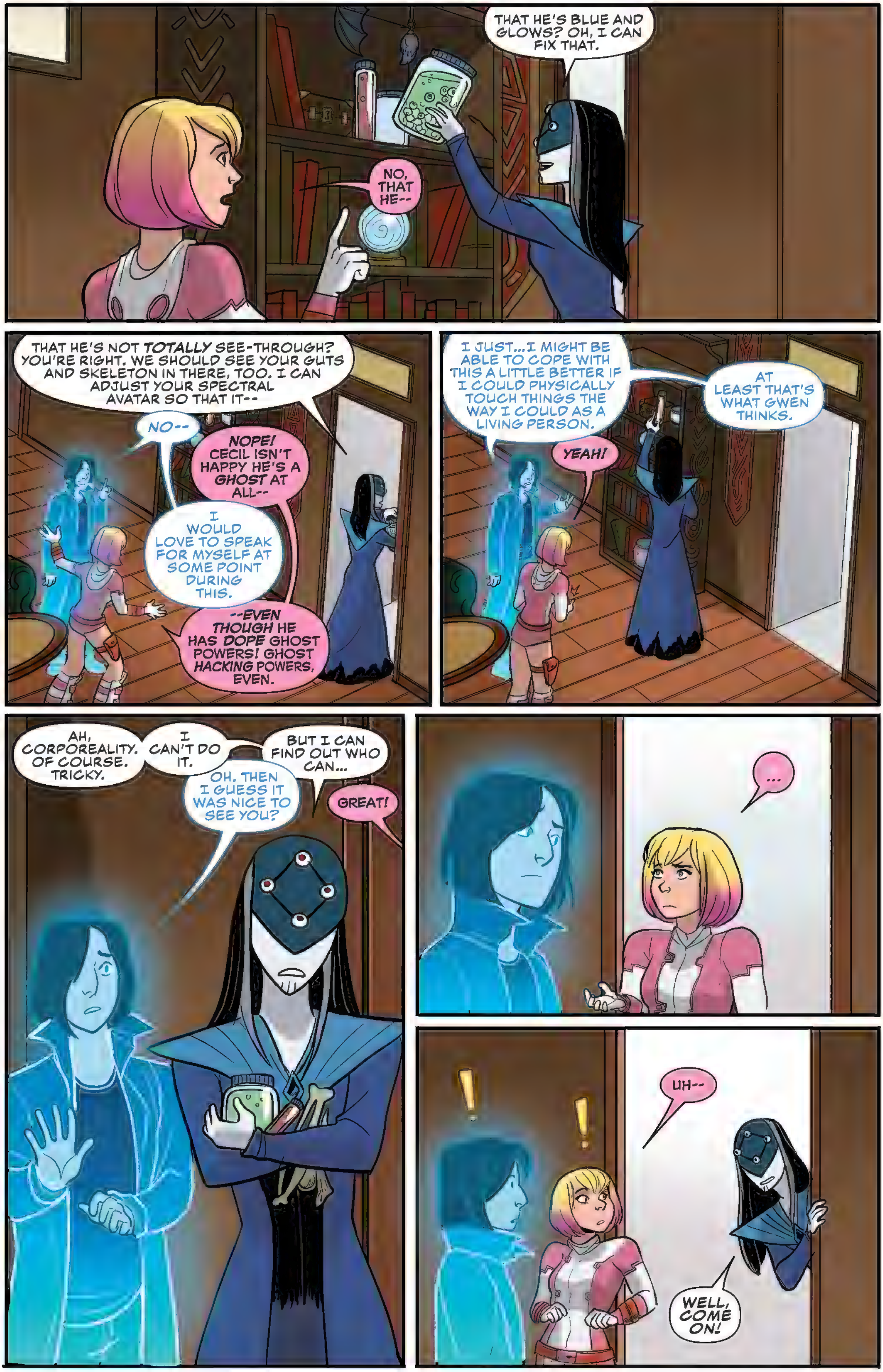

OH, THAT'S SO GREAT! LISTEN. ONE DAY WILL COME THAT I NEED A FAVOR.
AND THAT FAVOR WILL BE FOR YOU TO INTRODUCE ME TO PETER PARKER.
SERIOUSLY? I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE SUCH A SCIENCE NUT, GWEN.
HA HA YES THAT IS WHY.
THANK YOU. I REALLY THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST SOME... FORCE TO RUIN MY LIFE.
YOU PROBABLY WEREN'T WRONG! BUT YOU KNOW... CHARACTER ARCS AND STUFF.
HM?
WHEN I FIRST GOT HERE, I THOUGHT YOU WERE ALL JOKES, BUT YOU BECAME MY FRIENDS...
...AND I REALIZED THE DESTRUCTION OF M.O.D.O.K. HURT ALL OF YOU.
I WANT TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT FOR ALL OF YOU.
ONE DOWN. WHO'S NEXT?
I'M FINE. IT WAS JUST ANOTHER JOB TO ME.
OH! OKAY. SARAH?
I GOT INTO NYU'S SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT. SO I'LL BE DOING THAT SOON.
HUH. OKAY THEN. WELL, I GUESS IT'S...
CECIL! I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE!
LISTEN, YOU USED TO BE A GOOD BOY! BUT YOU WENT OFF TO THAT CITY OF SIN, NEW YORK...
AND NOW YOU'S A GHOST IN THE SERVICE OF SATAN! SO WHY DON'T YOU COME OUT...
...AND WE CAN TAKE YOU TO GET YOU PROPER EXORCISED?

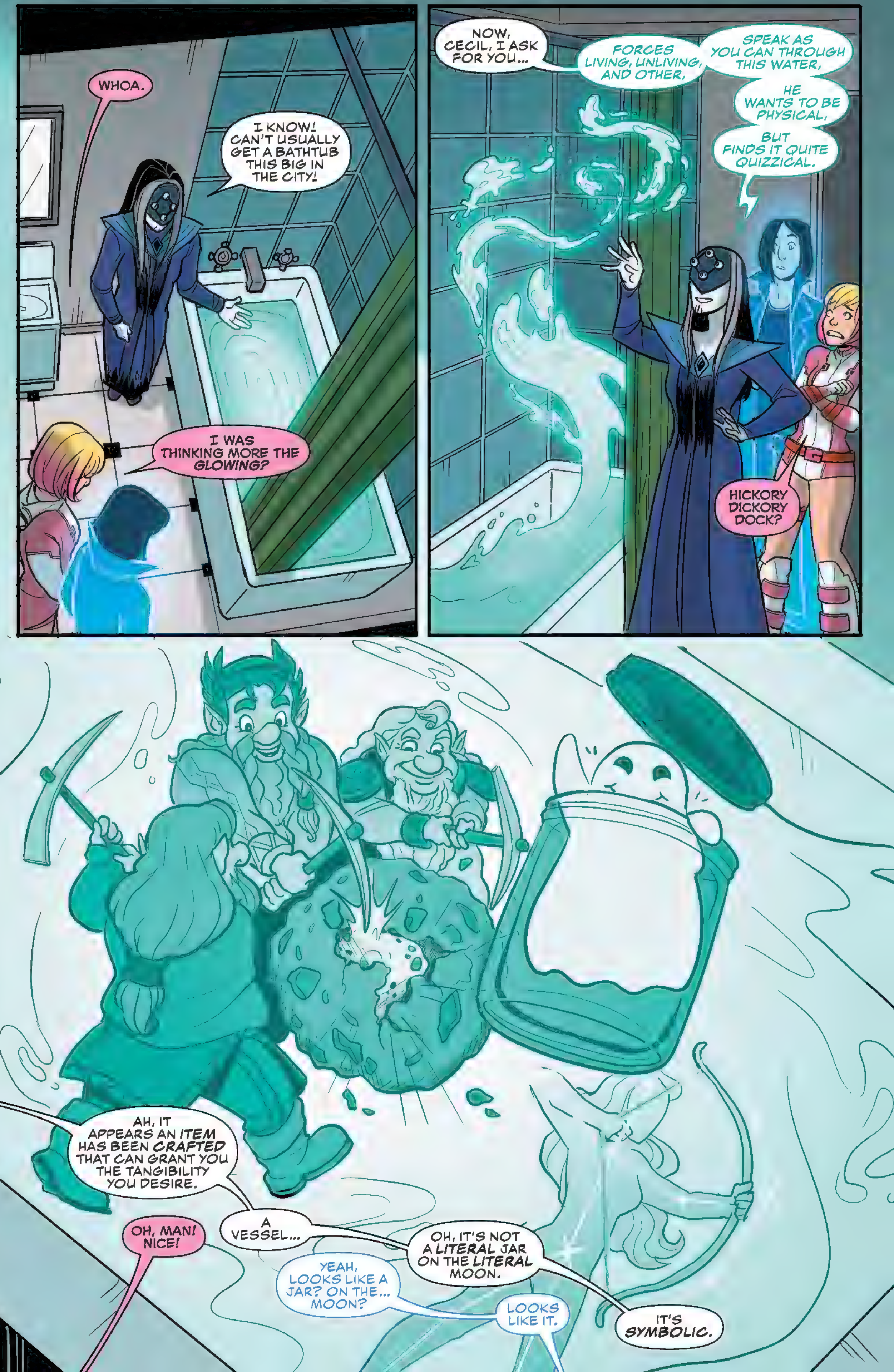

ALL I WANTED WAS TO SAY HI TO MY MOM.
AND NOW THE ENTIRE TOWN IS A *DUCK DYNASTY/ GHOSTBUSTERS* CROSSOVER.
MAYBE I'LL TRAVEL MORE. I COULD GO TALK TO DOCTOR STRANGE. I MEAN, HE DID THIS TO ME--
AAAAA!
THWACK
WHAM
BAP BAP BAP
WHAT WAS--
HEY, CECIL.
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING A REAL, LIVING BOY AGAIN?

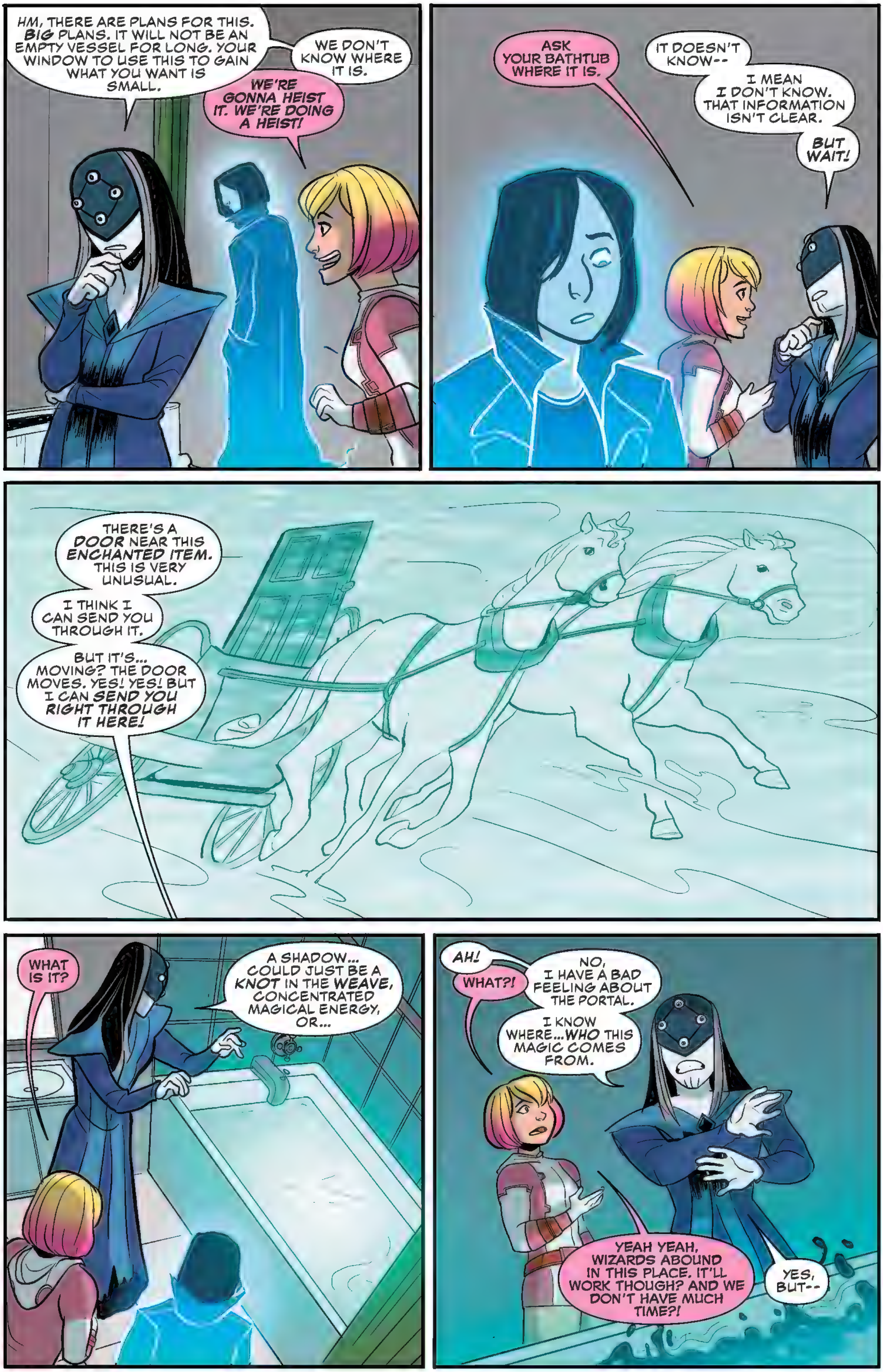
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #14

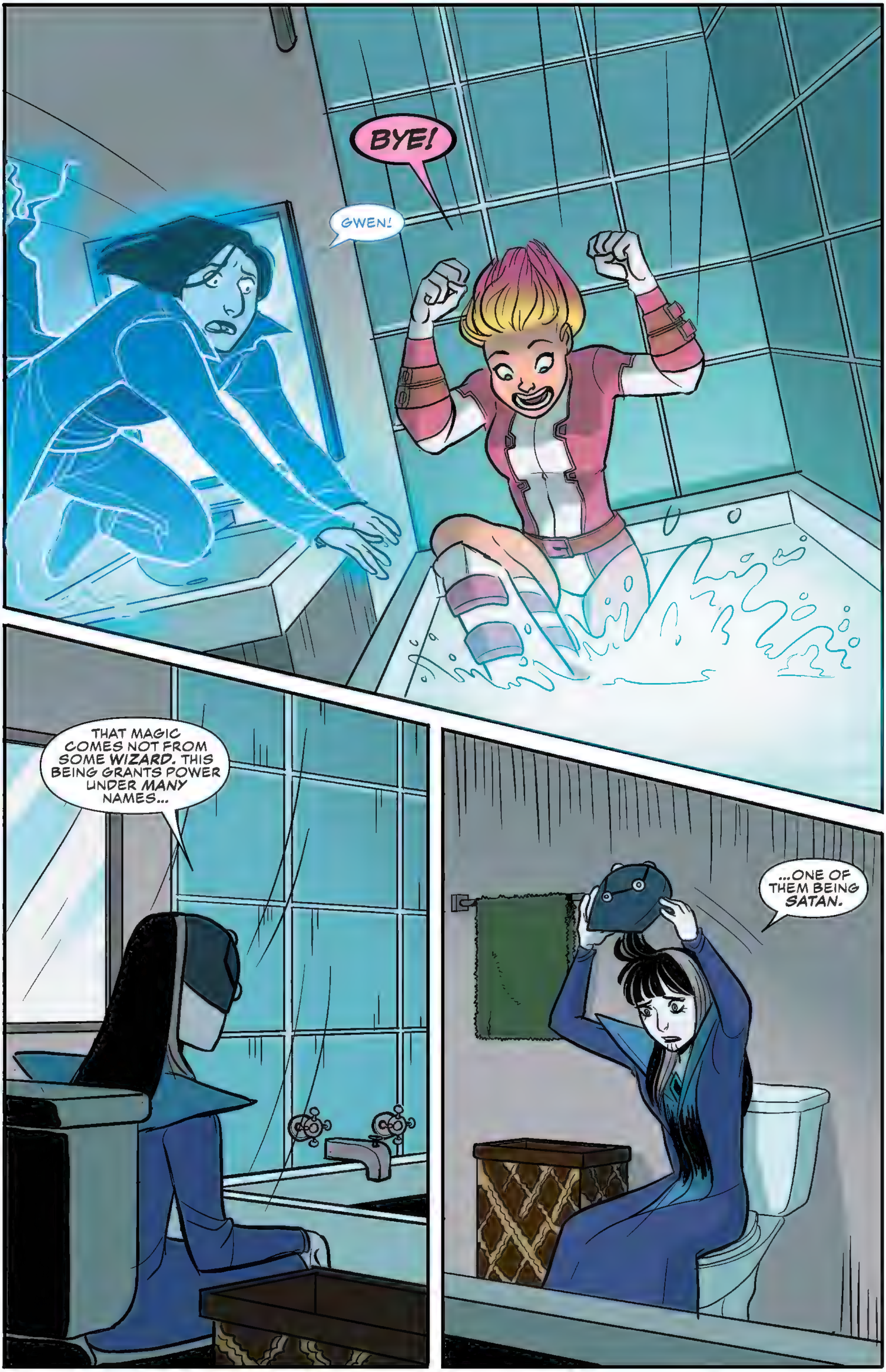

NEW YORK CITY.
WOW, SARAH. YOUR APARTMENT IS REALLY NICE!

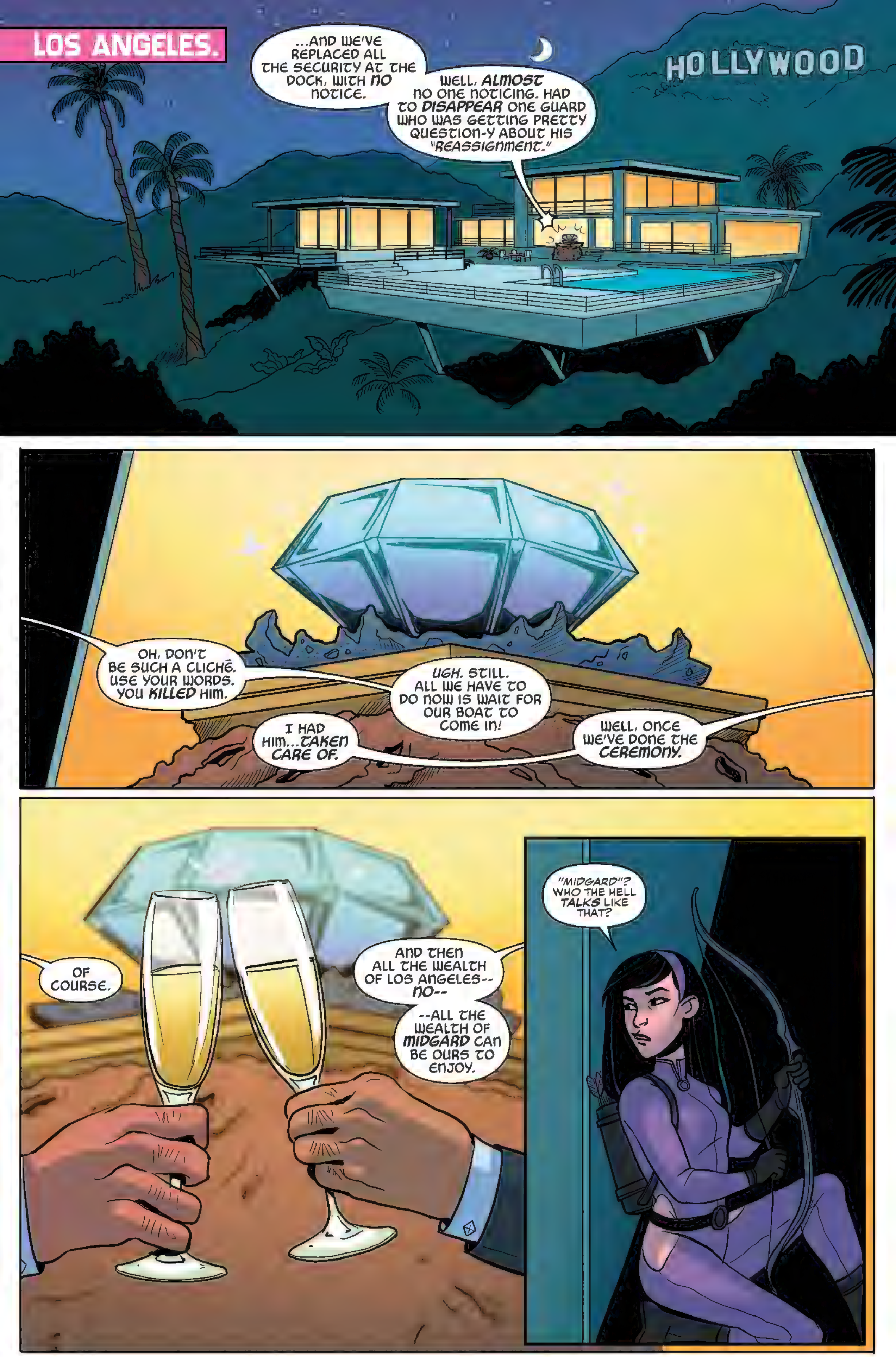

REALLY NICE! WHAT WITH THE SKULLS AND...
...ART THAT I THINK I CAN HEAR SPEAKING IN MY MIND...
WE'RE TRYING TO HELP OUT WITH CECIL'S *GHOST* PROBLEMS...
THANK YOU, GWEN! IT'S SO NICE OF YOU TO VISIT!

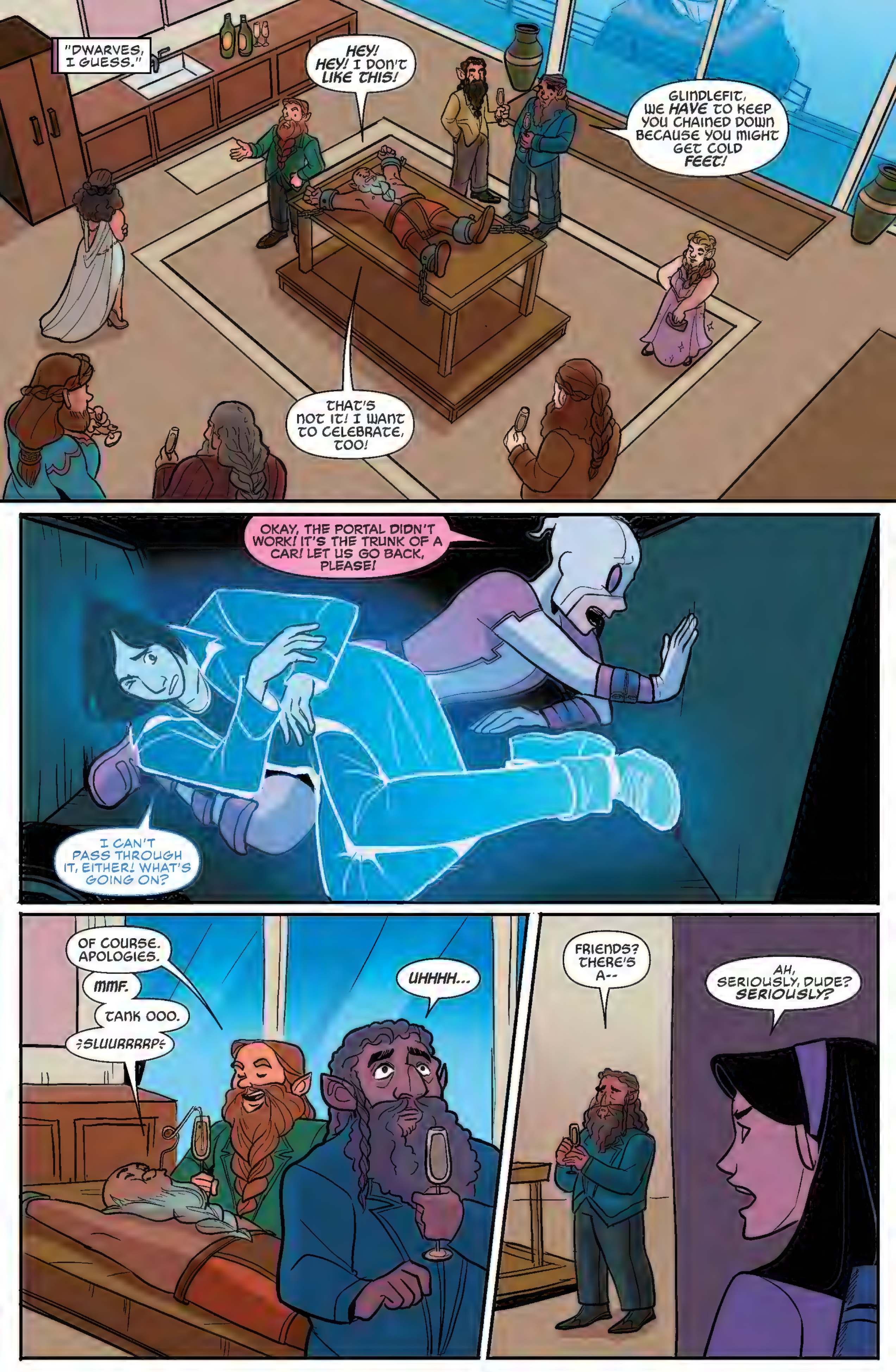

THAT HE'S BLUE AND GLOWS? OH, I CAN FIX THAT.
NO, THAT HE--
THAT HE'S NOT *TOTALLY* SEE-THROUGH? YOU'RE RIGHT. WE SHOULD SEE YOUR GUTS AND SKELETON IN THERE, TOO. I CAN ADJUST YOUR SPECTRAL AVATAR SO THAT IT--
NO--
NOPE! CECIL ISN'T HAPPY HE'S A *GHOST* AT ALL--
I WOULD LOVE TO SPEAK FOR MYSELF AT SOME POINT DURING THIS.
--EVEN THOUGH HE HAS *DOPE* GHOST POWERS! GHOST *HACKING* POWERS, EVEN.
I JUST...I MIGHT BE ABLE TO COPE WITH THIS A LITTLE BETTER IF I COULD PHYSICALLY TOUCH THINGS THE WAY I COULD AS A LIVING PERSON.
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT GWEN THINKS.
YEAH!
AH, CORPOREALITY. OF COURSE. TRICKY.
I CAN'T DO IT.
BUT I CAN FIND OUT WHO CAN...
OH. THEN I GUESS IT WAS NICE TO SEE YOU?
GREAT!
...
!
!
UH--
WELL, COME ON!

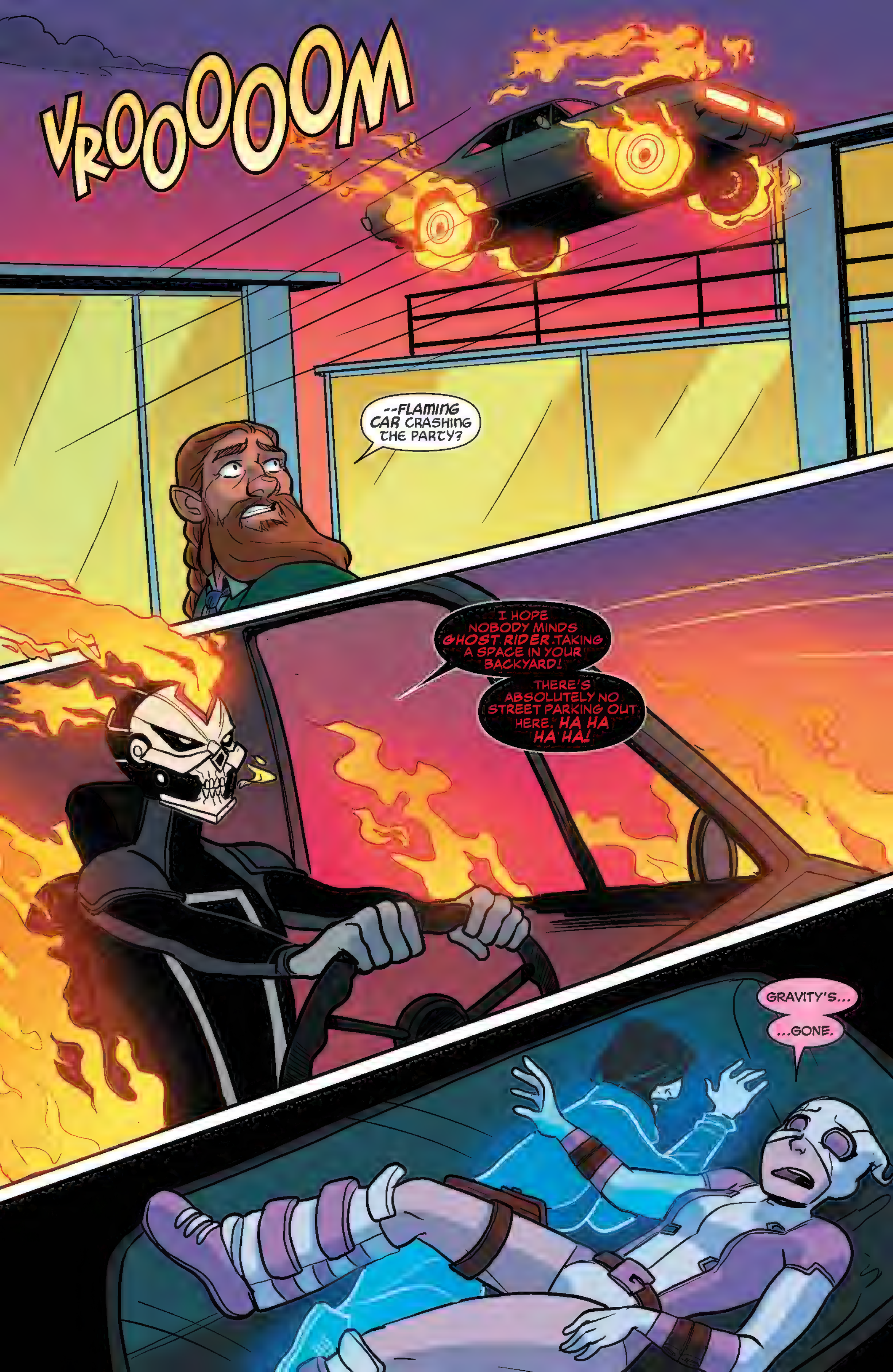

WHOA.
I KNOW! CAN'T USUALLY GET A BATHTUB THIS BIG IN THE CITY!
I WAS THINKING MORE THE *GLOWING?*
NOW, CECIL, I ASK FOR YOU...
FORCES LIVING, UNLIVING, AND OTHER,
SPEAK AS YOU CAN THROUGH THIS WATER,
HE WANTS TO BE PHYSICAL,
BUT FINDS IT QUITE QUIZZICAL.
HICKORY DICKORY DOCK?
AH, IT APPEARS AN *ITEM* HAS BEEN *CRAFTED* THAT CAN GRANT YOU THE TANGIBILITY YOU DESIRE.
A VESSEL...
OH, MAN! NICE!
YEAH, LOOKS LIKE A JAR? ON THE... MOON?
LOOKS LIKE IT.
OH, IT'S NOT A *LITERAL* JAR ON THE *LITERAL* MOON.
IT'S *SYMBOLIC.*

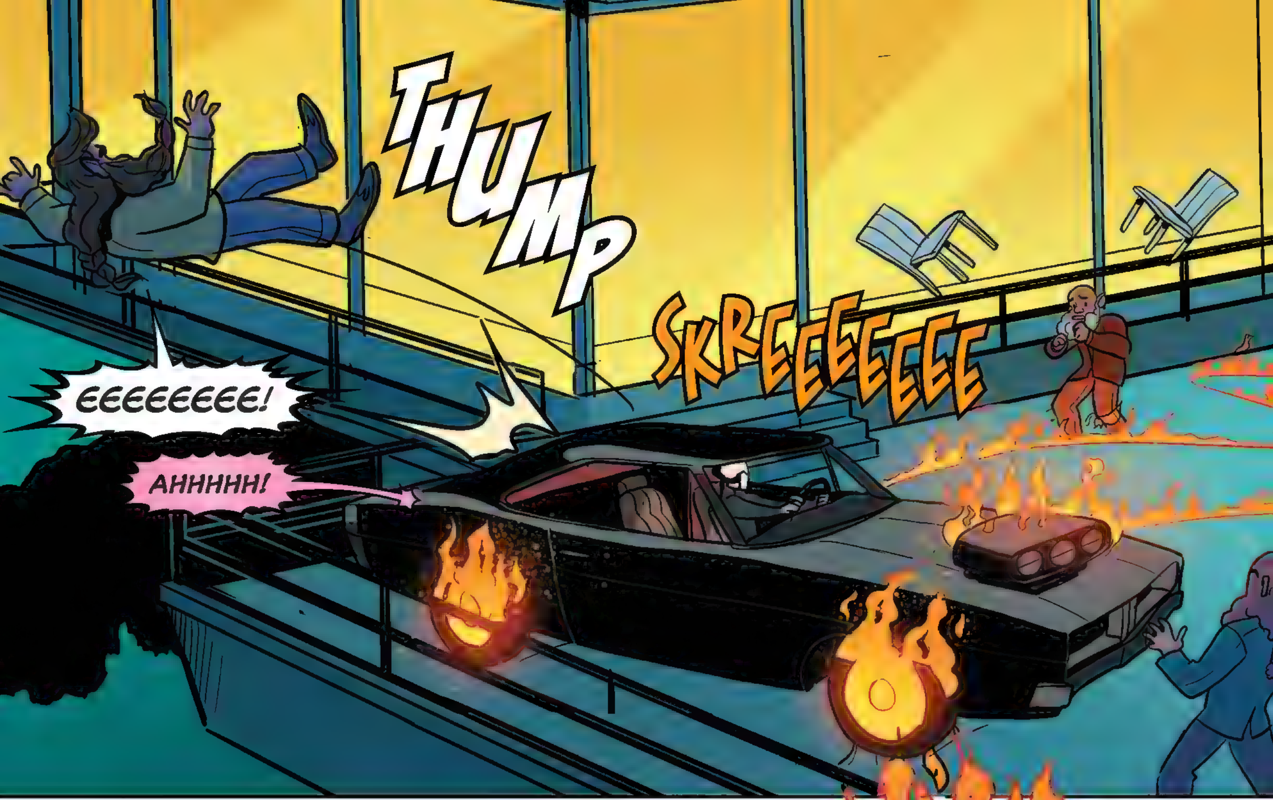

HM, THERE ARE PLANS FOR THIS. *BIG* PLANS. IT WILL NOT BE AN EMPTY VESSEL FOR LONG. YOUR WINDOW TO USE THIS TO GAIN WHAT YOU WANT IS SMALL.
WE DON'T KNOW WHERE IT IS.
WE'RE GONNA HEIST IT. WE'RE DOING A HEIST!
ASK YOUR BATHTUB WHERE IT IS.
IT DOESN'T KNOW--
I MEAN *I* DON'T KNOW. THAT INFORMATION ISN'T CLEAR.
BUT WAIT!
THERE'S A *DOOR* NEAR THIS *ENCHANTED ITEM.* THIS IS VERY UNUSUAL.
I THINK I CAN SEND YOU THROUGH IT.
BUT IT'S... MOVING? THE DOOR MOVES. YES! YES! BUT I CAN *SEND YOU RIGHT THROUGH IT HERE!*
WHAT IS IT?
A SHADOW... COULD JUST BE A *KNOT* IN THE *WEAVE,* CONCENTRATED MAGICAL ENERGY, OR...
AH!
WHAT?!
NO, I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THE PORTAL.
I KNOW WHERE...*WHO* THIS MAGIC COMES FROM.
YEAH YEAH, WIZARDS ABOUND IN THIS PLACE. IT'LL WORK THOUGH? AND WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME?!
YES, BUT--

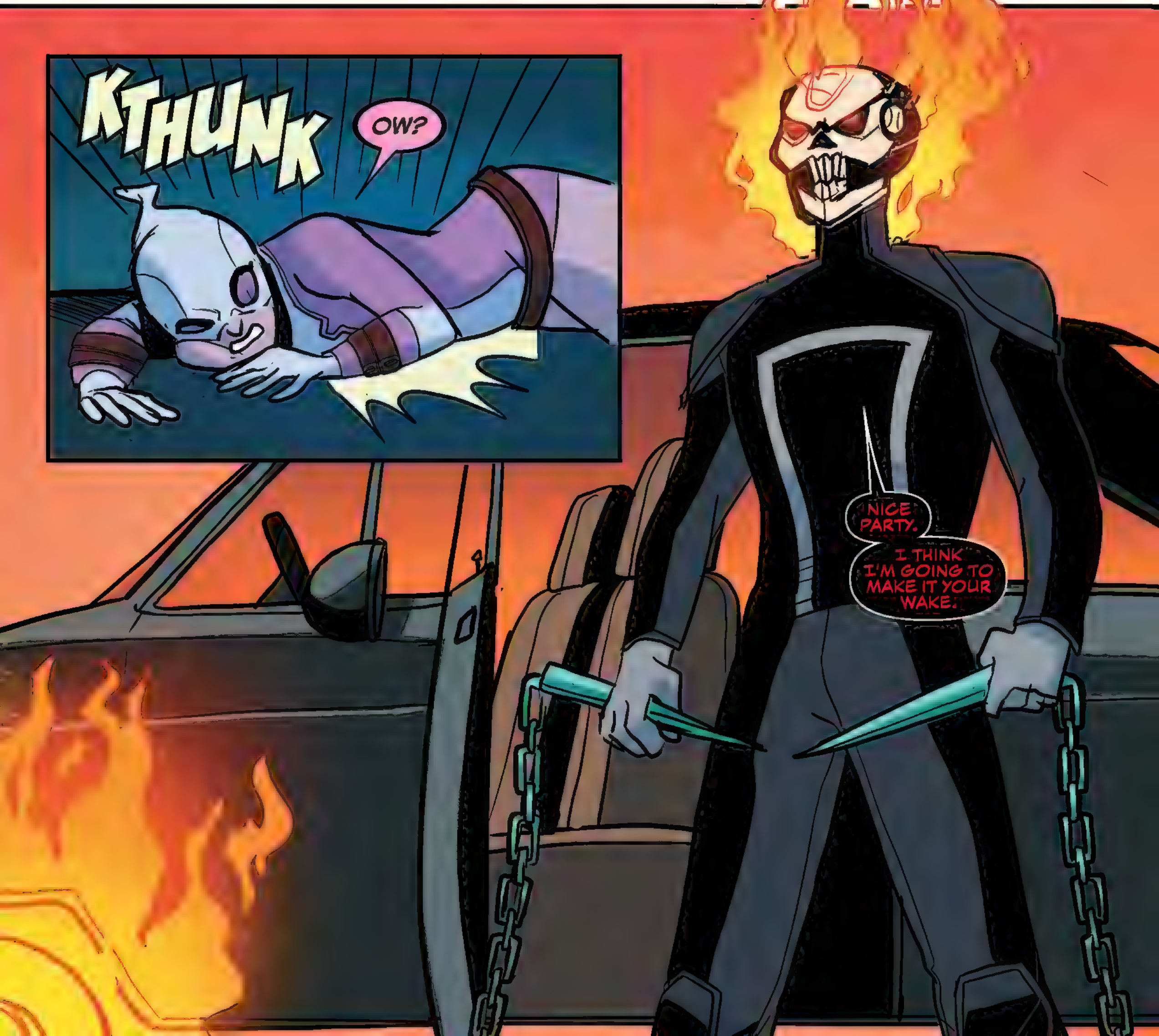

BYE!
GWEN!
THAT MAGIC COMES NOT FROM SOME *WIZARD*. THIS BEING GRANTS POWER UNDER *MANY* NAMES...
...ONE OF THEM BEING *SATAN*.

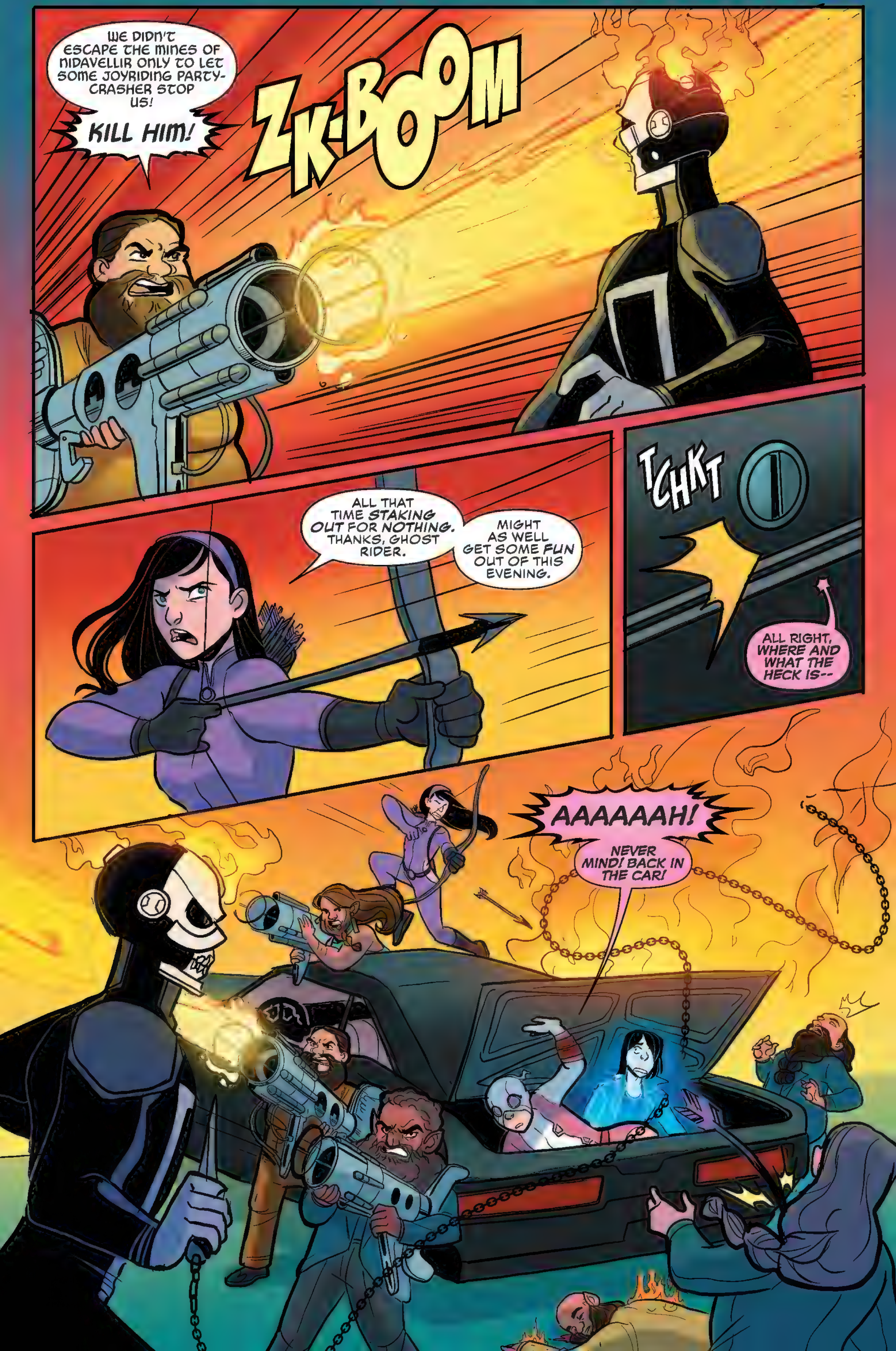

LOS ANGELES.
HOLLYWOOD
...AND WE'VE REPLACED ALL THE SECURITY AT THE DOCK, WITH NO NOTICE.
WELL, ALMOST NO ONE NOTICING. HAD TO DISAPPEAR ONE GUARD WHO WAS GETTING PRETTY QUESTION-Y ABOUT HIS "REASSIGNMENT."
OH, DON'T BE SUCH A CLICHÉ. USE YOUR WORDS. YOU KILLED HIM.
UGH. STILL. ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW IS WAIT FOR OUR BOAT TO COME IN!
I HAD HIM...TAKEN CARE OF.
WELL, ONCE WE'VE DONE THE CEREMONY.
OF COURSE.
AND THEN ALL THE WEALTH OF LOS ANGELES--NO--
--ALL THE WEALTH OF MIDGARD CAN BE OURS TO ENJOY.
"MIDGARD"? WHO THE HELL TALKS LIKE THAT?

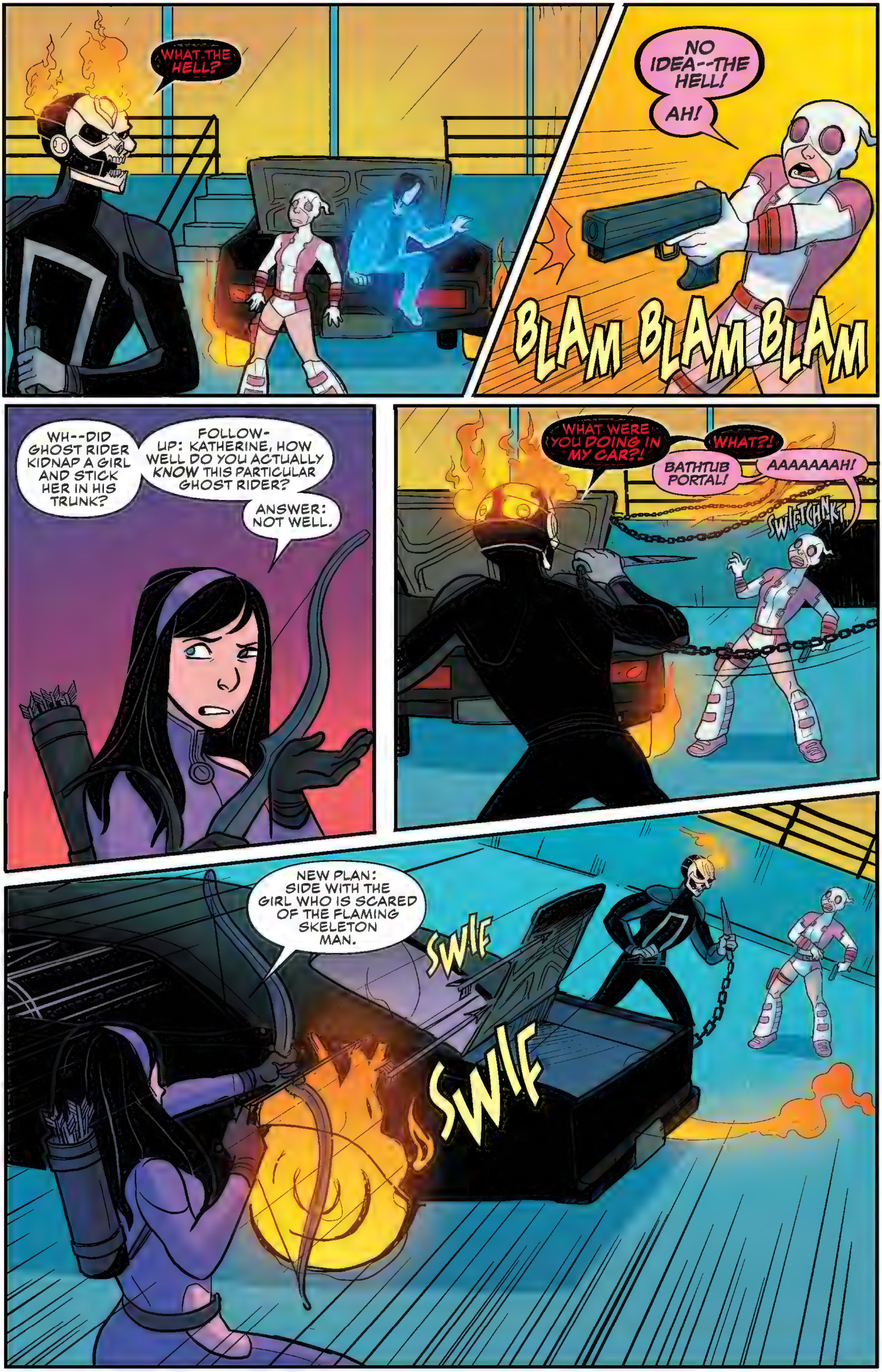

"DWARVES, I GUESS."
HEY! HEY! I DON'T LIKE THIS!
GLINDLEFIT, WE *HAVE* TO KEEP YOU CHAINED DOWN BECAUSE YOU MIGHT GET COLD *FEET!*
THAT'S NOT IT! I WANT TO CELEBRATE, TOO!
OKAY, THE PORTAL DIDN'T WORK! IT'S THE TRUNK OF A CAR! LET US GO BACK, PLEASE!
I CAN'T PASS THROUGH IT, EITHER! WHAT'S GOING ON?
OF COURSE. APOLOGIES.
MMF.
TANK OOO.
SLUURRRRP
UHHHH...
FRIENDS? THERE'S A--
AH, SERIOUSLY, DUDE? *SERIOUSLY?*

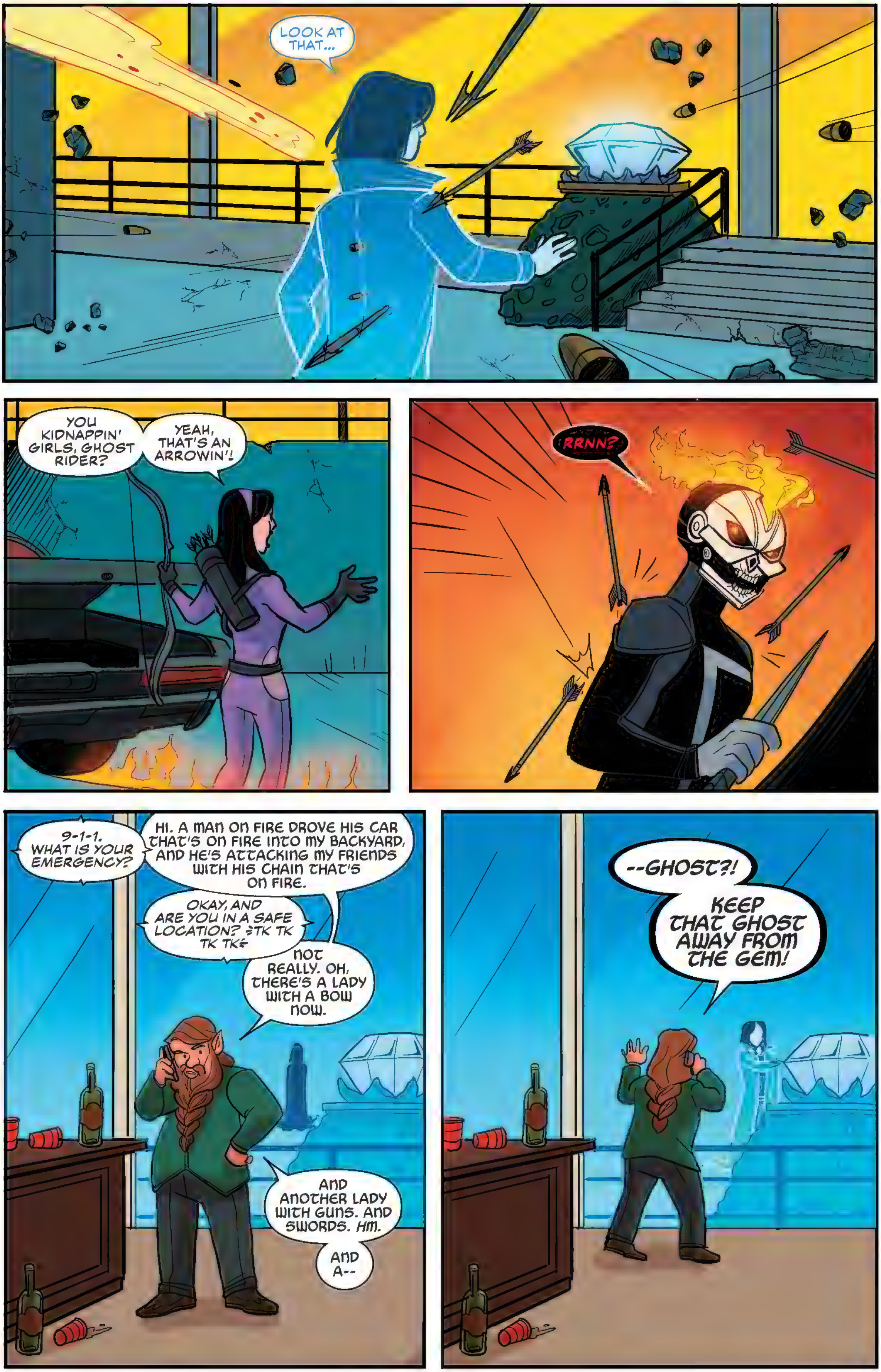

VROOOOOM
--FLAMING CAR CRASHING THE PARTY?
I HOPE NOBODY MINDS GHOST RIDER TAKING A SPACE IN YOUR BACKYARD!
THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO STREET PARKING OUT HERE. HA HA HA HA!
GRAVITY'S...
...GONE.

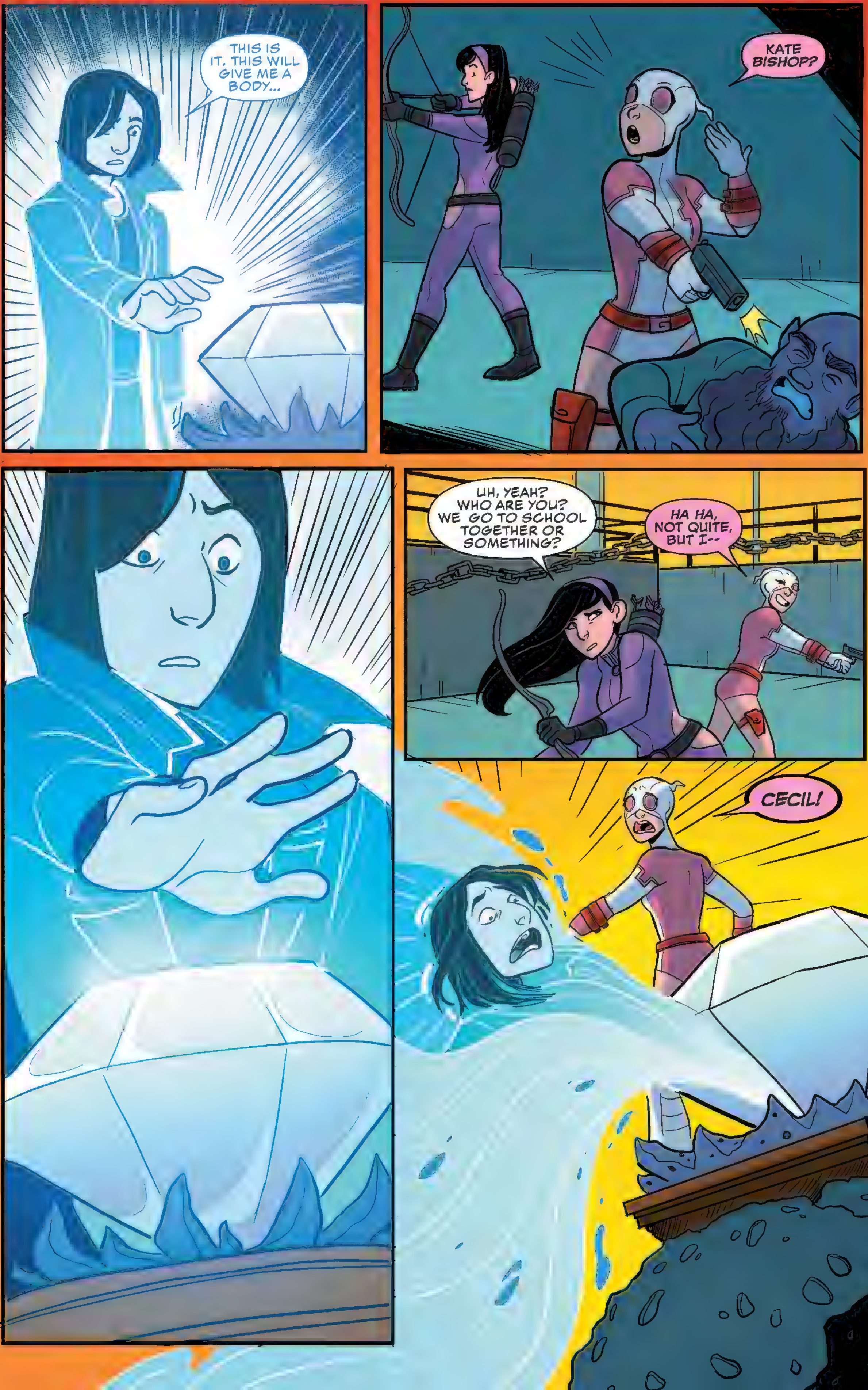

THUMP
SKREEEEEEEE
EEEEEEEEE!
AHHHHH!

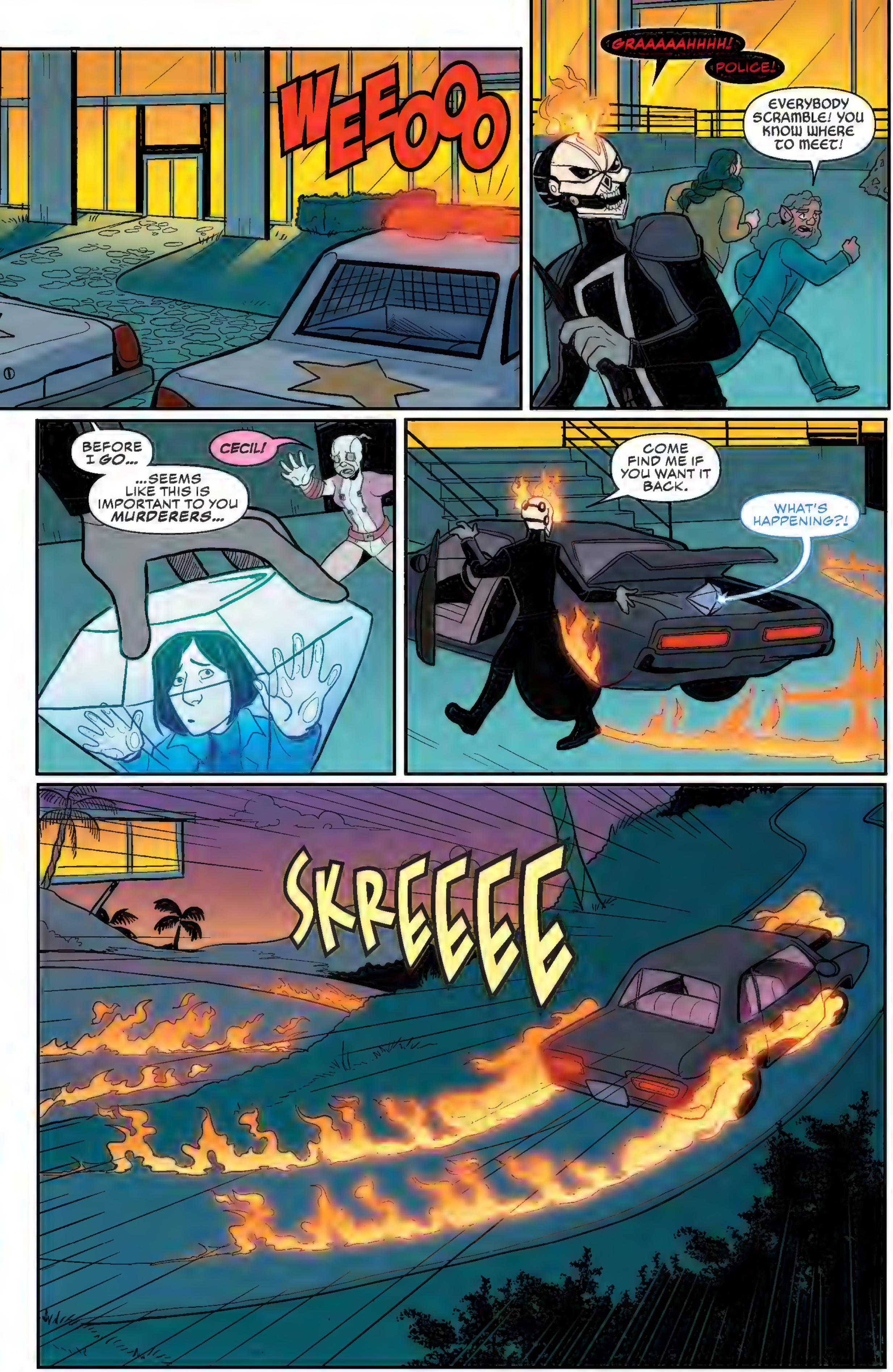

KTHUNK
OW?
NICE PARTY.
I THINK I'M GOING TO MAKE IT YOUR WAKE.

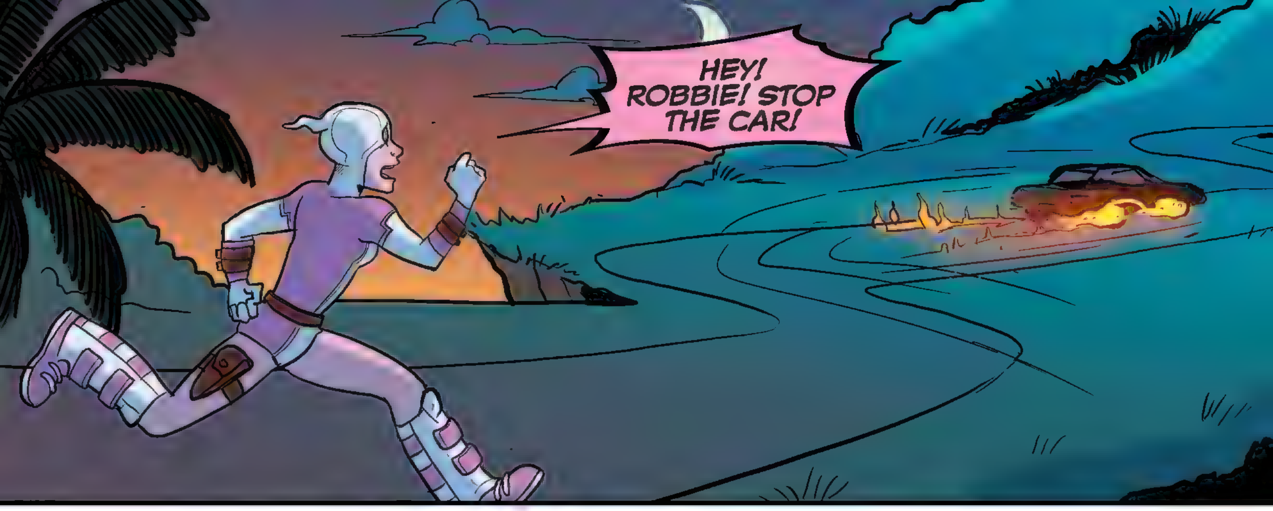

WE DIDN'T ESCAPE THE MINES OF NIDAVELLIR ONLY TO LET SOME JOYRIDING PARTY-CRASHER STOP US!
KILL HIM!
ZK-BOOM
ALL THAT TIME STAKING OUT FOR NOTHING. THANKS, GHOST RIDER.
MIGHT AS WELL GET SOME FUN OUT OF THIS EVENING.
TCHKT
ALL RIGHT, WHERE AND WHAT THE HECK IS--
AAAAAAH!
NEVER MIND! BACK IN THE CAR!

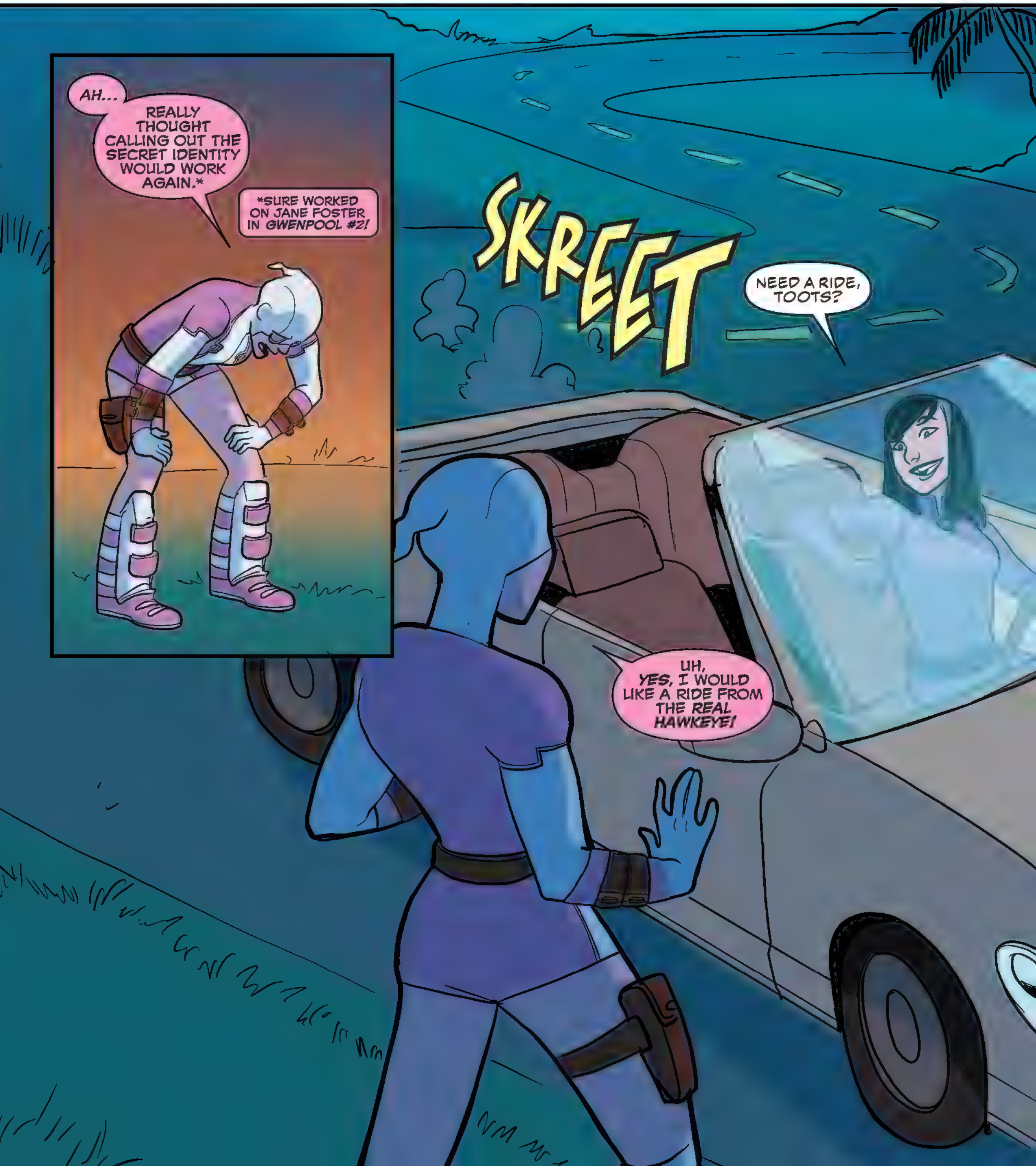

WHAT THE HELL?
NO IDEA--THE HELL!
AH!
BLAM BLAM BLAM
WH--DID GHOST RIDER KIDNAP A GIRL AND STICK HER IN HIS TRUNK?
FOLLOW-UP: KATHERINE, HOW WELL DO YOU ACTUALLY KNOW THIS PARTICULAR GHOST RIDER?
ANSWER: NOT WELL.
WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN MY CAR?!
WHAT?!
BATHTUB PORTAL!
AAAAAAAH!
SWIFTCHNKT
NEW PLAN: SIDE WITH THE GIRL WHO IS SCARED OF THE FLAMING SKELETON MAN.
SWIF
SWIF

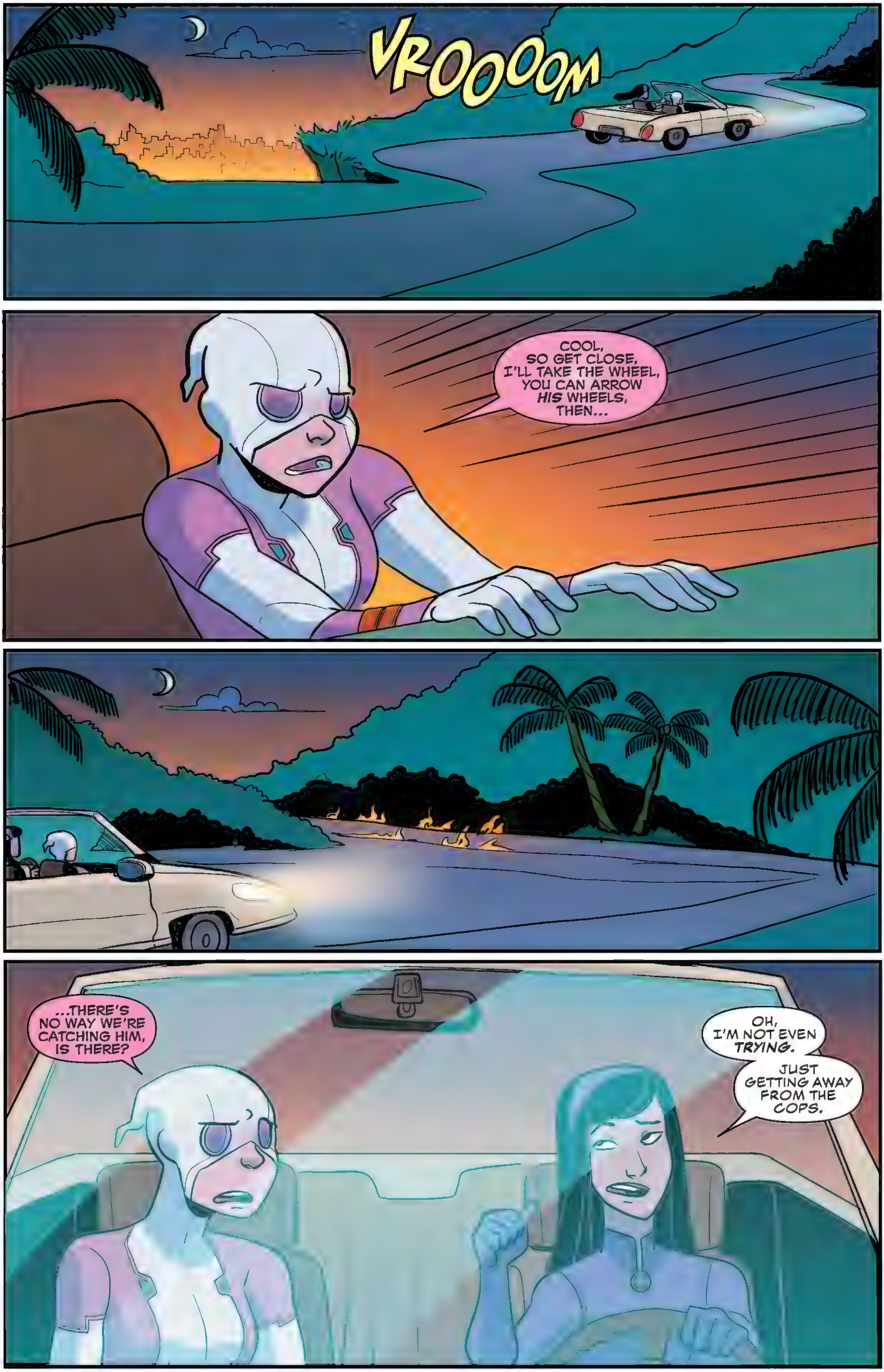

LOOK AT THAT...
YOU KIDNAPPIN' GIRLS, GHOST RIDER?
YEAH, THAT'S AN ARROWIN'!
RRNN?
9-1-1. WHAT IS YOUR EMERGENCY?
HI. A MAN ON FIRE DROVE HIS CAR THAT'S ON FIRE INTO MY BACKYARD, AND HE'S ATTACKING MY FRIENDS WITH HIS CHAIN THAT'S ON FIRE.
OKAY, AND ARE YOU IN A SAFE LOCATION? ⇒TK TK TK TK⇐
NOT REALLY. OH, THERE'S A LADY WITH A BOW NOW.
AND ANOTHER LADY WITH GUNS. AND SWORDS. *HM.*
AND A--
--GHOST?!
KEEP THAT GHOST AWAY FROM THE GEM!

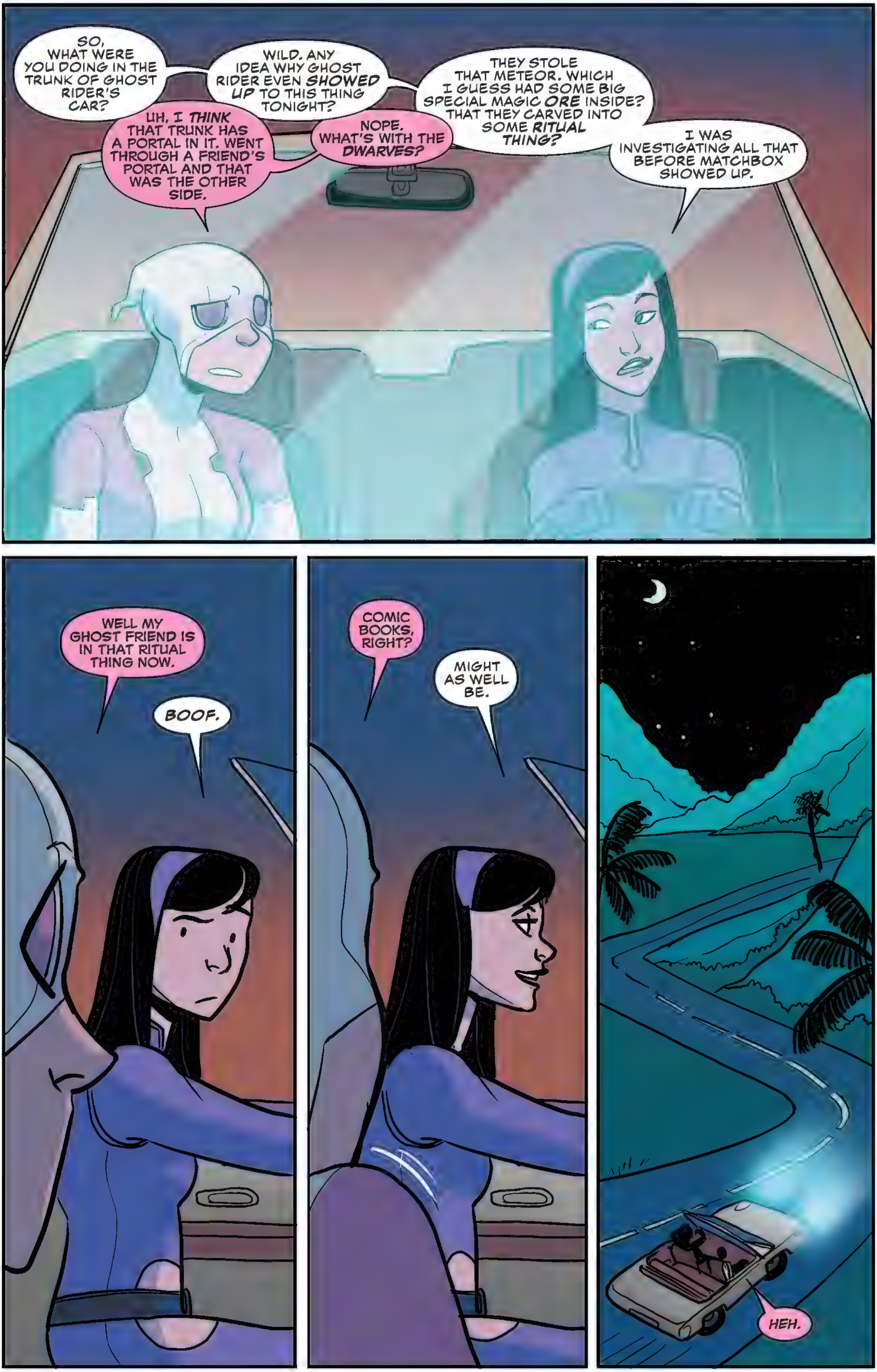

THIS IS IT. THIS WILL GIVE ME A BODY...
KATE BISHOP?
UH, YEAH? WHO ARE YOU? WE GO TO SCHOOL TOGETHER OR SOMETHING?
HA HA, NOT QUITE, BUT I--
CECIL!

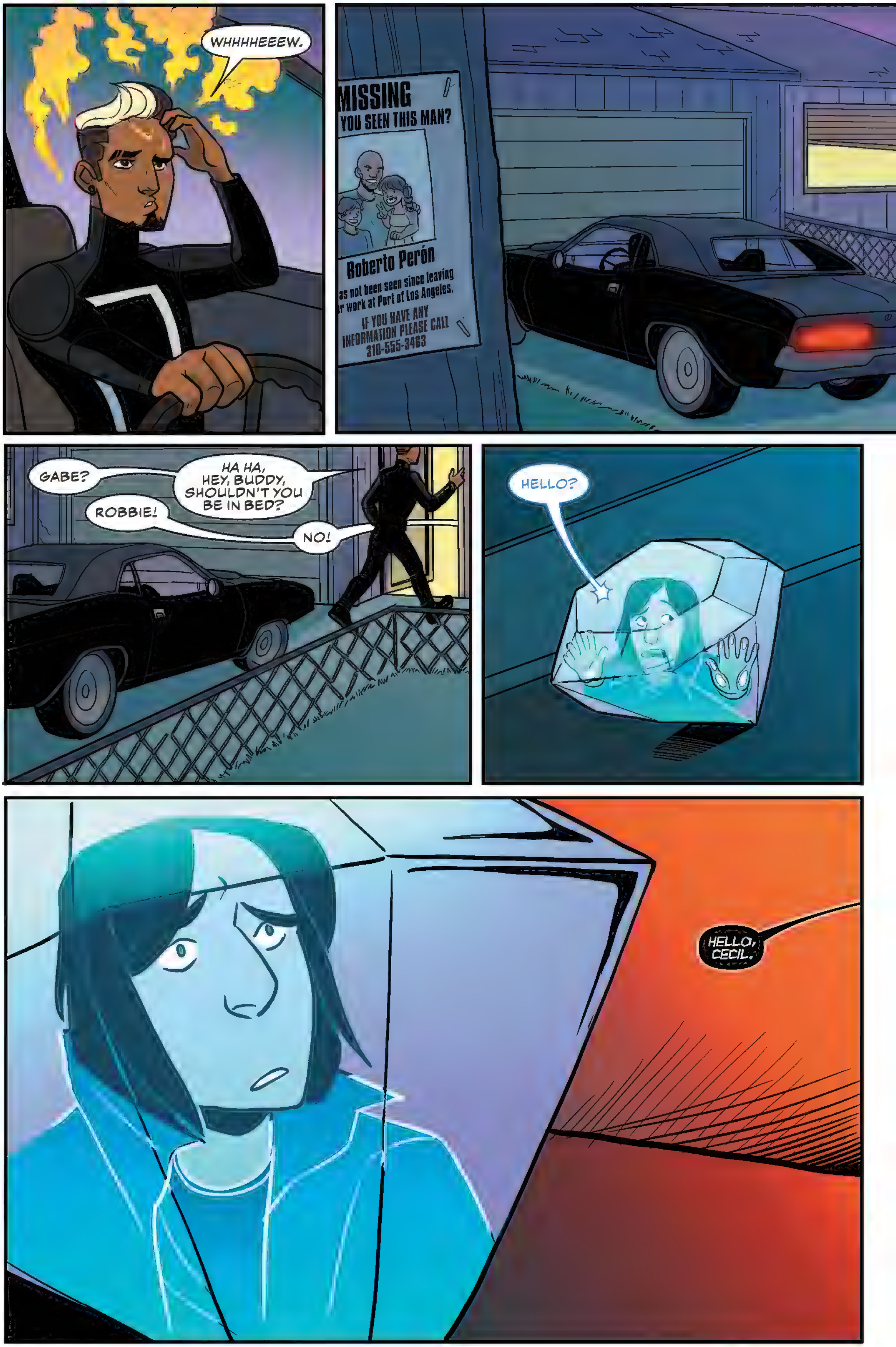

WEEOOO
GRAAAAAHHHH!
POLICE!
EVERYBODY SCRAMBLE! YOU KNOW WHERE TO MEET!
BEFORE I GO...
...SEEMS LIKE THIS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU *MURDERERS*...
CECIL!
COME FIND ME IF YOU WANT IT BACK.
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
SKREEEEE

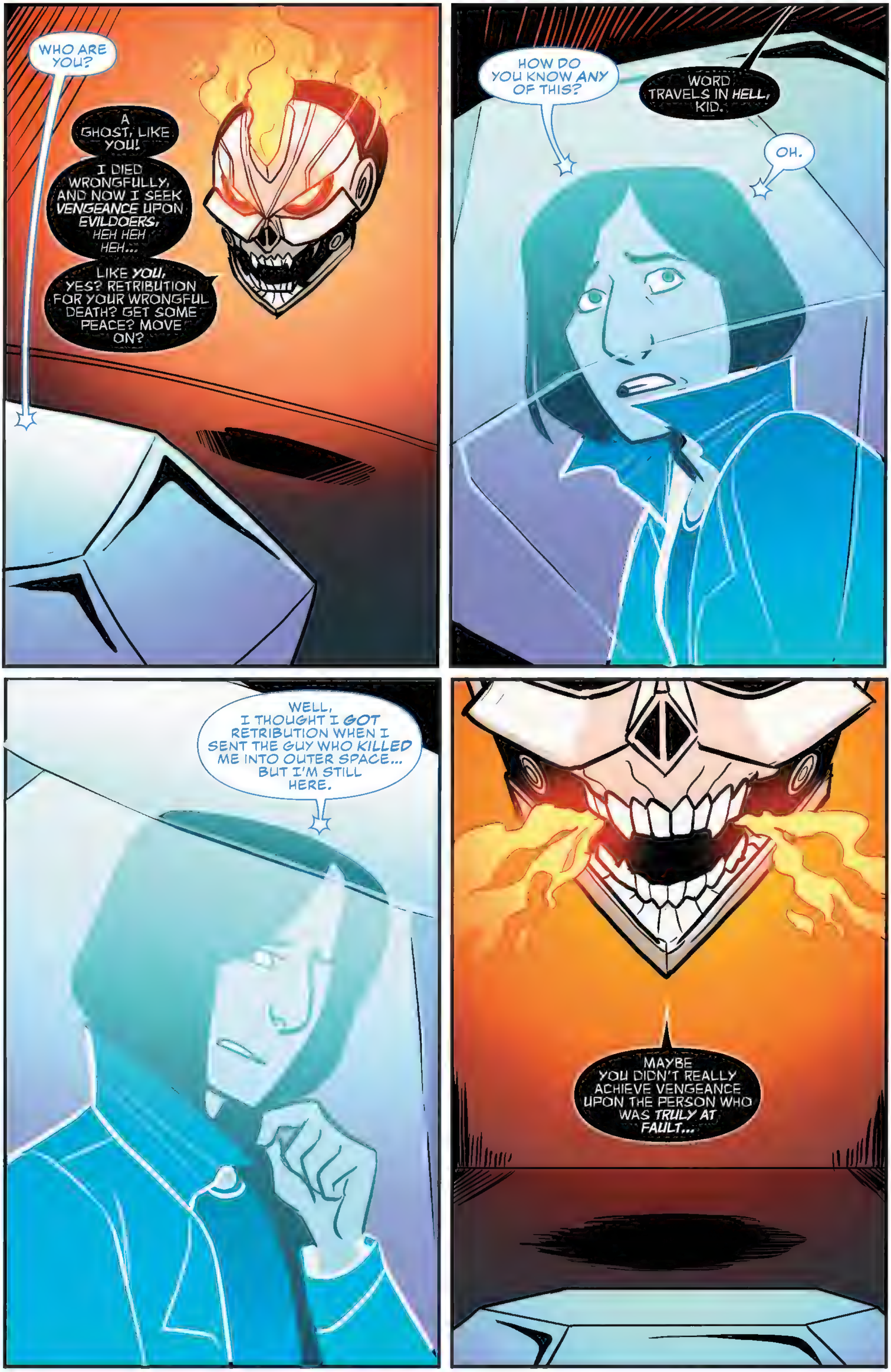

HEY! ROBBIE! STOP THE CAR!

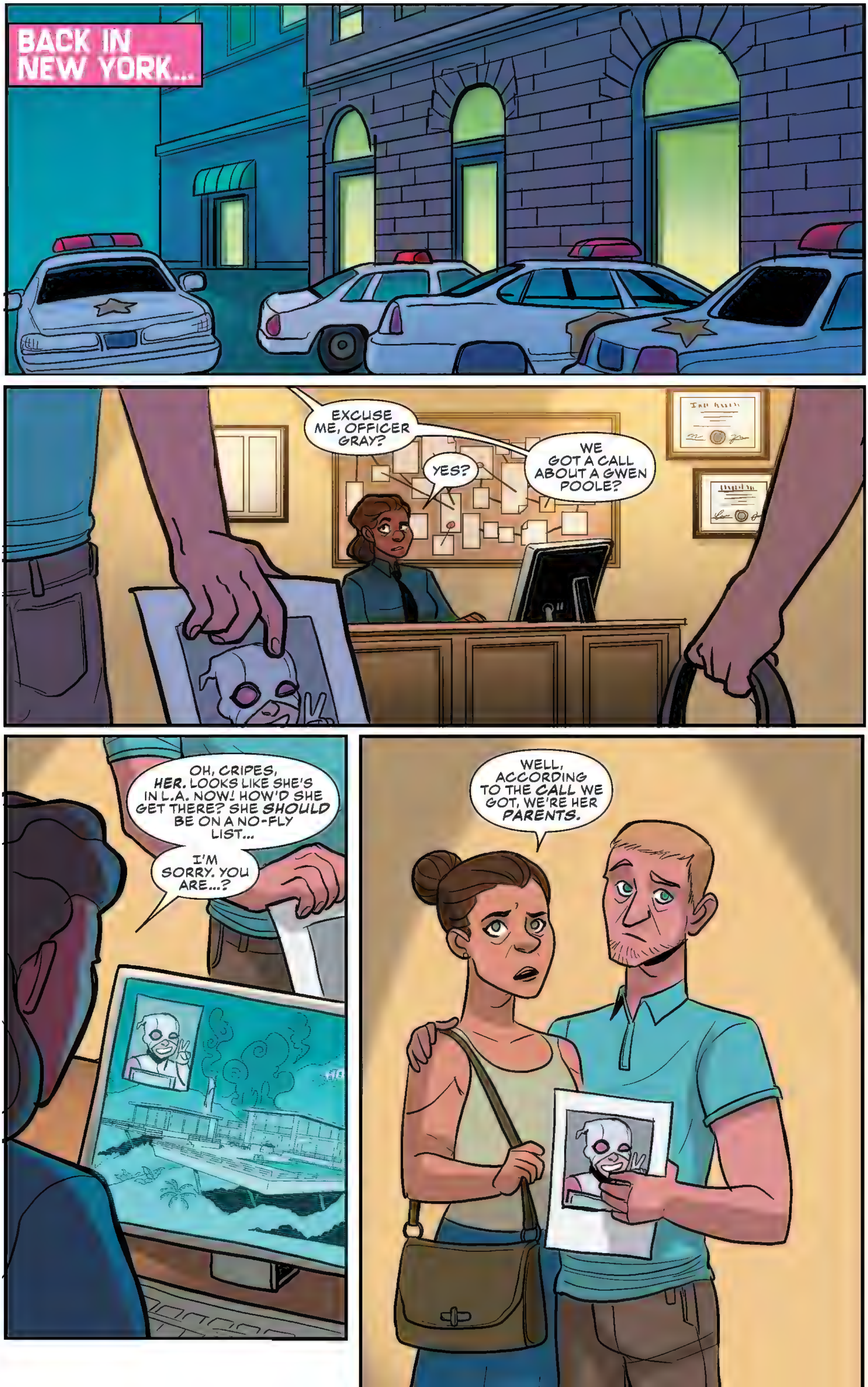

AH...
REALLY THOUGHT CALLING OUT THE SECRET IDENTITY WOULD WORK AGAIN.*
*SURE WORKED ON JANE FOSTER IN *GWENPOOL #2!*
SKREEET
NEED A RIDE, TOOTS?
UH, *YES*, I WOULD LIKE A RIDE FROM THE *REAL HAWKEYE!*


VROOOOM
COOL, SO GET CLOSE, I'LL TAKE THE WHEEL, YOU CAN ARROW *HIS* WHEELS, THEN...
...THERE'S NO WAY WE'RE CATCHING HIM, IS THERE?
OH, I'M NOT EVEN *TRYING.*
JUST GETTING AWAY FROM THE COPS.

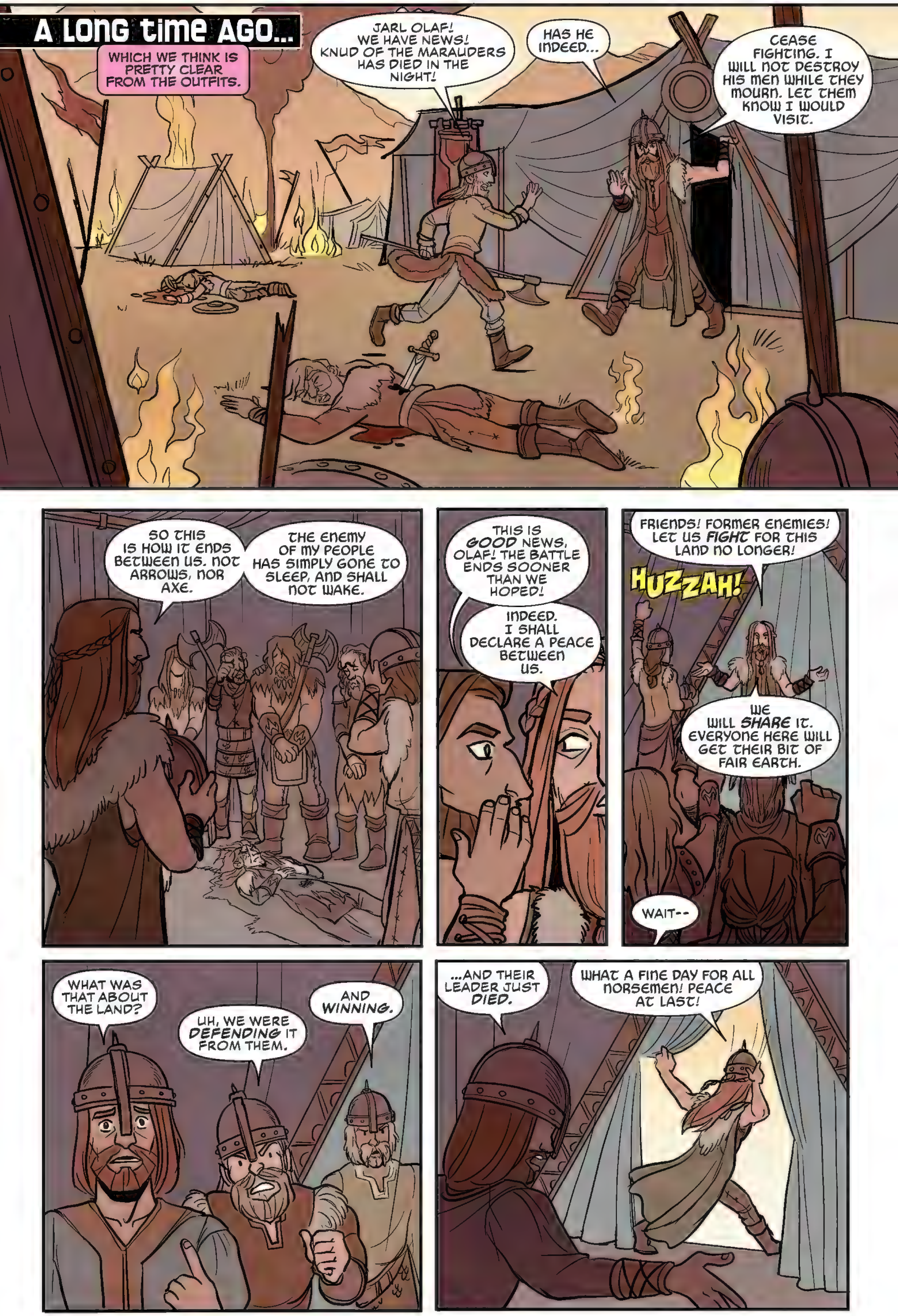

SO, WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN THE TRUNK OF GHOST RIDER'S CAR?
UH, I *THINK* THAT TRUNK HAS A PORTAL IN IT. WENT THROUGH A FRIEND'S PORTAL AND THAT WAS THE OTHER SIDE.
WILD. ANY IDEA WHY GHOST RIDER EVEN *SHOWED UP* TO THIS THING TONIGHT?
NOPE. WHAT'S WITH THE *DWARVES?*
THEY STOLE THAT METEOR. WHICH I GUESS HAD SOME BIG SPECIAL MAGIC *ORE* INSIDE? THAT THEY CARVED INTO SOME *RITUAL THING?*
I WAS INVESTIGATING ALL THAT BEFORE MATCHBOX SHOWED UP.
WELL MY GHOST FRIEND IS IN THAT RITUAL THING NOW.
BOOF.
COMIC BOOKS, RIGHT?
MIGHT AS WELL BE.
HEH.

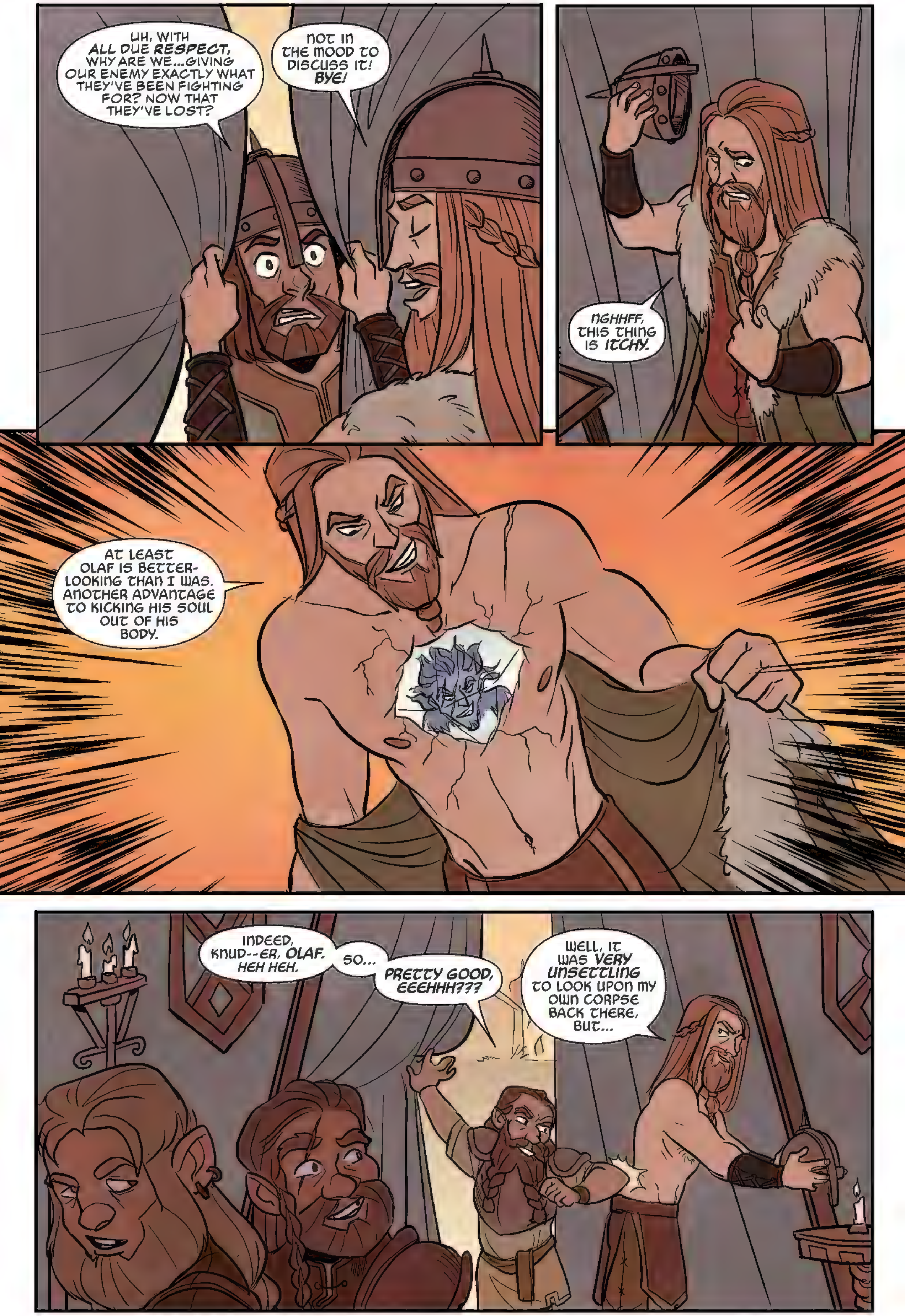

WHHHHEEEW.
MISSING
YOU SEEN THIS MAN?
Roberto Perón
as not been seen since leaving
r work at Port of Los Angeles.
IF YOU HAVE ANY
INFORMATION PLEASE CALL
310-555-3463
GABE?
HA HA, HEY, BUDDY, SHOULDN'T YOU BE IN BED?
ROBBIE!
NO!
HELLO?
HELLO, CECIL.

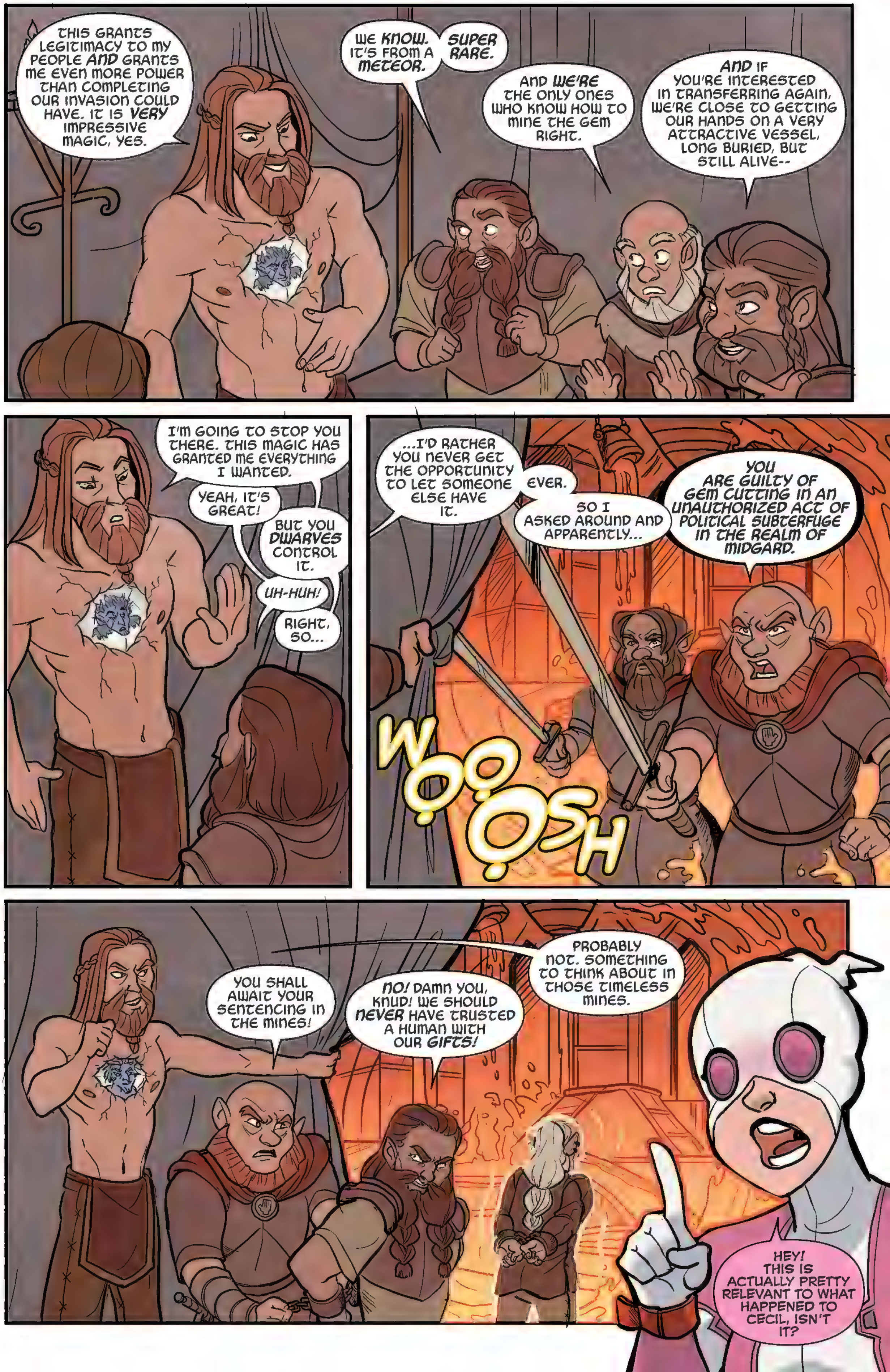

WHO ARE YOU?
A GHOST, LIKE YOU!
I DIED WRONGFULLY, AND NOW I SEEK *VENGEANCE* UPON *EVILDOERS*, HEH HEH HEH...
LIKE *YOU*, YES? RETRIBUTION FOR YOUR WRONGFUL DEATH? GET SOME PEACE? MOVE ON?
HOW DO YOU KNOW *ANY* OF THIS?
WORD TRAVELS IN *HELL*, KID.
OH.
WELL, I THOUGHT I *GOT* RETRIBUTION WHEN I SENT THE GUY WHO *KILLED* ME INTO OUTER SPACE... BUT I'M STILL HERE.
MAYBE YOU DIDN'T REALLY ACHIEVE VENGEANCE UPON THE PERSON WHO WAS *TRULY AT FAULT...*

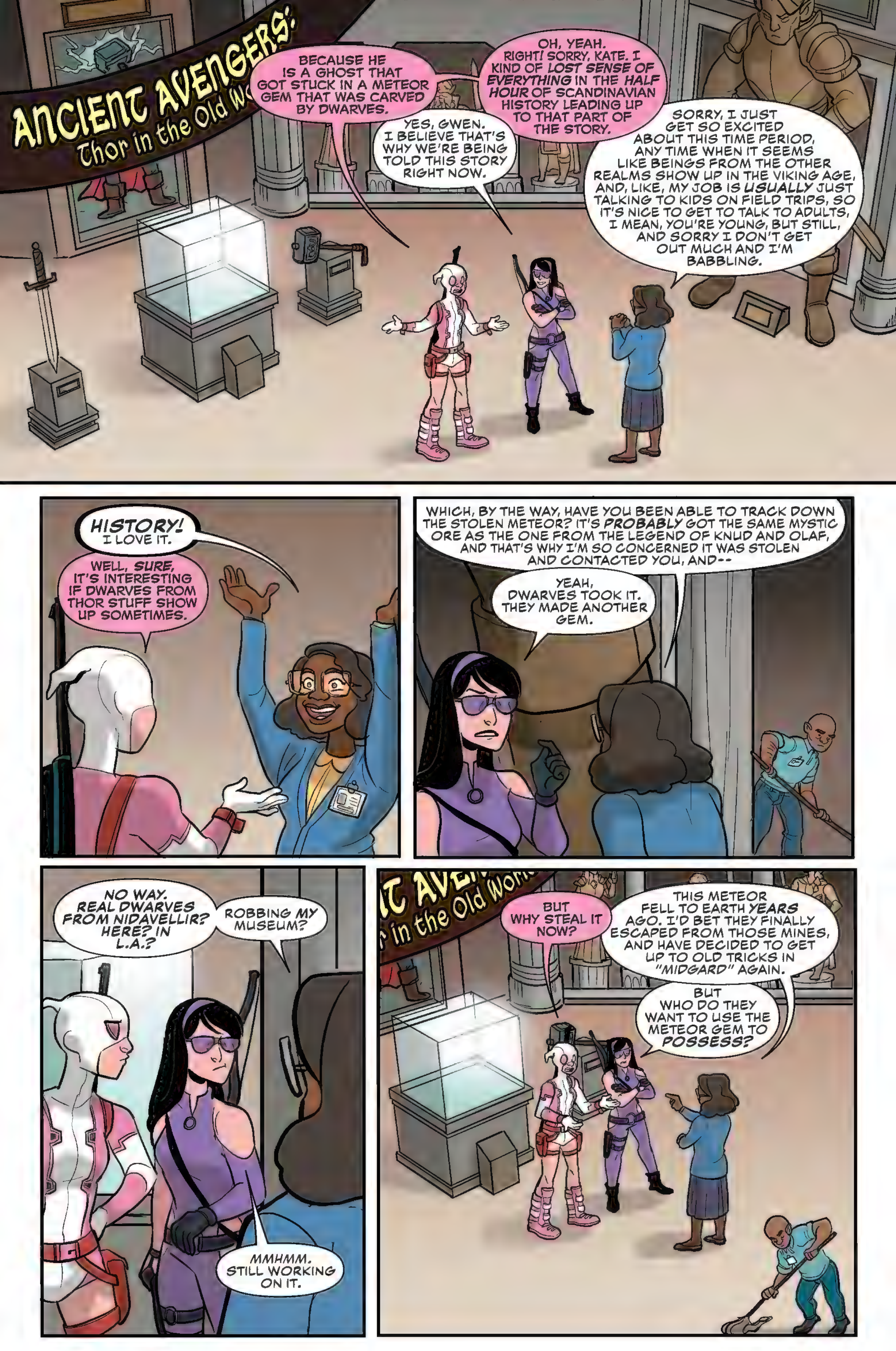

BACK IN NEW YORK...
EXCUSE ME, OFFICER GRAY?
YES?
WE GOT A CALL ABOUT A GWEN POOLE?
OH, CRIPES, HER. LOOKS LIKE SHE'S IN L.A. NOW! HOW'D SHE GET THERE? SHE SHOULD BE ON A NO-FLY LIST...
I'M SORRY. YOU ARE...?
WELL, ACCORDING TO THE CALL WE GOT, WE'RE HER PARENTS.

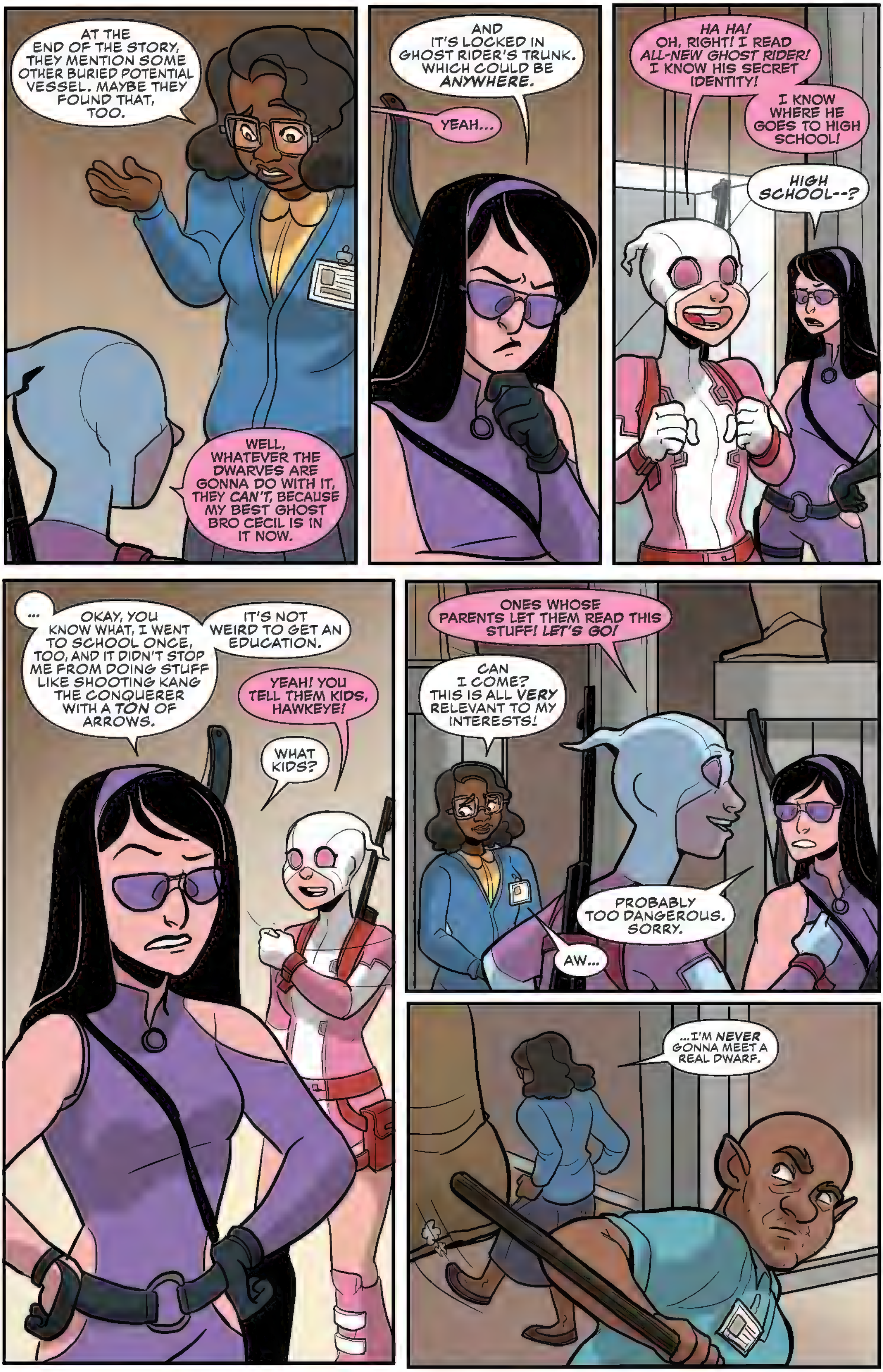
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #15

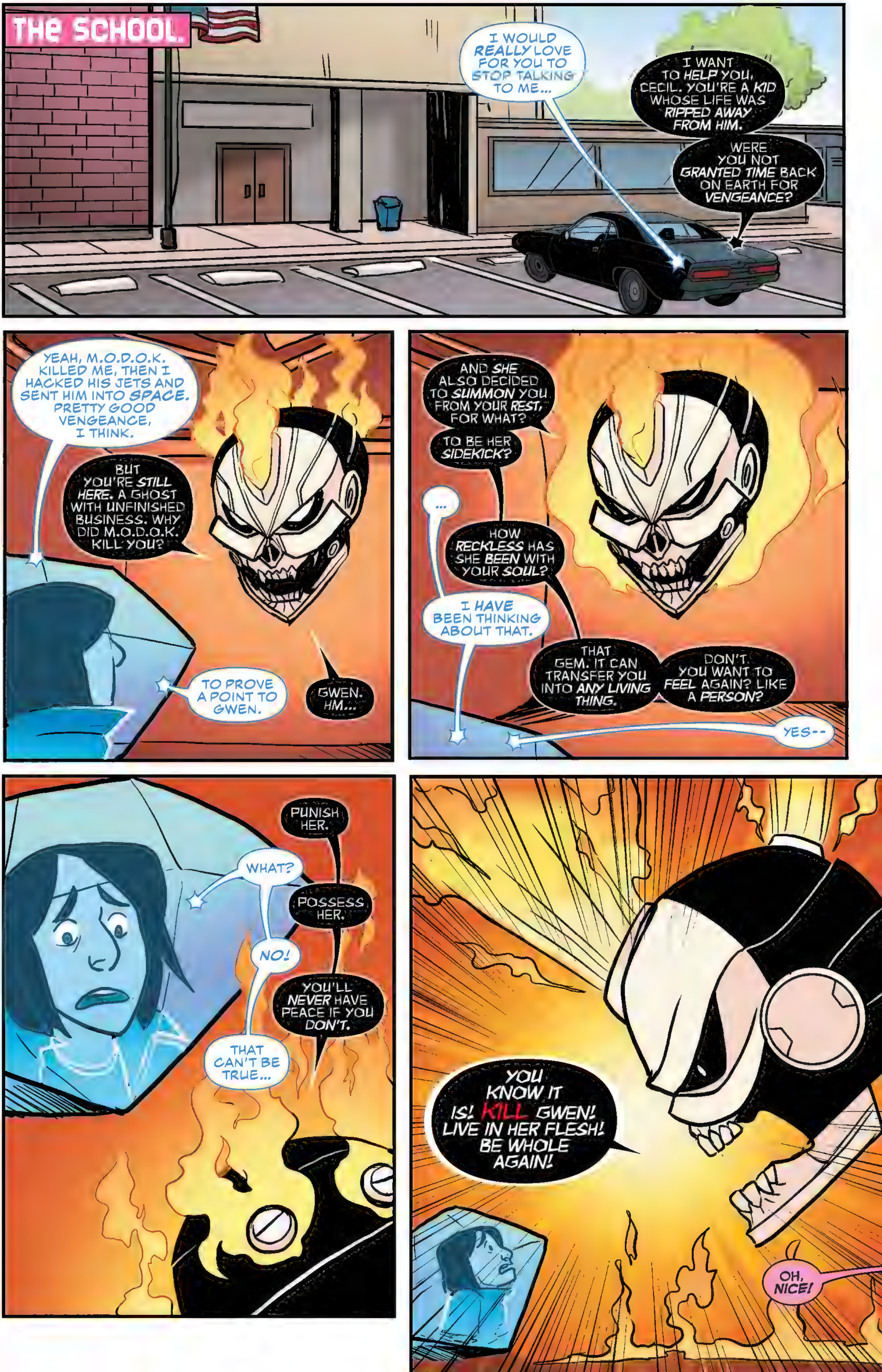

A LONG TIME AGO...
WHICH WE THINK IS PRETTY CLEAR FROM THE OUTFITS.
JARL OLAF! WE HAVE NEWS! KNUD OF THE MARAUDERS HAS DIED IN THE NIGHT!
HAS HE INDEED...
CEASE FIGHTING. I WILL NOT DESTROY HIS MEN WHILE THEY MOURN. LET THEM KNOW I WOULD VISIT.
SO THIS IS HOW IT ENDS BETWEEN US. NOT ARROWS, NOR AXE.
THE ENEMY OF MY PEOPLE HAS SIMPLY GONE TO SLEEP, AND SHALL NOT WAKE.
THIS IS GOOD NEWS, OLAF! THE BATTLE ENDS SOONER THAN WE HOPED!
INDEED. I SHALL DECLARE A PEACE BETWEEN US.
FRIENDS! FORMER ENEMIES! LET US FIGHT FOR THIS LAND NO LONGER!
HUZZAH!
WE WILL SHARE IT. EVERYONE HERE WILL GET THEIR BIT OF FAIR EARTH.
WAIT--
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT THE LAND?
UH, WE WERE DEFENDING IT FROM THEM.
AND WINNING.
...AND THEIR LEADER JUST DIED.
WHAT A FINE DAY FOR ALL NORSEMEN! PEACE AT LAST!

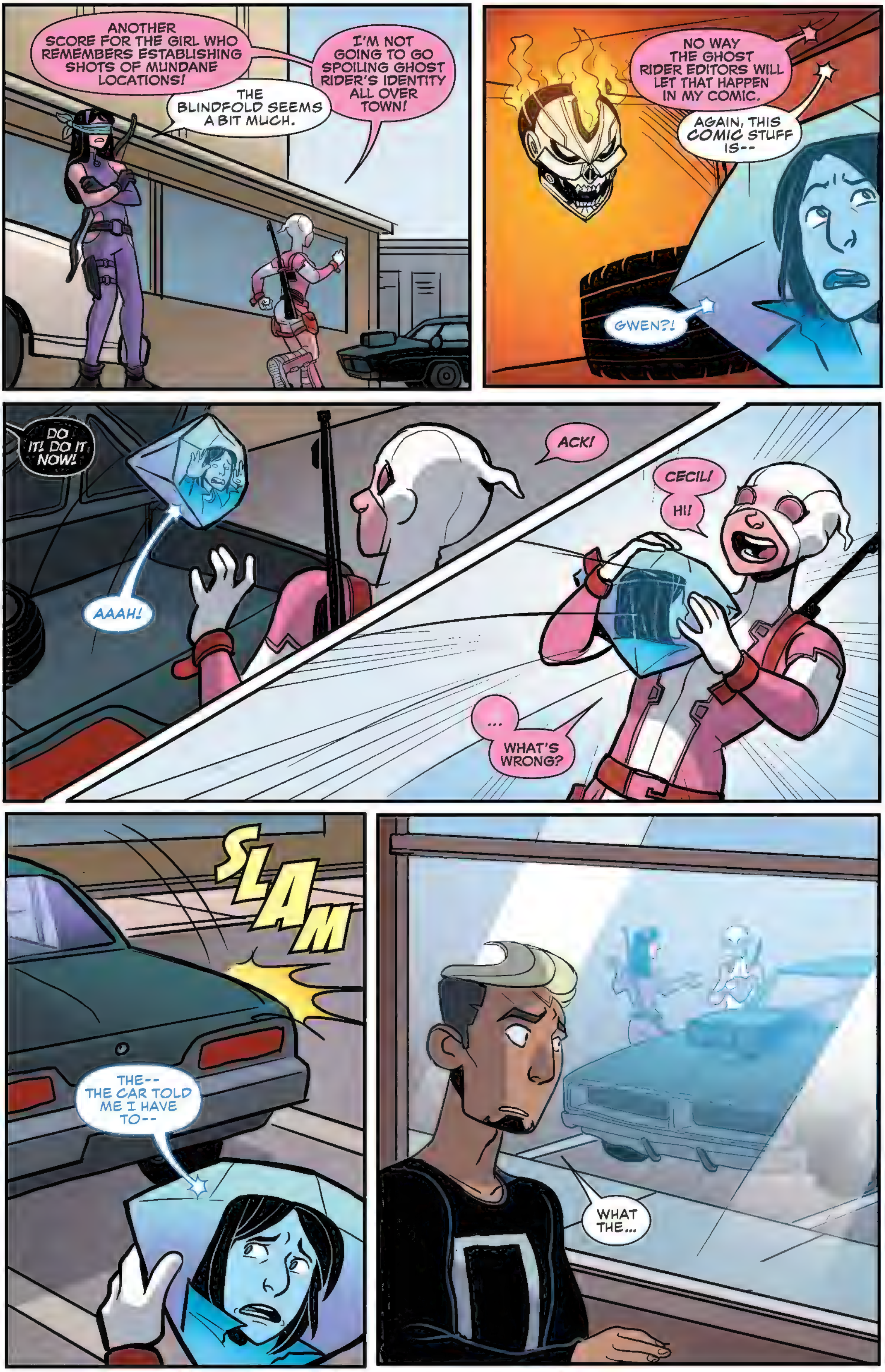

UH, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, WHY ARE WE...GIVING OUR ENEMY EXACTLY WHAT THEY'VE BEEN FIGHTING FOR? NOW THAT THEY'VE LOST?
NOT IN THE MOOD TO DISCUSS IT! BYE!
NGHHFF, THIS THING IS ITCHY.
AT LEAST OLAF IS BETTER-LOOKING THAN I WAS. ANOTHER ADVANTAGE TO KICKING HIS SOUL OUT OF HIS BODY.
INDEED, KNUD--ER, OLAF. HEH HEH.
SO...
PRETTY GOOD, EEEHHH???
WELL, IT WAS VERY UNSETTLING TO LOOK UPON MY OWN CORPSE BACK THERE, BUT...

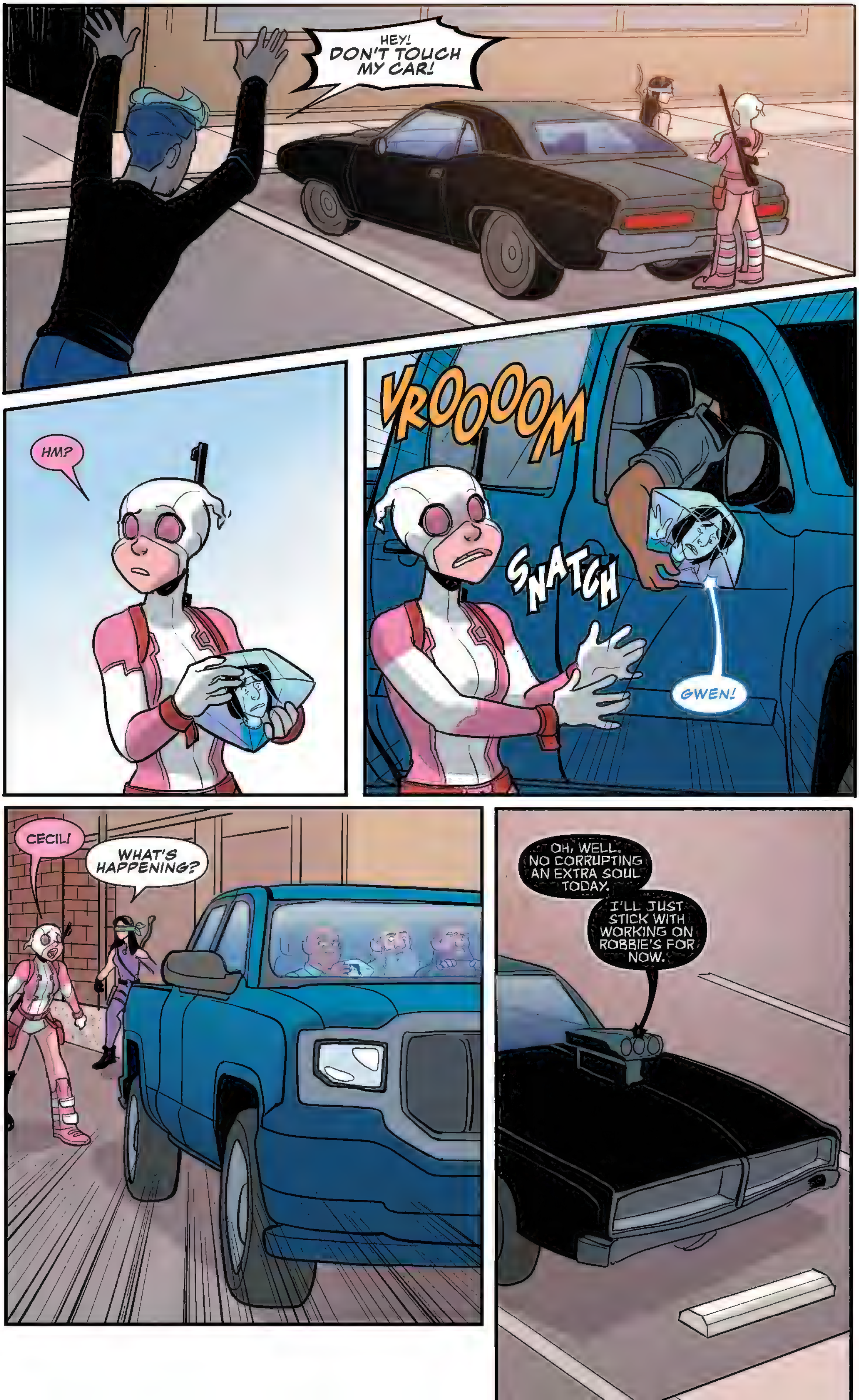

THIS GRANTS LEGITIMACY TO MY PEOPLE AND GRANTS ME EVEN MORE POWER THAN COMPLETING OUR INVASION COULD HAVE. IT IS VERY IMPRESSIVE MAGIC, YES.
WE KNOW. IT'S FROM A METEOR.
SUPER RARE.
AND WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO KNOW HOW TO MINE THE GEM RIGHT.
AND IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN TRANSFERRING AGAIN, WE'RE CLOSE TO GETTING OUR HANDS ON A VERY ATTRACTIVE VESSEL, LONG BURIED, BUT STILL ALIVE--
I'M GOING TO STOP YOU THERE. THIS MAGIC HAS GRANTED ME EVERYTHING I WANTED.
YEAH, IT'S GREAT!
BUT YOU DWARVES CONTROL IT.
UH-HUH!
RIGHT, SO...
...I'D RATHER YOU NEVER GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO LET SOMEONE ELSE HAVE IT.
EVER.
SO I ASKED AROUND AND APPARENTLY...
YOU ARE GUILTY OF GEM CUTTING IN AN UNAUTHORIZED ACT OF POLITICAL SUBTERFUGE IN THE REALM OF MIDGARD.
WOOOSH
YOU SHALL AWAIT YOUR SENTENCING IN THE MINES!
NO! DAMN YOU, KNUD! WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE TRUSTED A HUMAN WITH OUR GIFTS!
PROBABLY NOT. SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT IN THOSE TIMELESS MINES.
HEY! THIS IS ACTUALLY PRETTY RELEVANT TO WHAT HAPPENED TO CECIL, ISN'T IT?

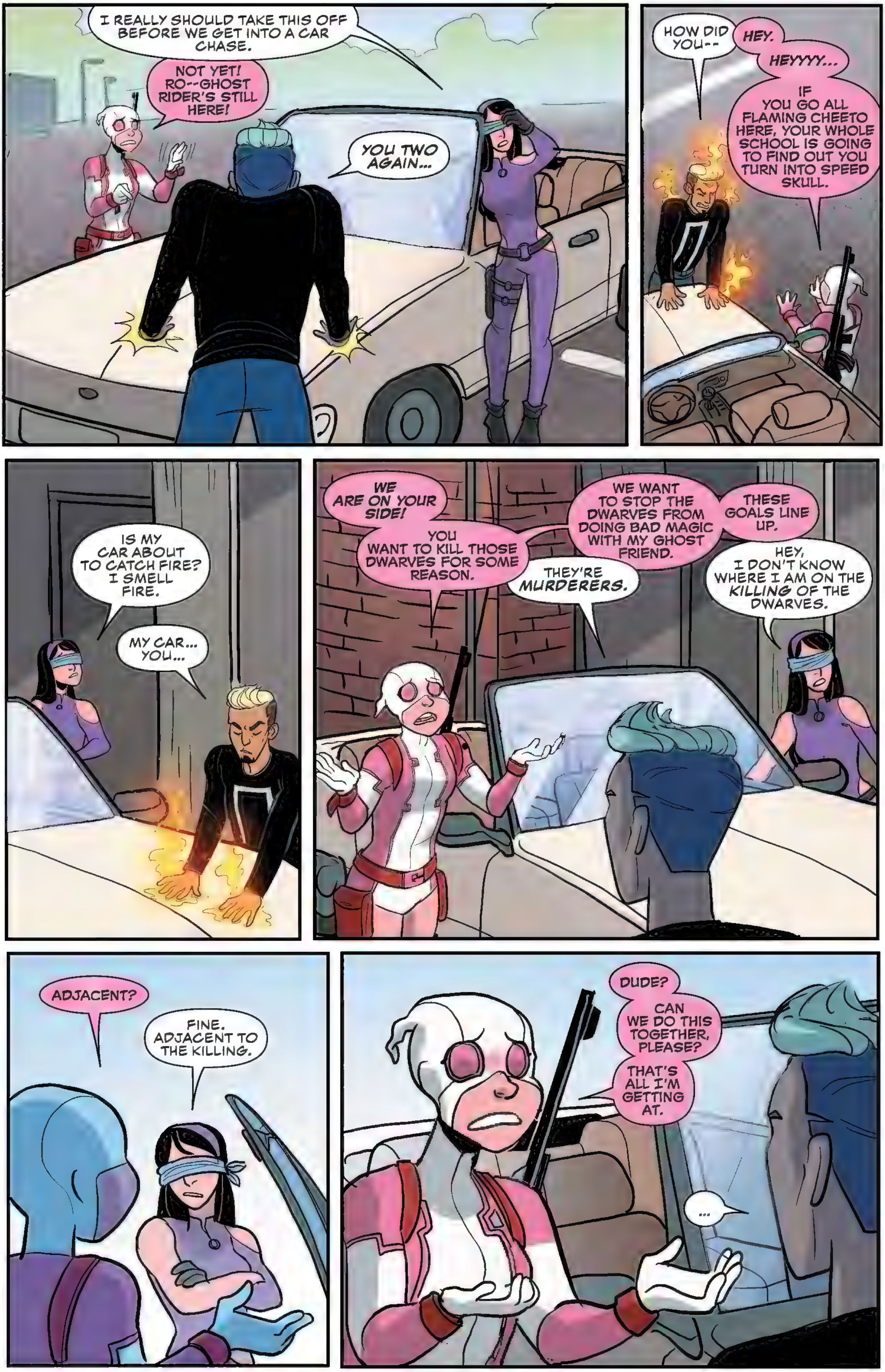

ANCIENT AVENGERS: Thor in the Old Wo
BECAUSE HE IS A GHOST THAT GOT STUCK IN A METEOR GEM THAT WAS CARVED BY DWARVES.
YES, GWEN. I BELIEVE THAT'S WHY WE'RE BEING TOLD THIS STORY RIGHT NOW.
OH, YEAH. RIGHT! SORRY, KATE. I KIND OF *LOST SENSE OF EVERYTHING* IN THE *HALF HOUR* OF SCANDINAVIAN HISTORY LEADING UP TO THAT PART OF THE STORY.
SORRY, I JUST GET SO EXCITED ABOUT THIS TIME PERIOD, ANY TIME WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE BEINGS FROM THE OTHER REALMS SHOW UP IN THE VIKING AGE, AND, LIKE, MY JOB IS *USUALLY* JUST TALKING TO KIDS ON FIELD TRIPS, SO IT'S NICE TO GET TO TALK TO ADULTS, I MEAN, YOU'RE YOUNG, BUT STILL, AND SORRY I DON'T GET OUT MUCH AND I'M BABBLING.
HISTORY! I LOVE IT.
WELL, *SURE*, IT'S INTERESTING IF DWARVES FROM THOR STUFF SHOW UP SOMETIMES.
WHICH, BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO TRACK DOWN THE STOLEN METEOR? IT'S *PROBABLY* GOT THE SAME MYSTIC ORE AS THE ONE FROM THE LEGEND OF KNUD AND OLAF, AND THAT'S WHY I'M SO CONCERNED IT WAS STOLEN AND CONTACTED YOU, AND--
YEAH, DWARVES TOOK IT. THEY MADE ANOTHER GEM.
NO WAY. *REAL DWARVES FROM NIDAVELLIR? HERE? IN L.A.?*
ROBBING *MY* MUSEUM?
MMHMM. STILL WORKING ON IT.
BUT WHY STEAL IT NOW?
THIS METEOR FELL TO EARTH *YEARS* AGO. I'D BET THEY FINALLY ESCAPED FROM THOSE MINES, AND HAVE DECIDED TO GET UP TO OLD TRICKS IN "MIDGARD" AGAIN.
BUT WHO DO THEY WANT TO USE THE METEOR GEM TO *POSSESS?*

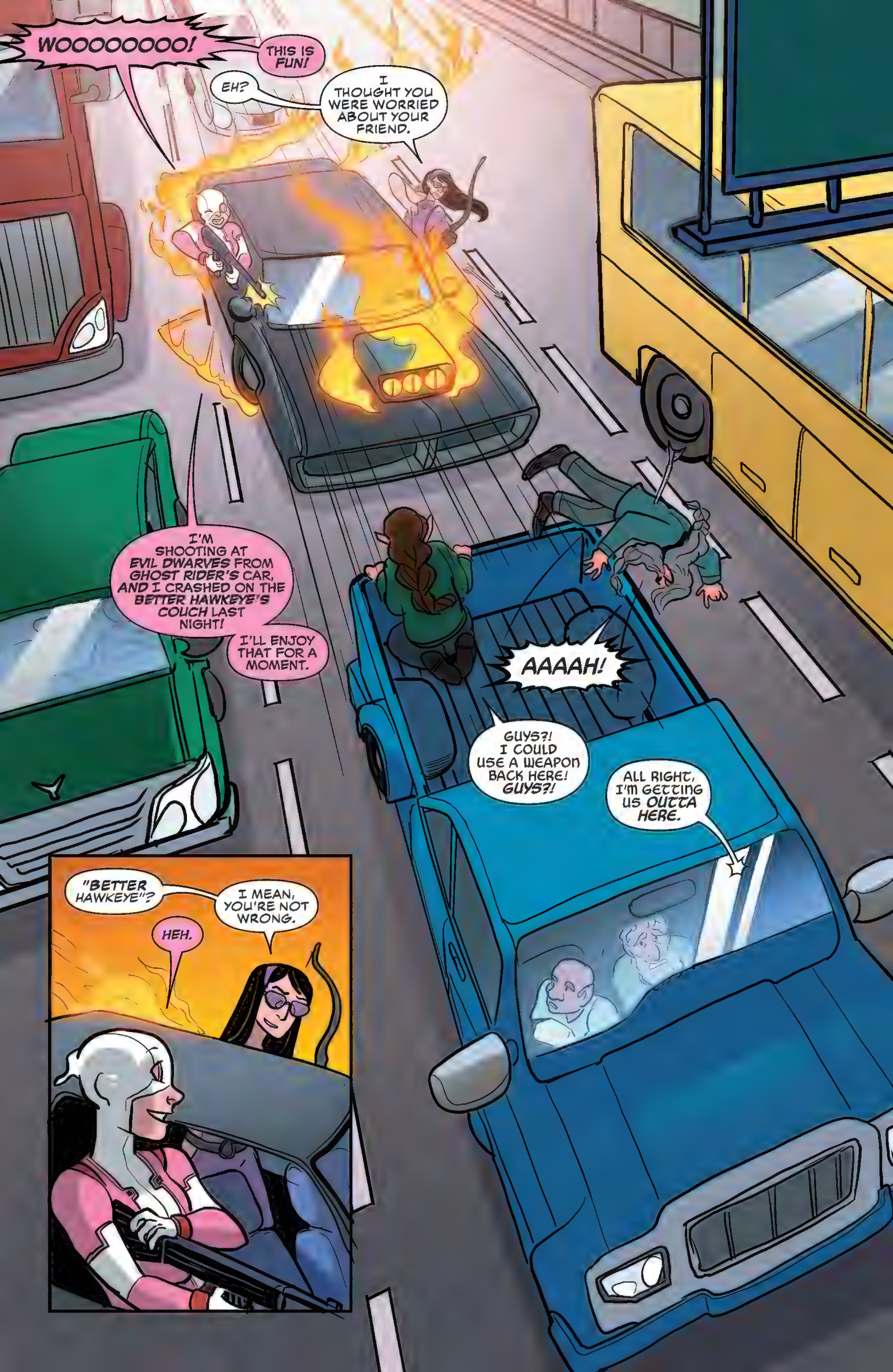

AT THE END OF THE STORY, THEY MENTION SOME OTHER BURIED POTENTIAL VESSEL. MAYBE THEY FOUND THAT, TOO.
WELL, WHATEVER THE DWARVES ARE GONNA DO WITH IT, THEY *CAN'T*, BECAUSE MY BEST GHOST BRO CECIL IS IN IT NOW.
AND IT'S LOCKED IN GHOST RIDER'S TRUNK. WHICH COULD BE *ANYWHERE*.
YEAH...
HA HA! OH, RIGHT! I READ *ALL-NEW GHOST RIDER!* I KNOW HIS SECRET IDENTITY!
I KNOW WHERE HE GOES TO HIGH SCHOOL!
HIGH SCHOOL--?
...
OKAY, YOU KNOW WHAT, I WENT TO SCHOOL ONCE, TOO, AND IT DIDN'T STOP ME FROM DOING STUFF LIKE SHOOTING KANG THE CONQUERER WITH A *TON* OF ARROWS.
IT'S NOT WEIRD TO GET AN EDUCATION.
YEAH! YOU TELL THEM KIDS, HAWKEYE!
WHAT KIDS?
ONES WHOSE PARENTS LET THEM READ THIS STUFF! *LET'S GO!*
CAN I COME? THIS IS ALL *VERY* RELEVANT TO MY INTERESTS!
PROBABLY TOO DANGEROUS. SORRY.
AW...
...I'M *NEVER* GONNA MEET A REAL DWARF.

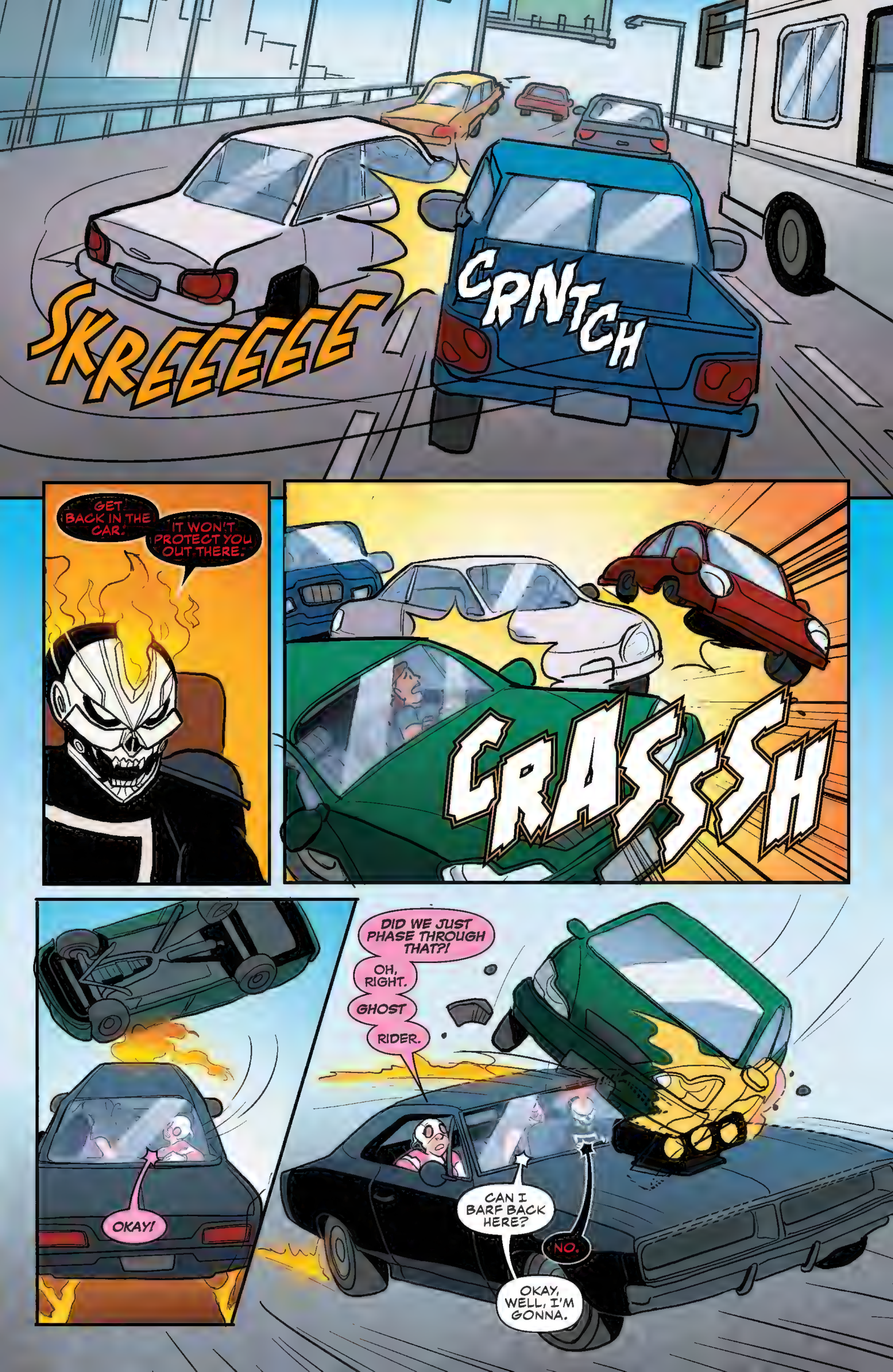

THE SCHOOL.
I WOULD REALLY LOVE FOR YOU TO STOP TALKING TO ME...
I WANT TO HELP YOU, CECIL. YOU'RE A KID WHOSE LIFE WAS RIPPED AWAY FROM HIM.
WERE YOU NOT GRANTED TIME BACK ON EARTH FOR VENGEANCE?
YEAH, M.O.D.O.K. KILLED ME, THEN I HACKED HIS JETS AND SENT HIM INTO SPACE. PRETTY GOOD VENGEANCE, I THINK.
BUT YOU'RE STILL HERE. A GHOST WITH UNFINISHED BUSINESS. WHY DID M.O.D.O.K. KILL YOU?
TO PROVE A POINT TO GWEN.
GWEN. HM...
AND SHE ALSO DECIDED TO SUMMON YOU FROM YOUR REST, FOR WHAT?
TO BE HER SIDEKICK?
...
HOW RECKLESS HAS SHE BEEN WITH YOUR SOUL?
I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT.
THAT GEM. IT CAN TRANSFER YOU INTO ANY LIVING THING.
DON'T YOU WANT TO FEEL AGAIN? LIKE A PERSON?
YES--
PUNISH HER.
WHAT?
POSSESS HER.
NO!
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE PEACE IF YOU DON'T.
THAT CAN'T BE TRUE...
YOU KNOW IT IS! KILL GWEN! LIVE IN HER FLESH! BE WHOLE AGAIN!
OH, NICE!

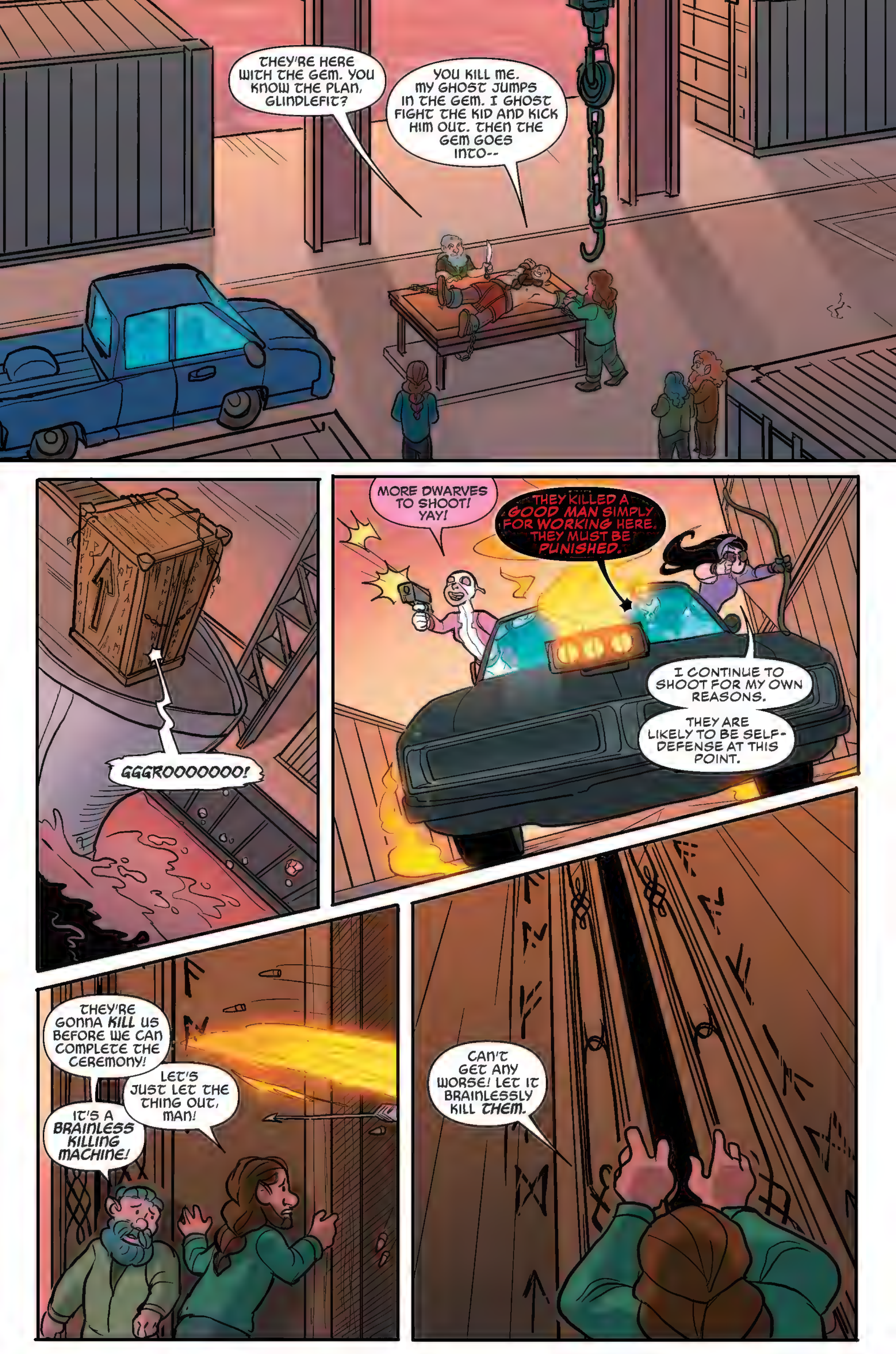

ANOTHER SCORE FOR THE GIRL WHO REMEMBERS ESTABLISHING SHOTS OF MUNDANE LOCATIONS!
I'M NOT GOING TO GO SPOILING GHOST RIDER'S IDENTITY ALL OVER TOWN!
THE BLINDFOLD SEEMS A BIT MUCH.
NO WAY THE GHOST RIDER EDITORS WILL LET THAT HAPPEN IN MY COMIC.
AGAIN, THIS COMIC STUFF IS--
GWEN?!
DO IT! DO IT NOW!
AAAH!
ACK!
CECIL!
HI!
...
WHAT'S WRONG?
SLAM
THE-- THE CAR TOLD ME I HAVE TO--
WHAT THE...

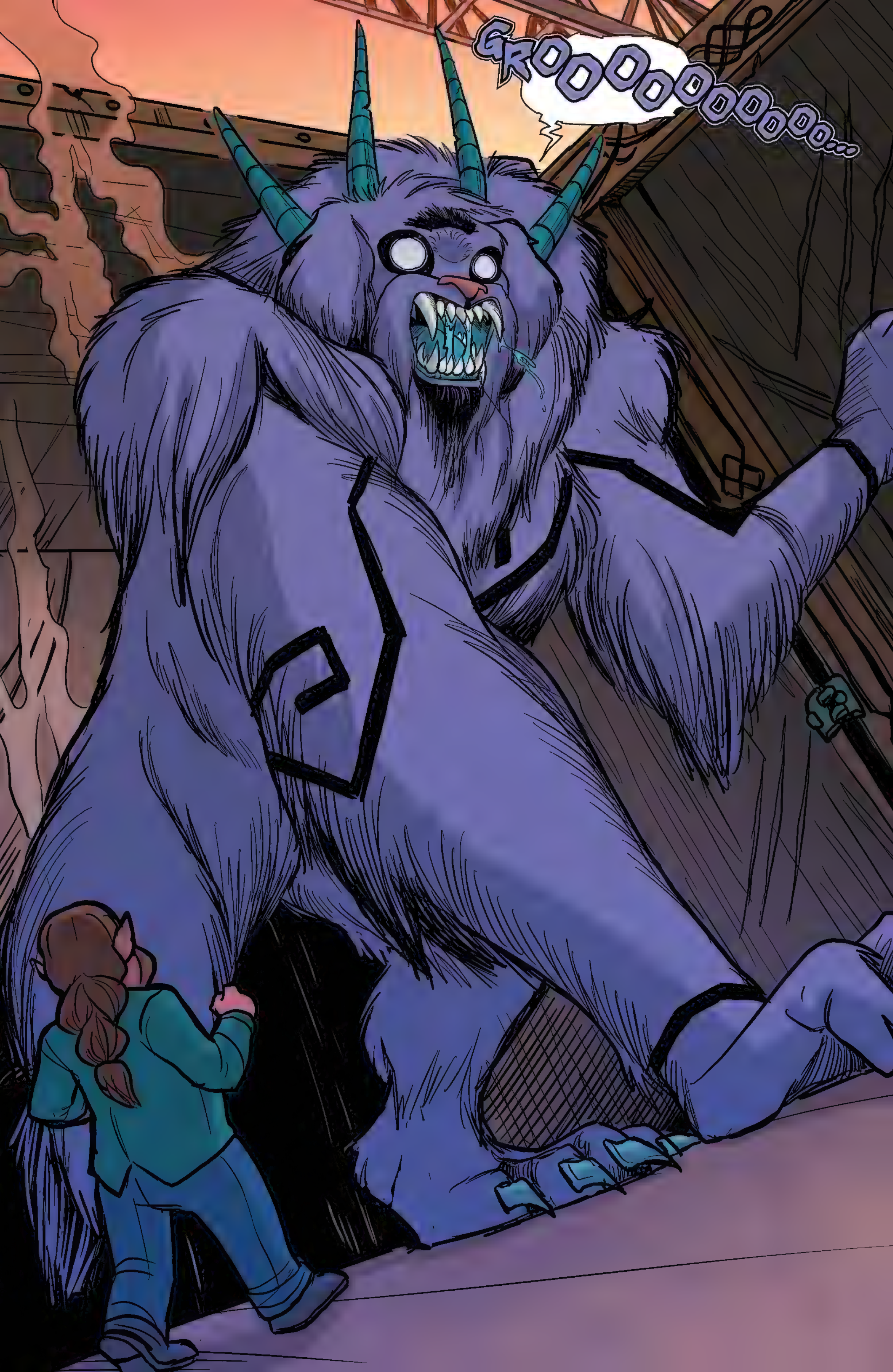

HEY! DON'T TOUCH MY CAR!
HM?
VROOOOM
SNATCH
GWEN!
CECIL!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
OH, WELL. NO CORRUPTING AN EXTRA SOUL TODAY.
I'LL JUST STICK WITH WORKING ON ROBBIE'S FOR NOW.

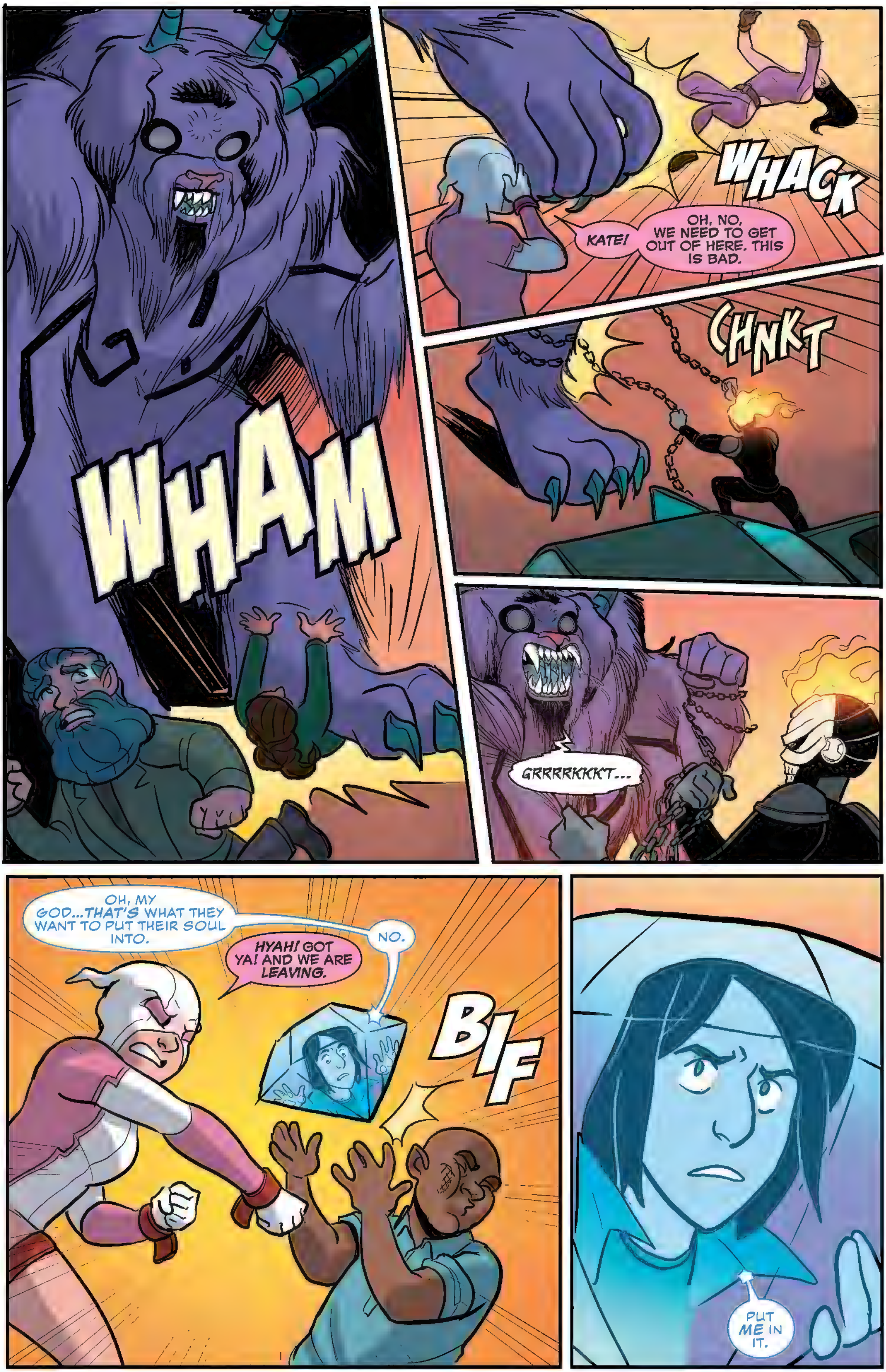

I REALLY SHOULD TAKE THIS OFF BEFORE WE GET INTO A CAR CHASE.
NOT YET! RO--GHOST RIDER'S STILL HERE!
YOU TWO AGAIN...
HOW DID YOU--
HEY.
HEYYYY...
IF YOU GO ALL FLAMING CHEETO HERE, YOUR WHOLE SCHOOL IS GOING TO FIND OUT YOU TURN INTO SPEED SKULL.
IS MY CAR ABOUT TO CATCH FIRE? I SMELL FIRE.
MY CAR... YOU...
WE ARE ON YOUR SIDE!
YOU WANT TO KILL THOSE DWARVES FOR SOME REASON.
WE WANT TO STOP THE DWARVES FROM DOING BAD MAGIC WITH MY GHOST FRIEND.
THESE GOALS LINE UP.
THEY'RE *MURDERERS.*
HEY, I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM ON THE *KILLING* OF THE DWARVES.
ADJACENT?
FINE. ADJACENT TO THE KILLING.
DUDE?
CAN WE DO THIS TOGETHER, PLEASE?
THAT'S ALL I'M GETTING AT.
...

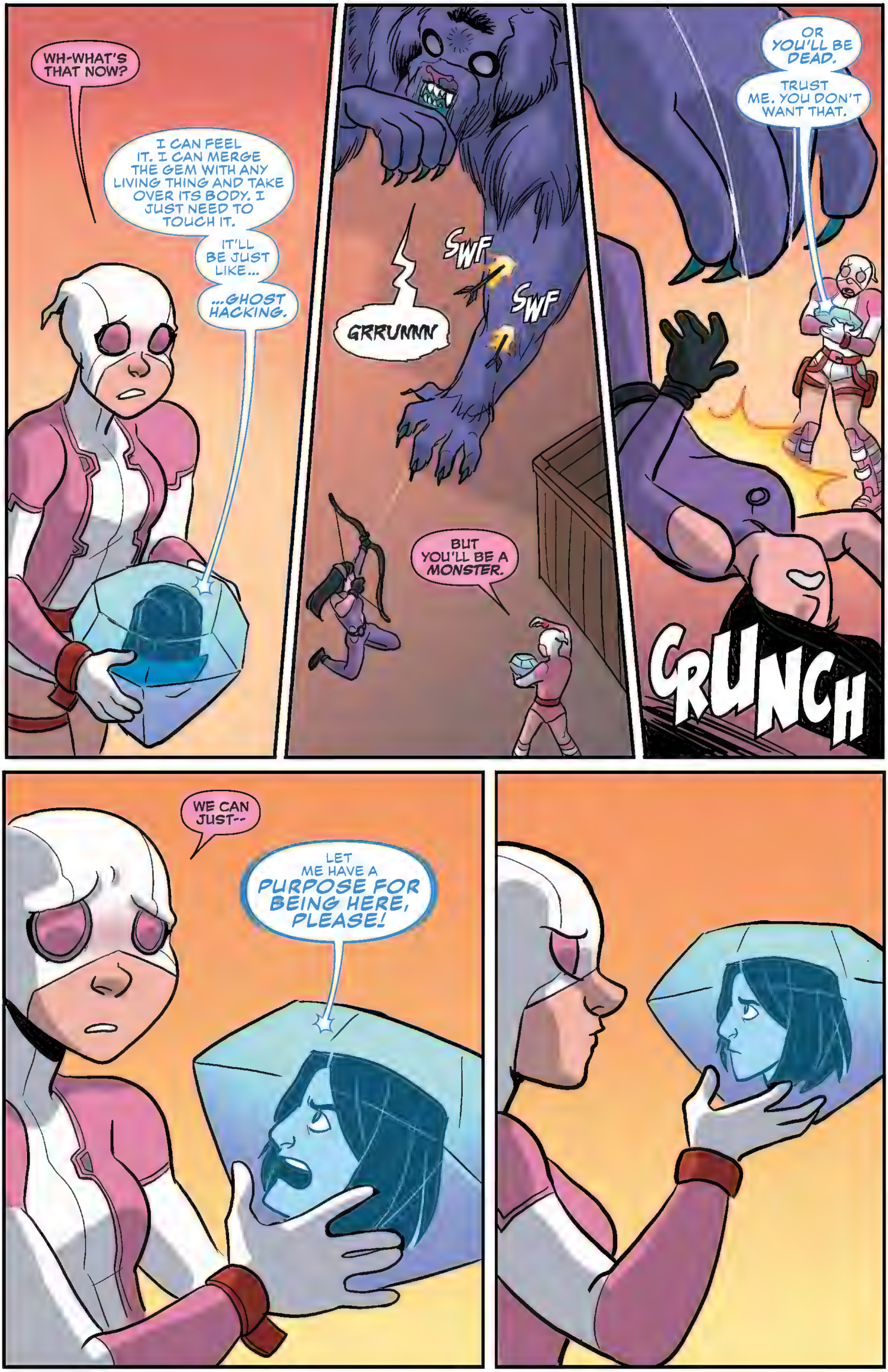

WOOOOOOOO!
THIS IS FUN!
EH?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR FRIEND.
I'M SHOOTING AT EVIL DWARVES FROM GHOST RIDER'S CAR, AND I CRASHED ON THE BETTER HAWKEYE'S COUCH LAST NIGHT!
I'LL ENJOY THAT FOR A MOMENT.
AAAAH!
GUYS?! I COULD USE A WEAPON BACK HERE! GUYS?!
ALL RIGHT, I'M GETTING US OUTTA HERE.
"BETTER HAWKEYE"?
I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT WRONG.
HEH.

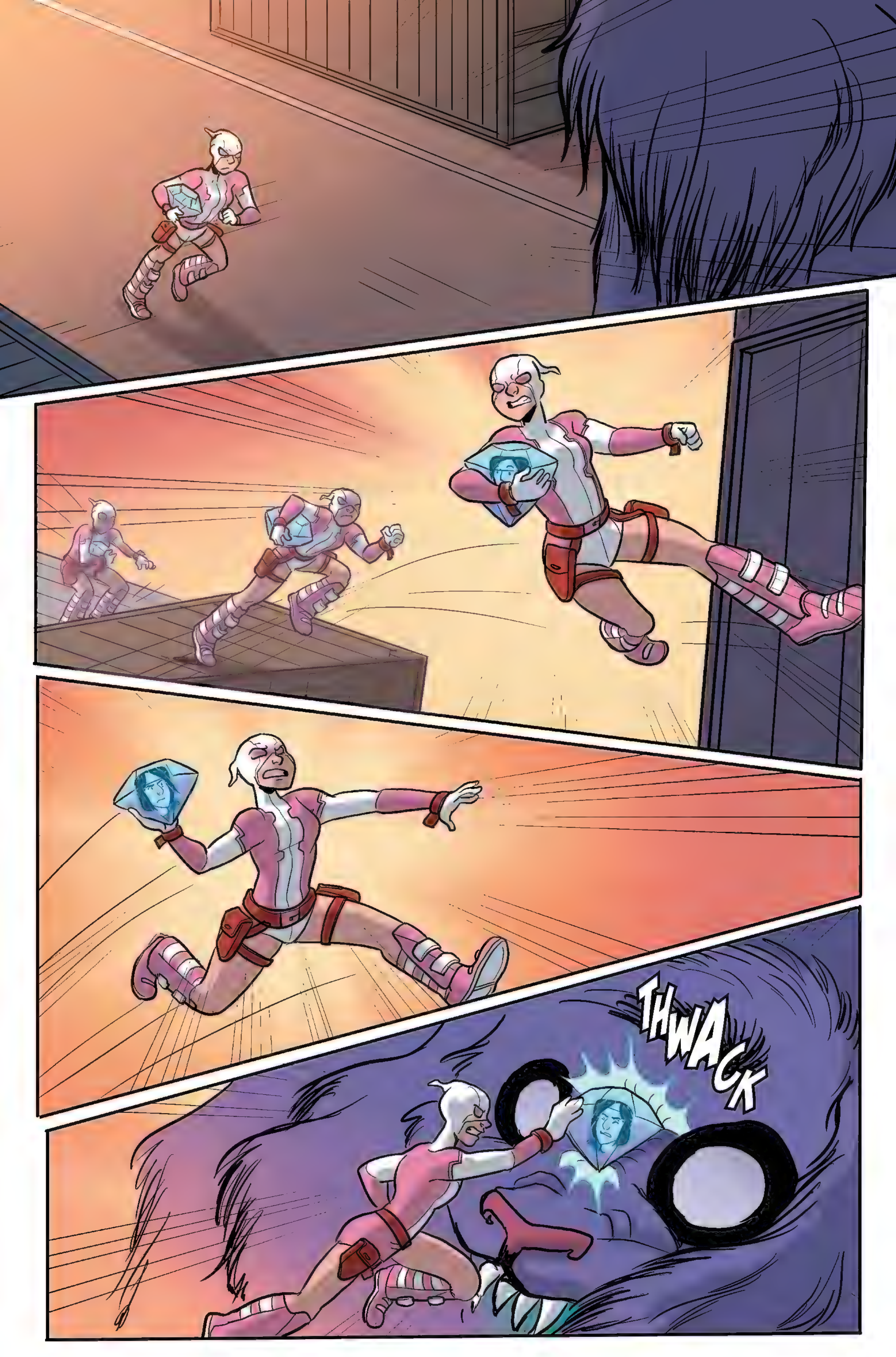

SKREEEEEE
CRNTCH
GET BACK IN THE CAR.
IT WON'T PROTECT YOU OUT THERE.
CRASSSH
OKAY!
DID WE JUST PHASE THROUGH THAT?!
OH, RIGHT.
GHOST
RIDER.
CAN I BARF BACK HERE?
NO.
OKAY, WELL, I'M GONNA.

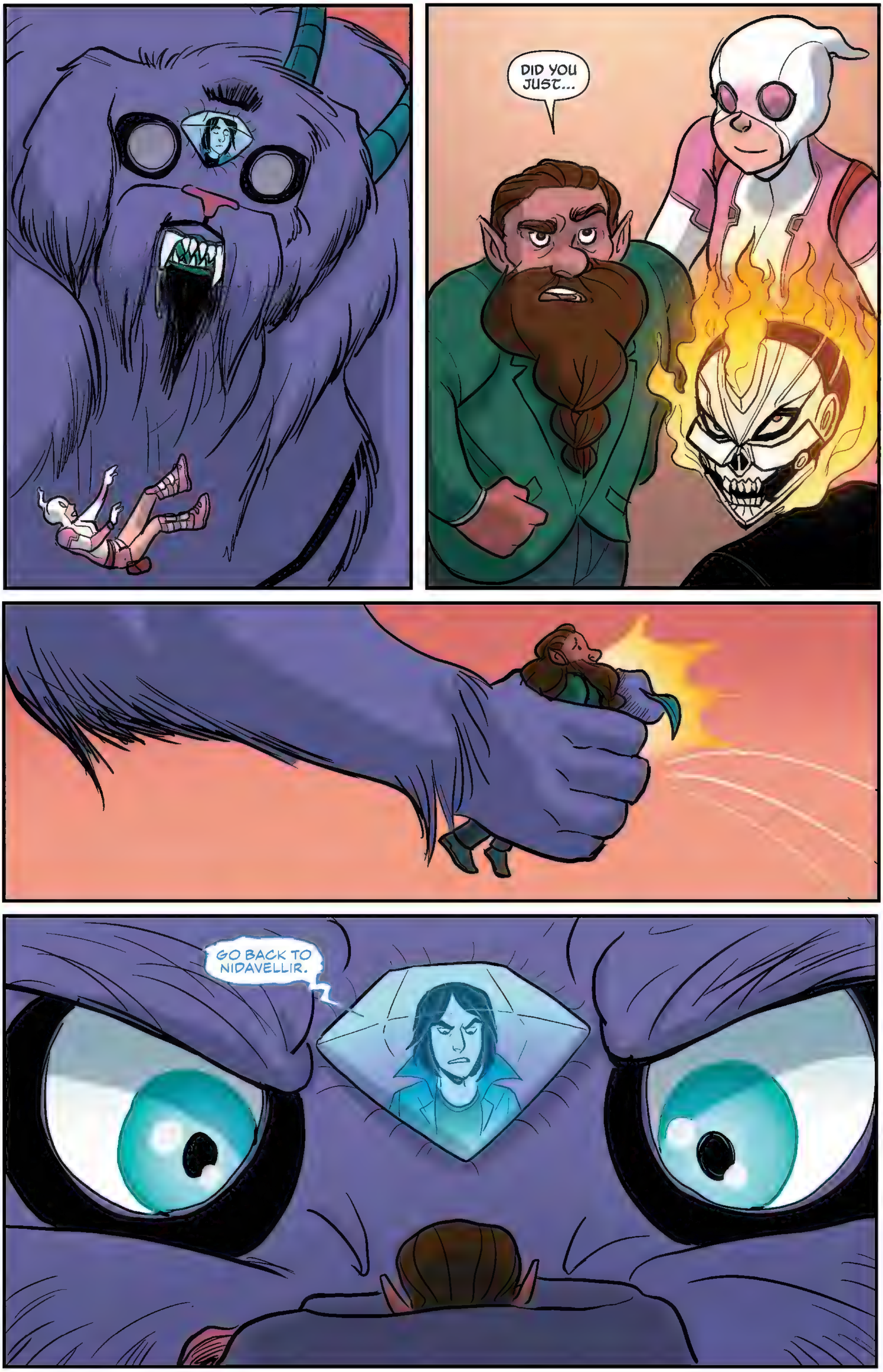

THEY'RE HERE WITH THE GEM. YOU KNOW THE PLAN, GLINDLEFIT?
YOU KILL ME. MY GHOST JUMPS IN THE GEM. I GHOST FIGHT THE KID AND KICK HIM OUT. THEN THE GEM GOES INTO--
GGGROOOOOOOO!
MORE DWARVES TO SHOOT! YAY!
THEY KILLED A GOOD MAN SIMPLY FOR WORKING HERE. THEY MUST BE PUNISHED.
I CONTINUE TO SHOOT FOR MY OWN REASONS.
THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE SELF-DEFENSE AT THIS POINT.
THEY'RE GONNA KILL US BEFORE WE CAN COMPLETE THE CEREMONY!
LET'S JUST LET THE THING OUT, MAN!
IT'S A BRAINLESS KILLING MACHINE!
CAN'T GET ANY WORSE! LET IT BRAINLESSLY KILL THEM.

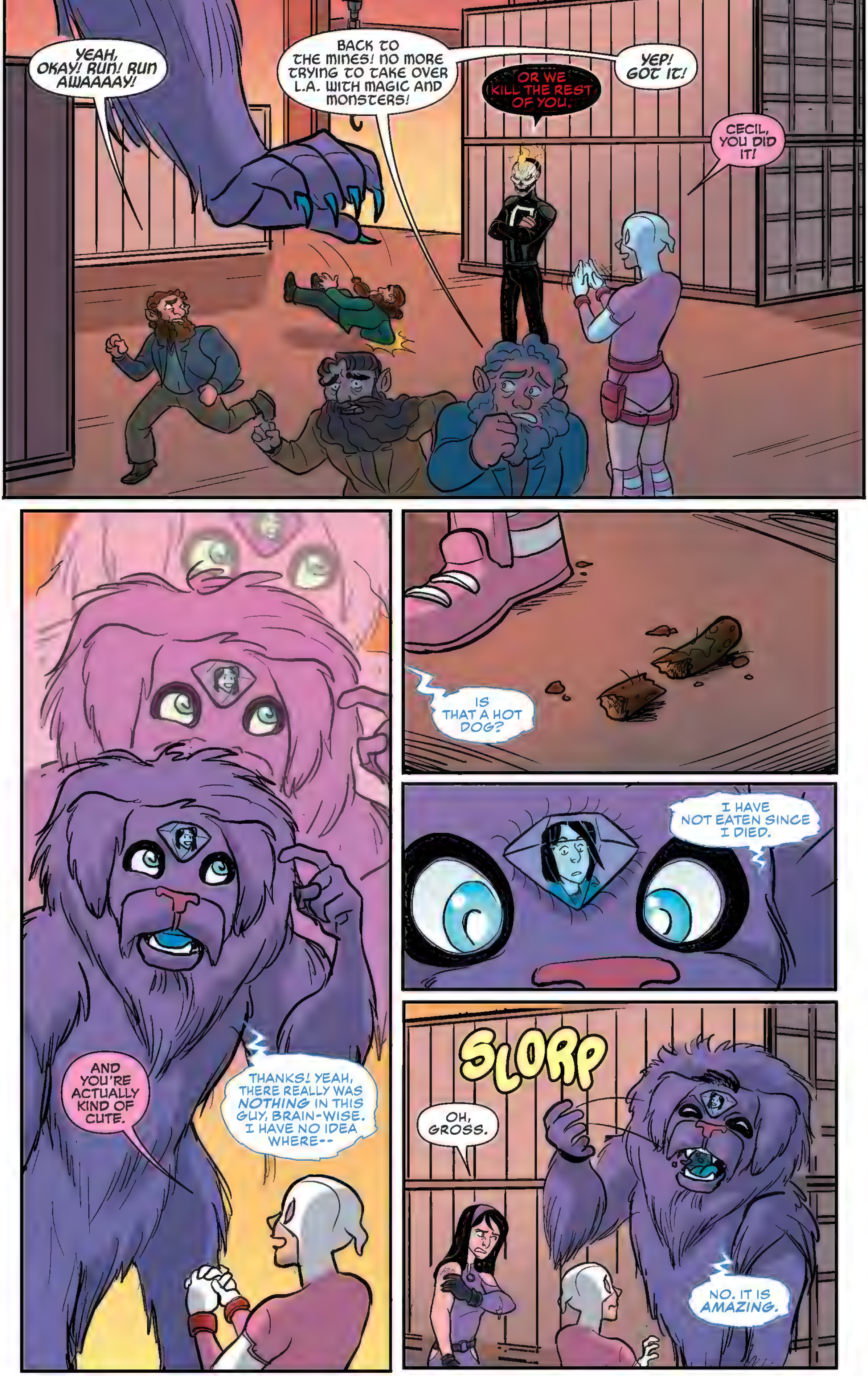

GROOOOOOOOOOOOO...

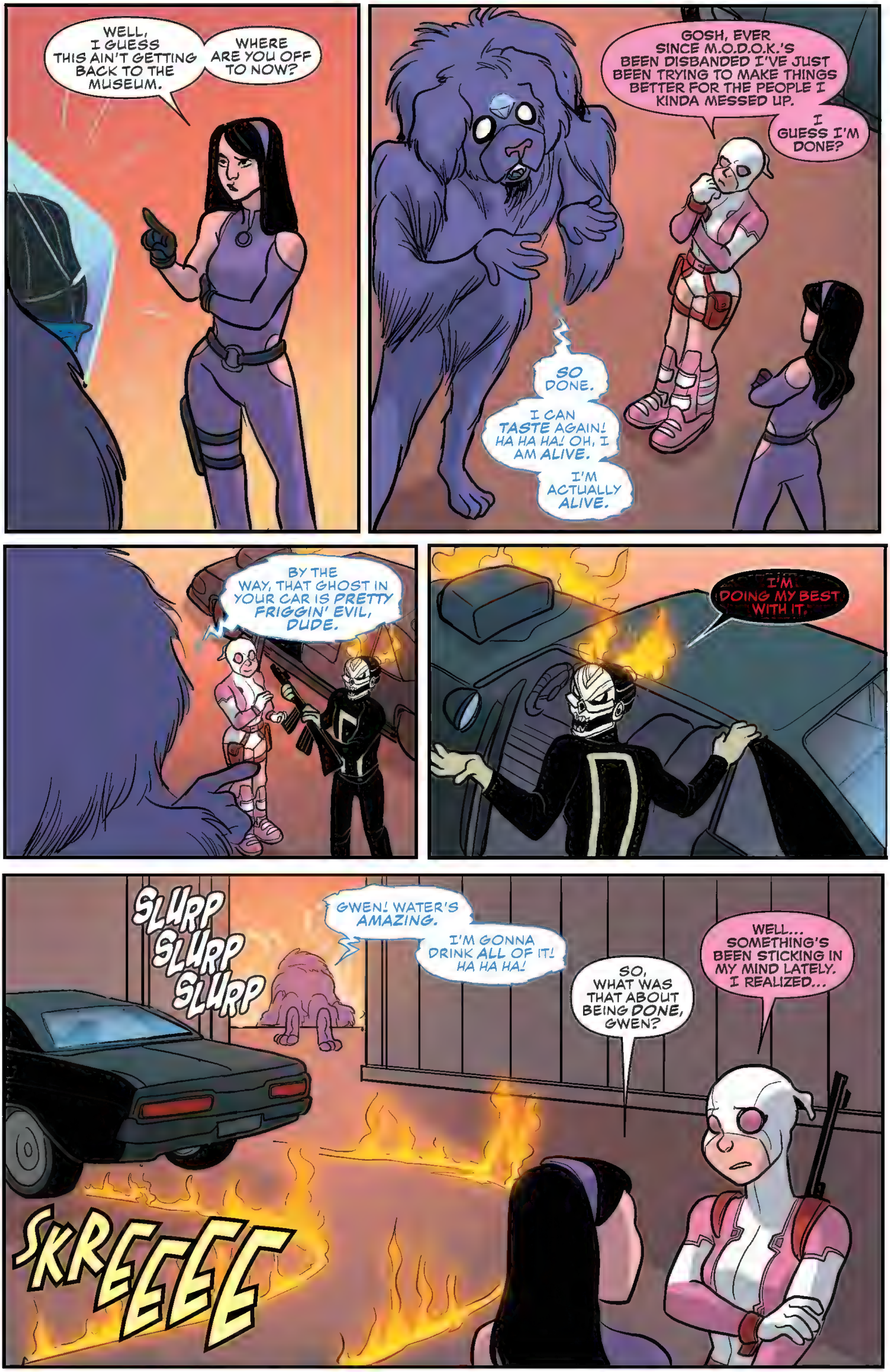

WHAM
WHACK
KATE!
OH, NO. WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE. THIS IS BAD.
CHNKT
GRRRRKKKT...
OH, MY GOD...THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT TO PUT THEIR SOUL INTO.
NO.
HYAH! GOT YA! AND WE ARE LEAVING.
BIF
PUT ME IN IT.

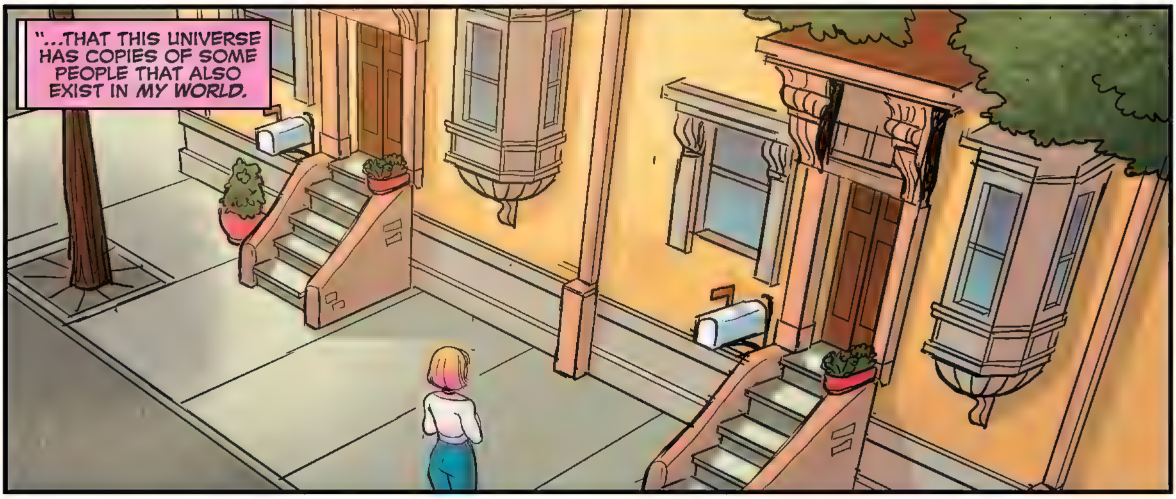

WH-WHAT'S THAT NOW?
I CAN FEEL IT. I CAN MERGE THE GEM WITH ANY LIVING THING AND TAKE OVER ITS BODY. I JUST NEED TO TOUCH IT.
IT'LL BE JUST LIKE...
...GHOST HACKING.
SWF
SWF
GRRUNNN
BUT YOU'LL BE A MONSTER.
OR YOU'LL BE DEAD.
TRUST ME. YOU DON'T WANT THAT.
CRUNCH
WE CAN JUST--
LET ME HAVE A PURPOSE FOR BEING HERE, PLEASE!

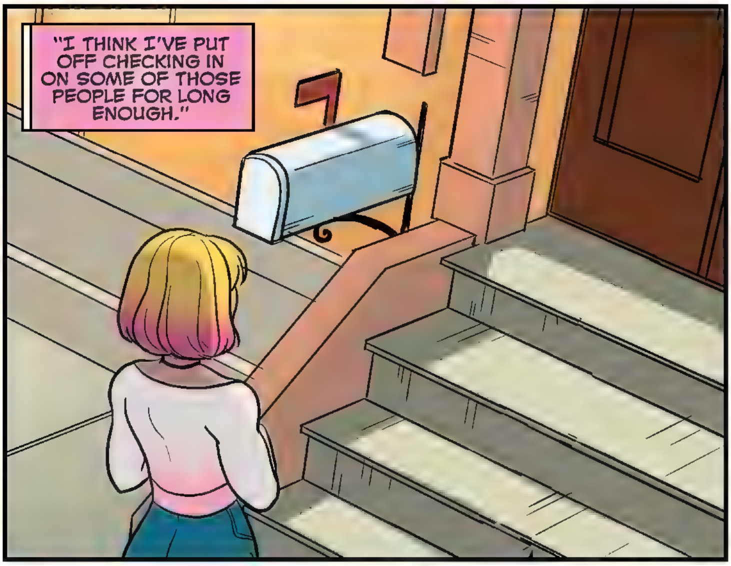

THWACK

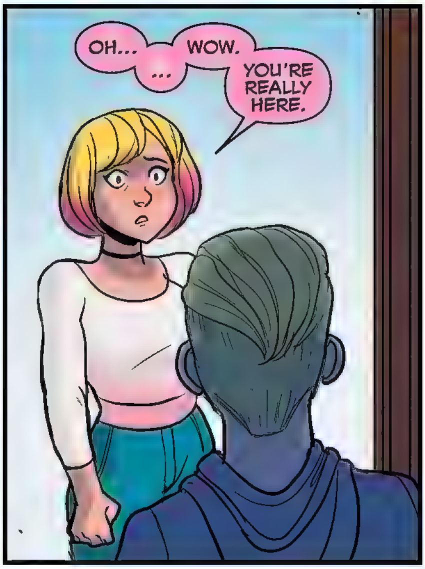

DID YOU JUST...
GO BACK TO NIDAVELLIR.

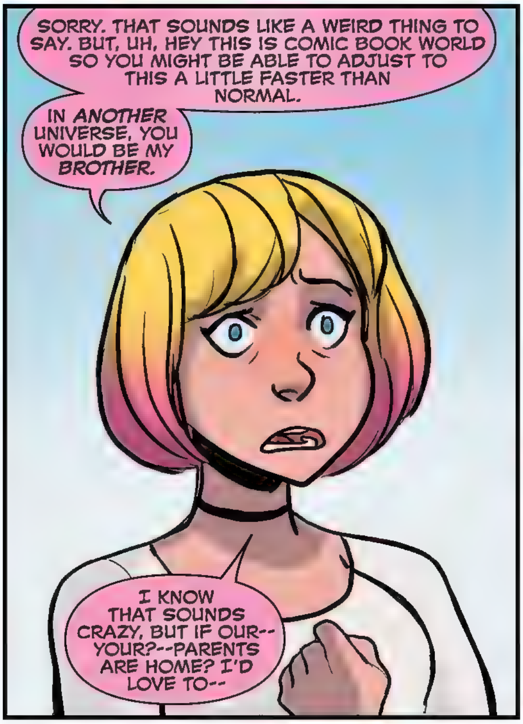

YEAH, OKAY! RUN! RUN AWAAAAAY!
BACK TO THE MINES! NO MORE TRYING TO TAKE OVER L.A. WITH MAGIC AND MONSTERS!
OR WE KILL THE REST OF YOU.
YEP! GOT IT!
CECIL, YOU DID IT!
AND YOU'RE ACTUALLY KIND OF CUTE.
THANKS! YEAH, THERE REALLY WAS *NOTHING* IN THIS GUY, BRAIN-WISE. I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE--
IS THAT A HOT DOG?
I HAVE NOT EATEN SINCE I DIED.
SLORP
OH, GROSS.
NO. IT IS *AMAZING.*

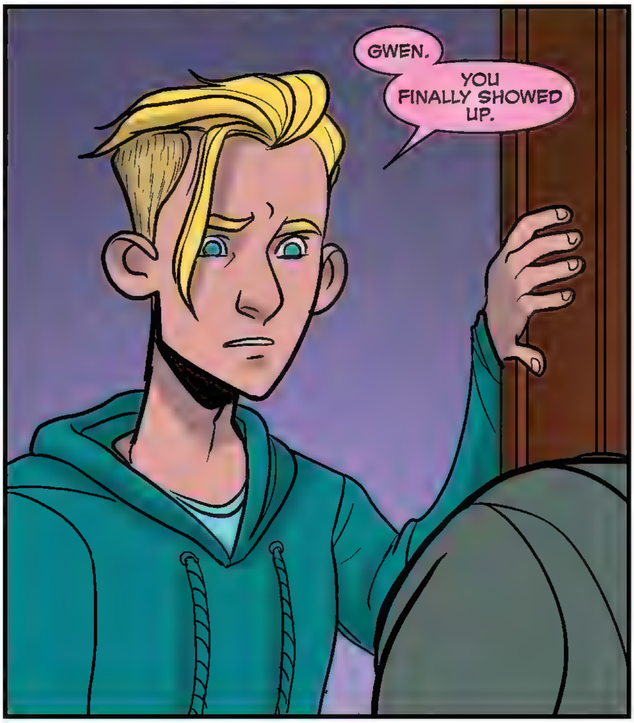

WELL, I GUESS THIS AIN'T GETTING BACK TO THE MUSEUM.
WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO NOW?
GOSH, EVER SINCE M.O.D.O.K.'S BEEN DISBANDED I'VE JUST BEEN TRYING TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR THE PEOPLE I KINDA MESSED UP.
I GUESS I'M DONE?
SO DONE.
I CAN TASTE AGAIN! HA HA HA! OH, I AM ALIVE.
I'M ACTUALLY ALIVE.
BY THE WAY, THAT GHOST IN YOUR CAR IS PRETTY FRIGGIN' EVIL, DUDE.
I'M DOING MY BEST WITH IT.
SLURP SLURP SLURP
GWEN! WATER'S AMAZING.
I'M GONNA DRINK ALL OF IT! HA HA HA!
SO, WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT BEING DONE, GWEN?
WELL... SOMETHING'S BEEN STICKING IN MY MIND LATELY. I REALIZED...
SKREEEE

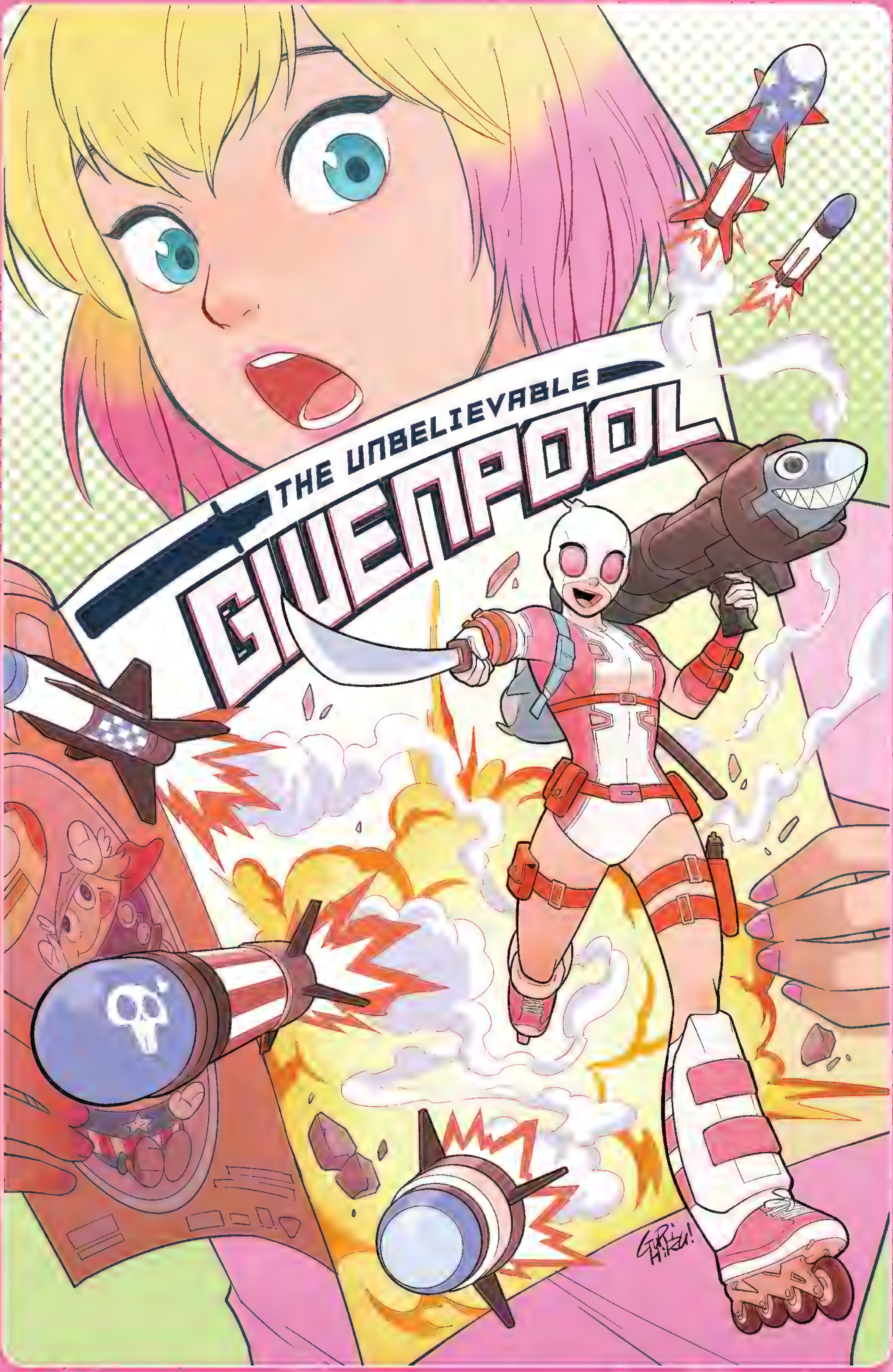

"...THAT THIS UNIVERSE HAS COPIES OF SOME PEOPLE THAT ALSO EXIST IN *MY WORLD*.


"I THINK I'VE PUT OFF CHECKING IN ON SOME OF THOSE PEOPLE FOR LONG ENOUGH."


OH...
...
WOW.
YOU'RE REALLY HERE.

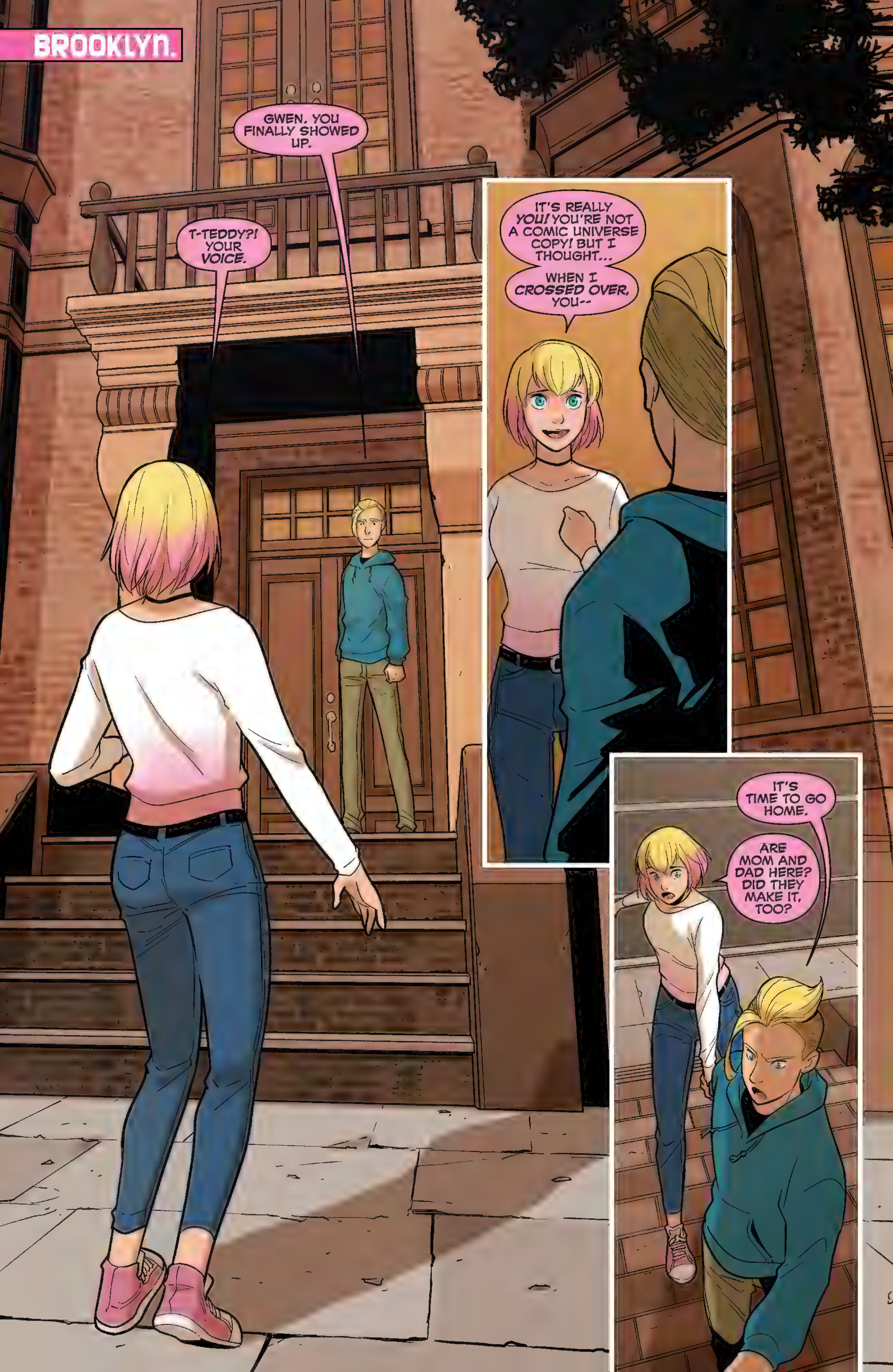

SORRY. THAT SOUNDS LIKE A WEIRD THING TO SAY. BUT, UH, HEY THIS IS COMIC BOOK WORLD SO YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO ADJUST TO THIS A LITTLE FASTER THAN NORMAL.
IN *ANOTHER* UNIVERSE, YOU WOULD BE MY *BROTHER*.
I KNOW THAT SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT IF OUR-- YOUR?--PARENTS ARE HOME? I'D LOVE TO--

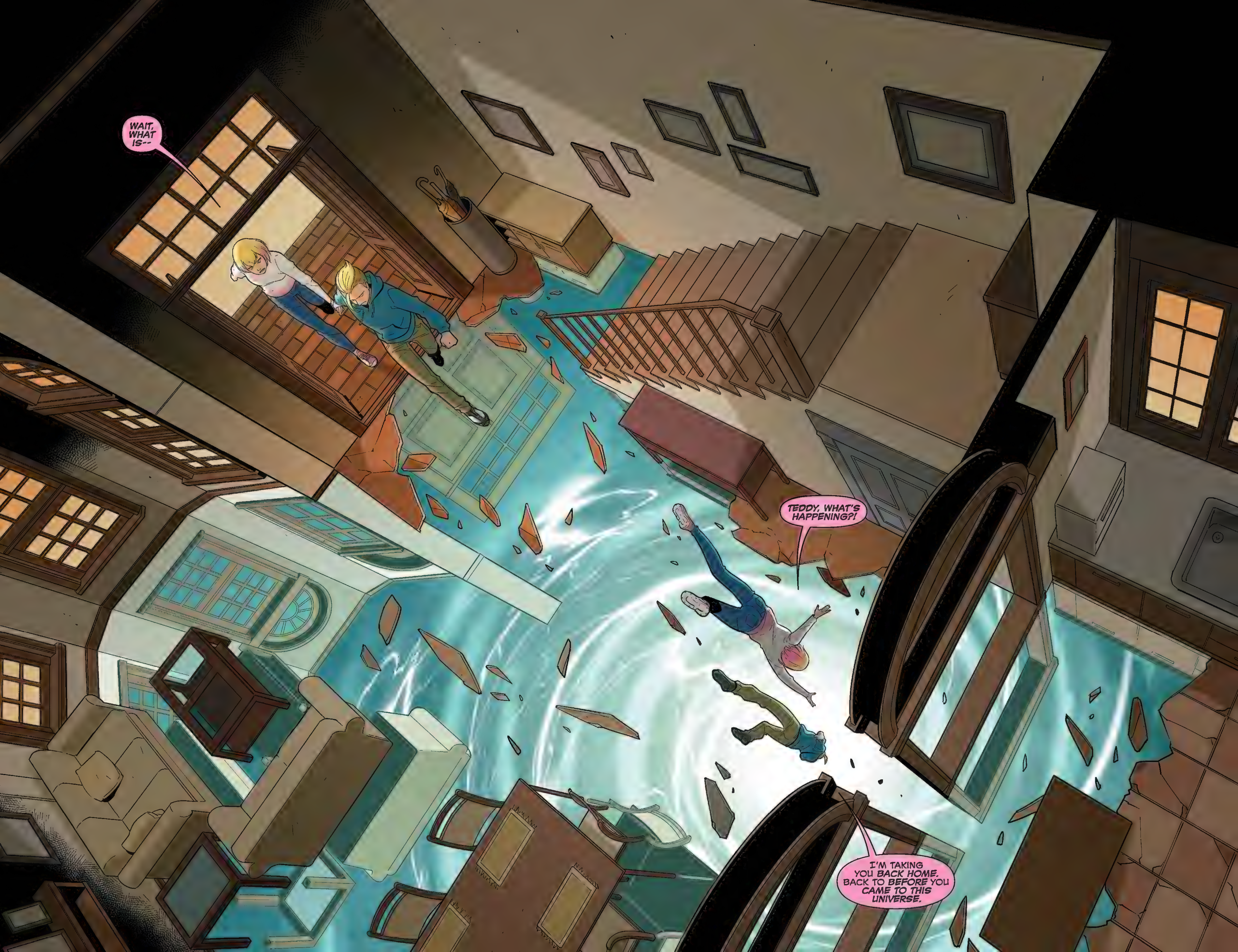

GWEN.
YOU FINALLY SHOWED UP.

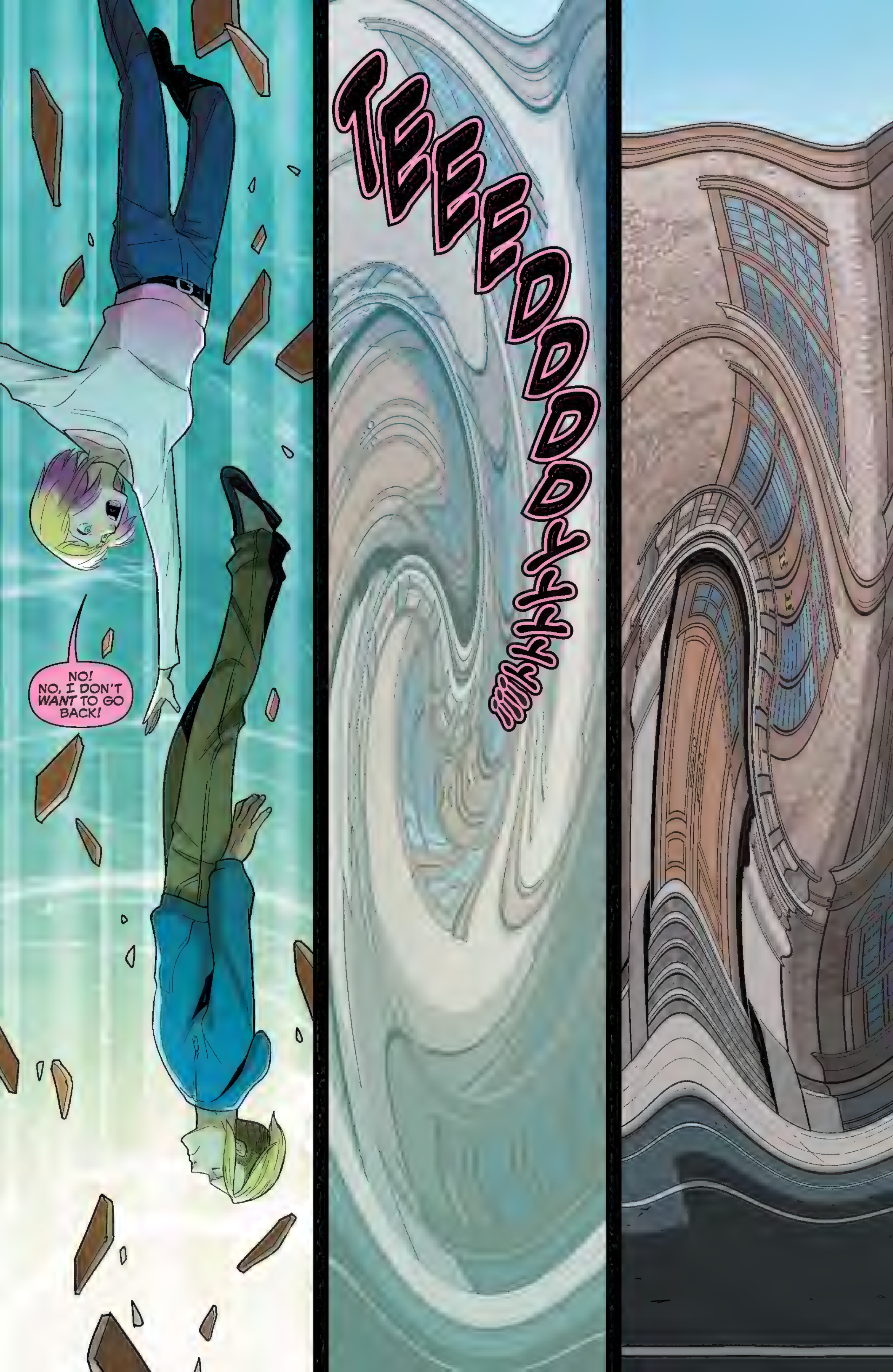

THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL
GURIHIRU!

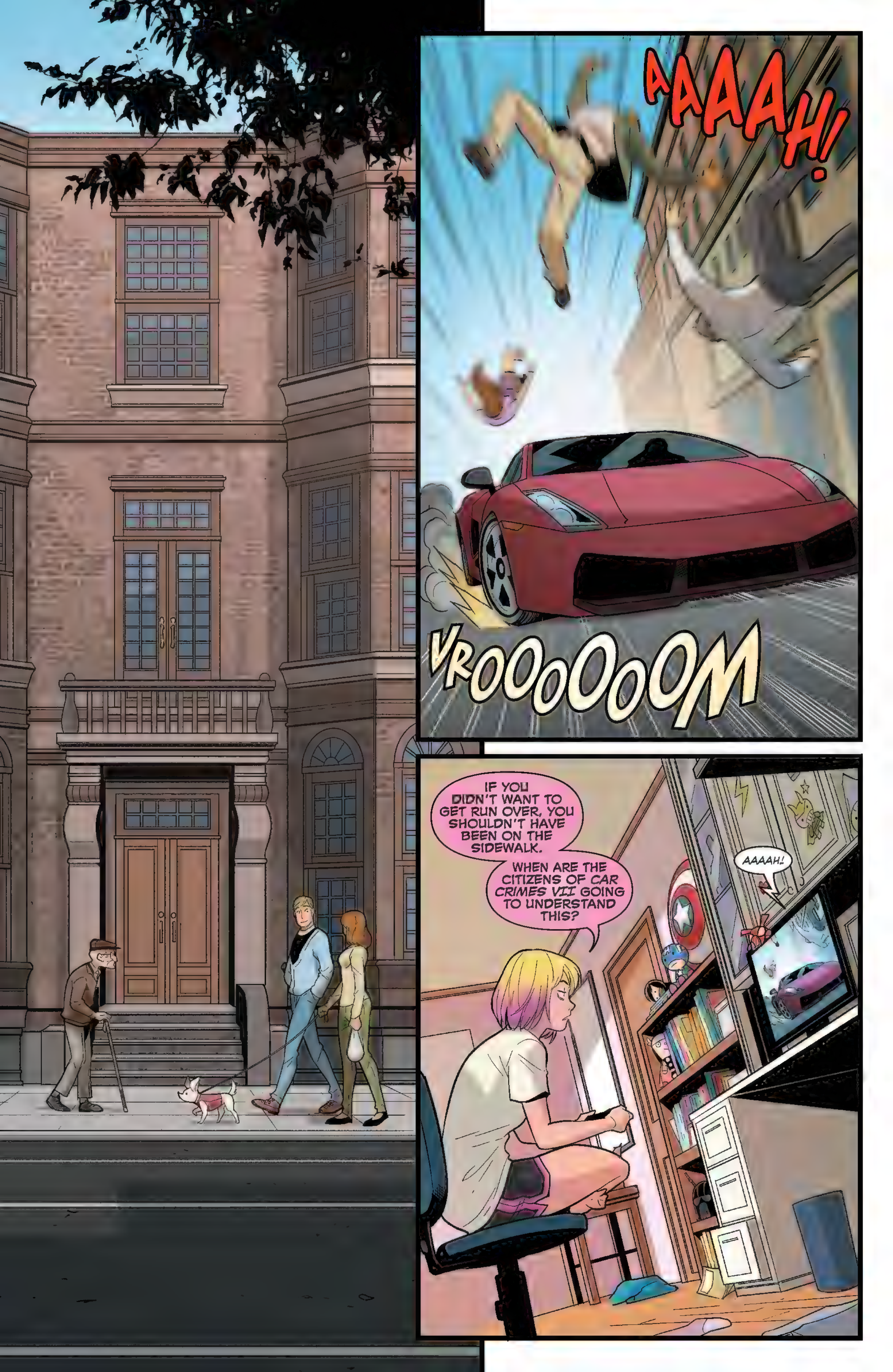
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #16

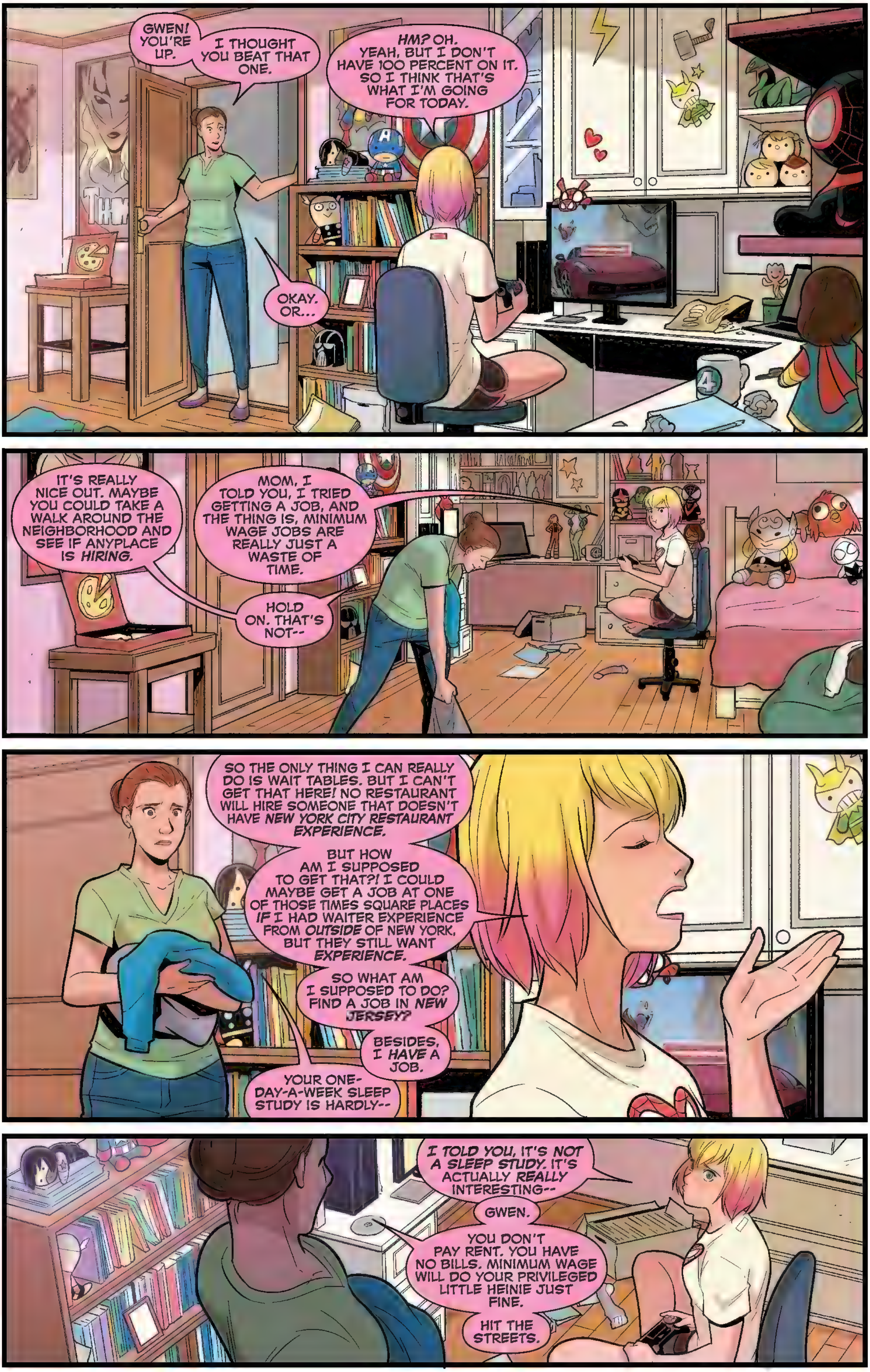
BEYOND THE FOURTH WALL [illegible]

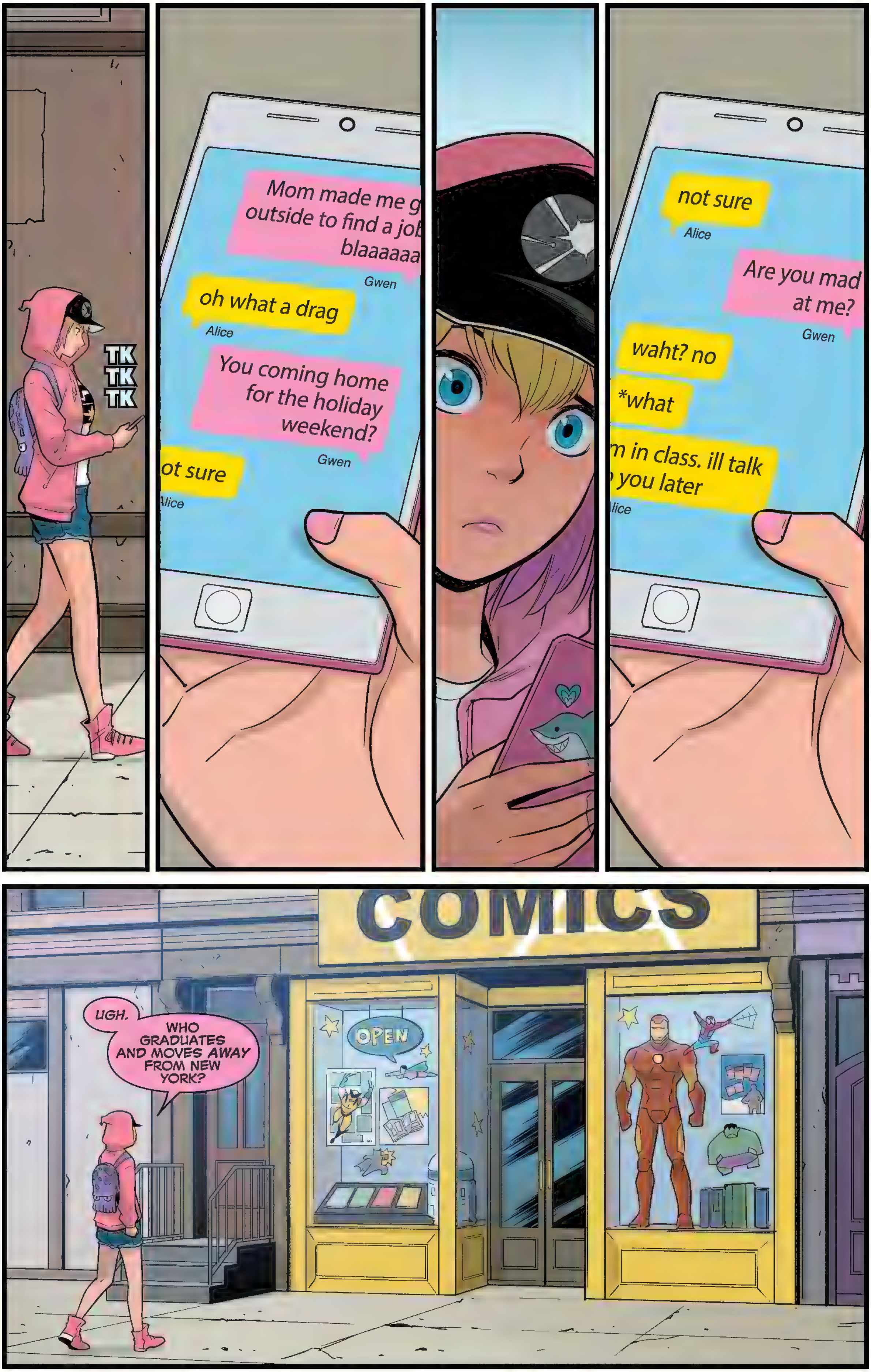

BROOKLYN.
GWEN. YOU FINALLY SHOWED UP.
T-TEDDY?! YOUR VOICE.
IT'S REALLY *YOU!* YOU'RE NOT A COMIC UNIVERSE COPY! BUT I THOUGHT...
WHEN I *CROSSED OVER,* YOU--
IT'S TIME TO GO HOME.
ARE MOM AND DAD HERE? DID THEY MAKE IT, TOO?

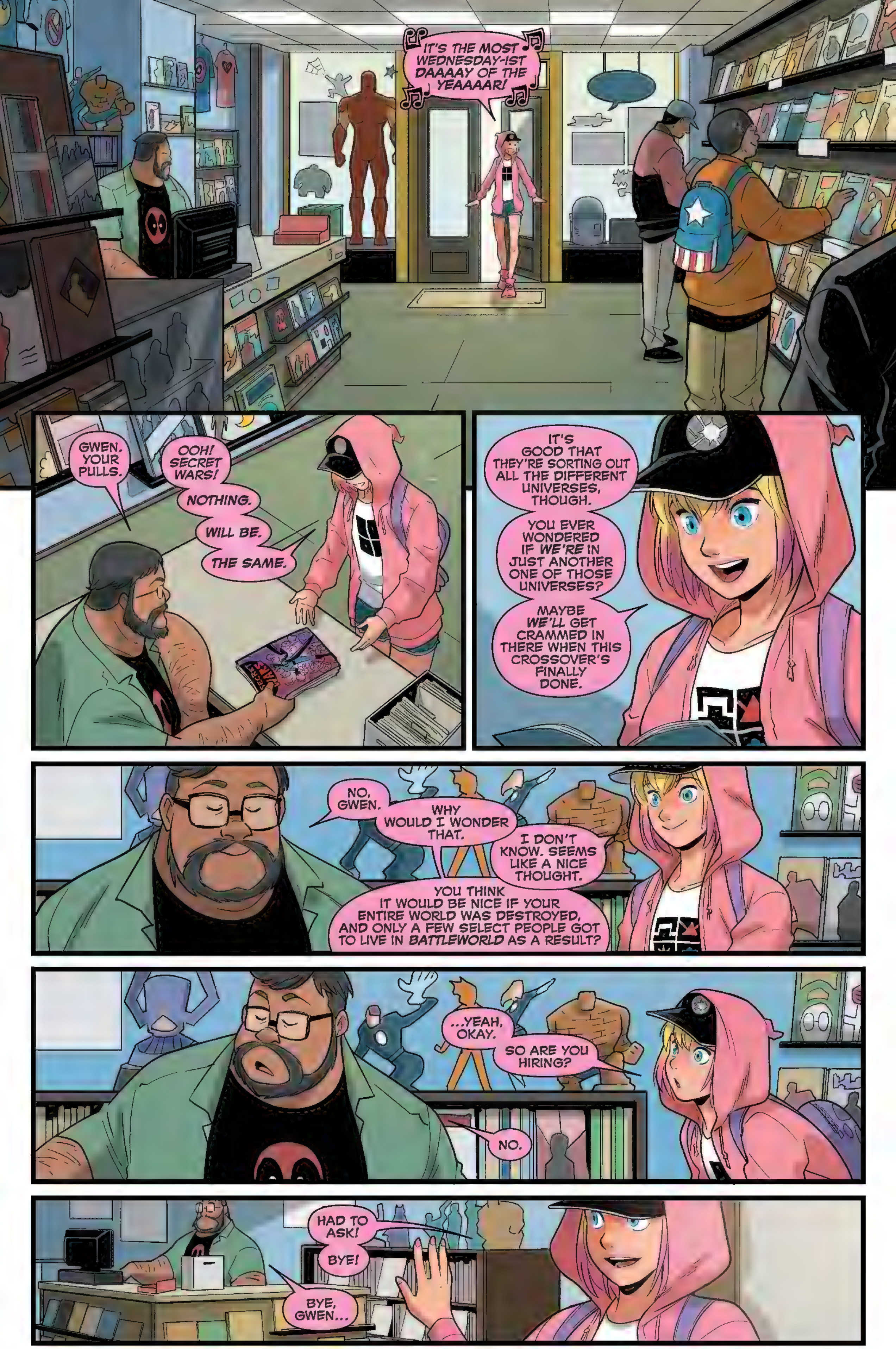

WAIT, WHAT IS--
TEDDY, WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
I'M TAKING YOU BACK HOME. BACK TO BEFORE YOU CAME TO THIS UNIVERSE.

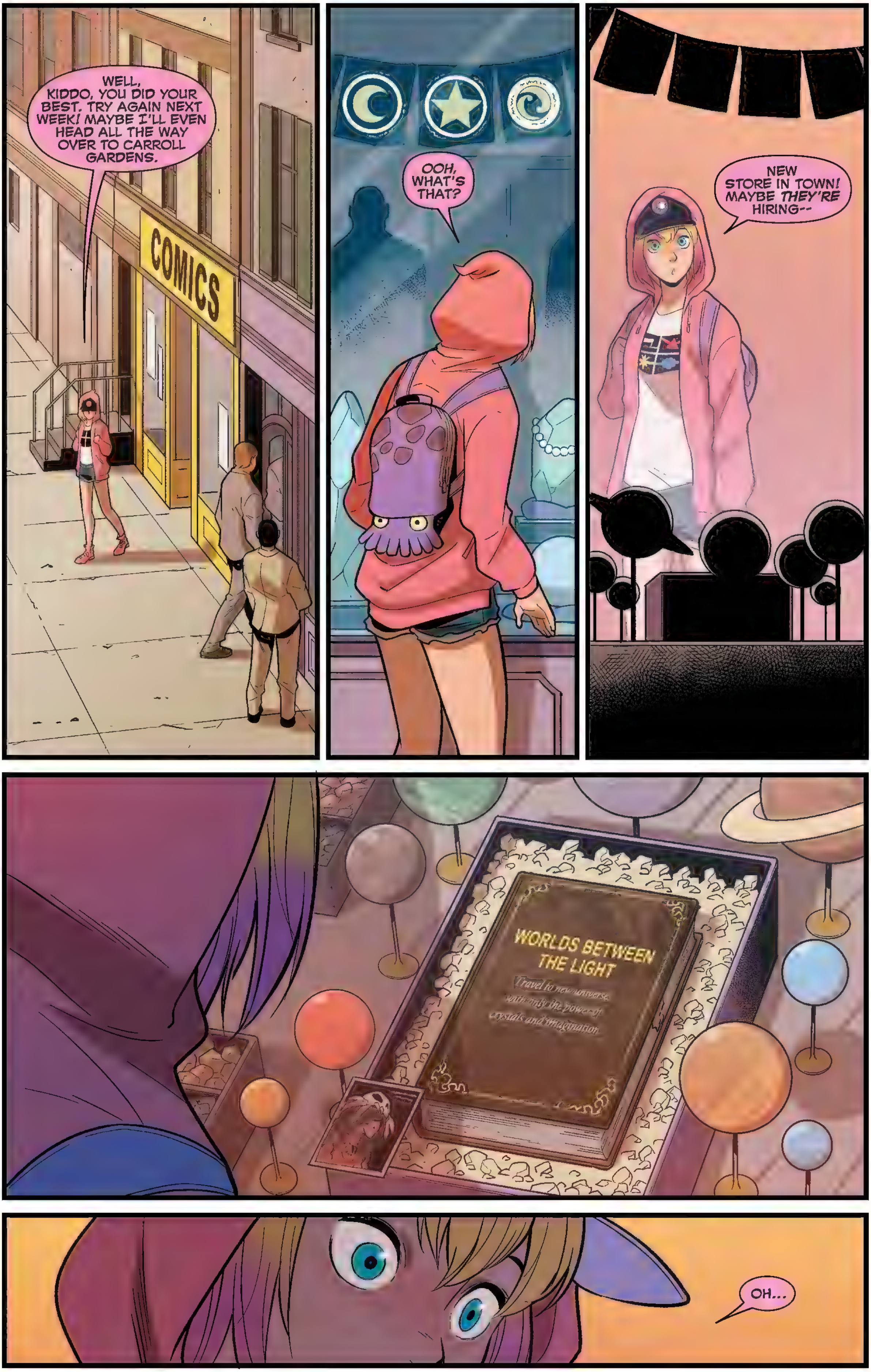

NO! NO, I DON'T *WANT* TO GO BACK!
TEEEDDDDYYYY!!!!

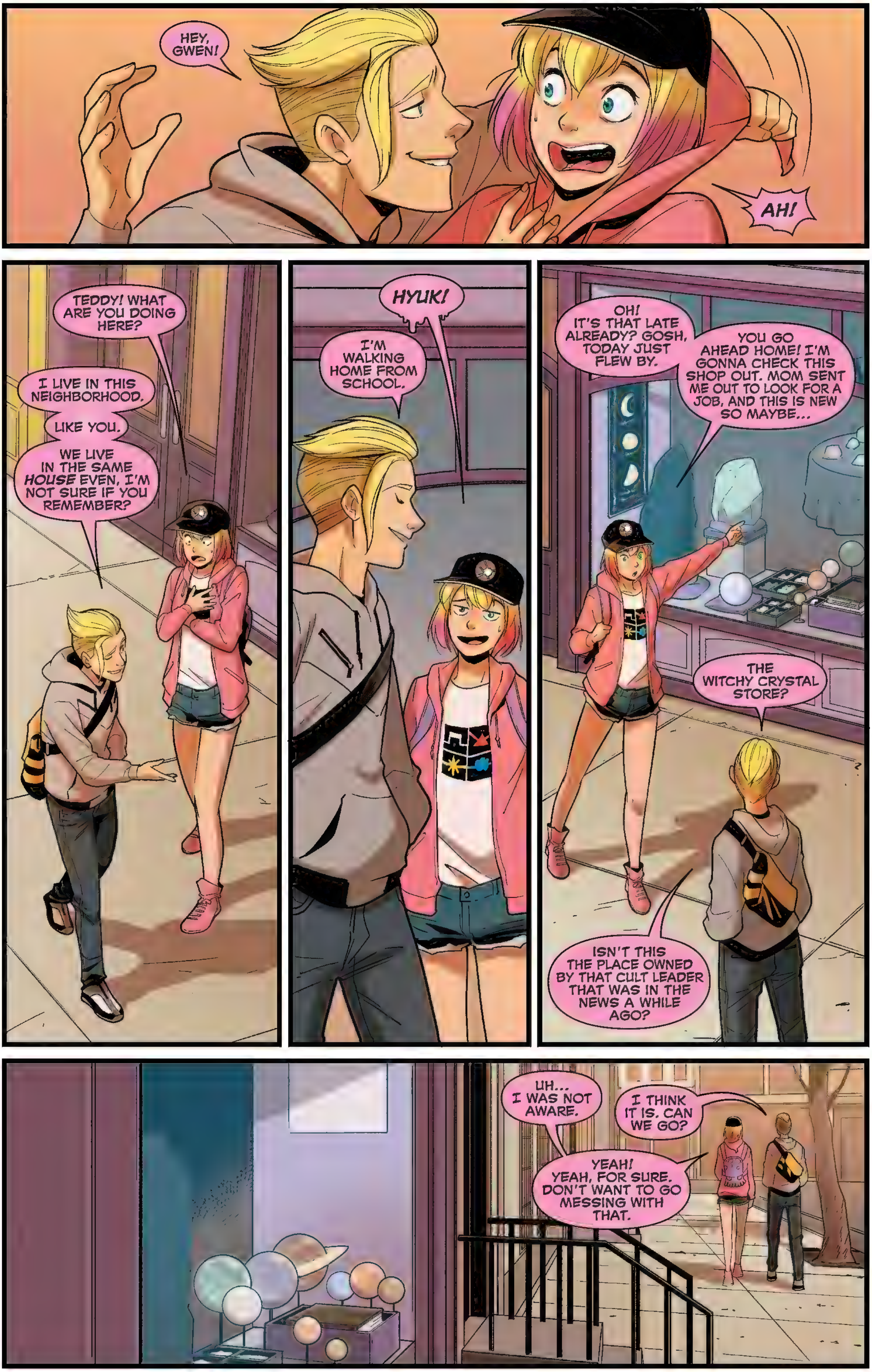

AAAAH!
VROOOOOOOM
IF YOU DIDN'T WANT TO GET RUN OVER, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ON THE SIDEWALK.
WHEN ARE THE CITIZENS OF *CAR CRIMES VII* GOING TO UNDERSTAND THIS?
AAAAH!

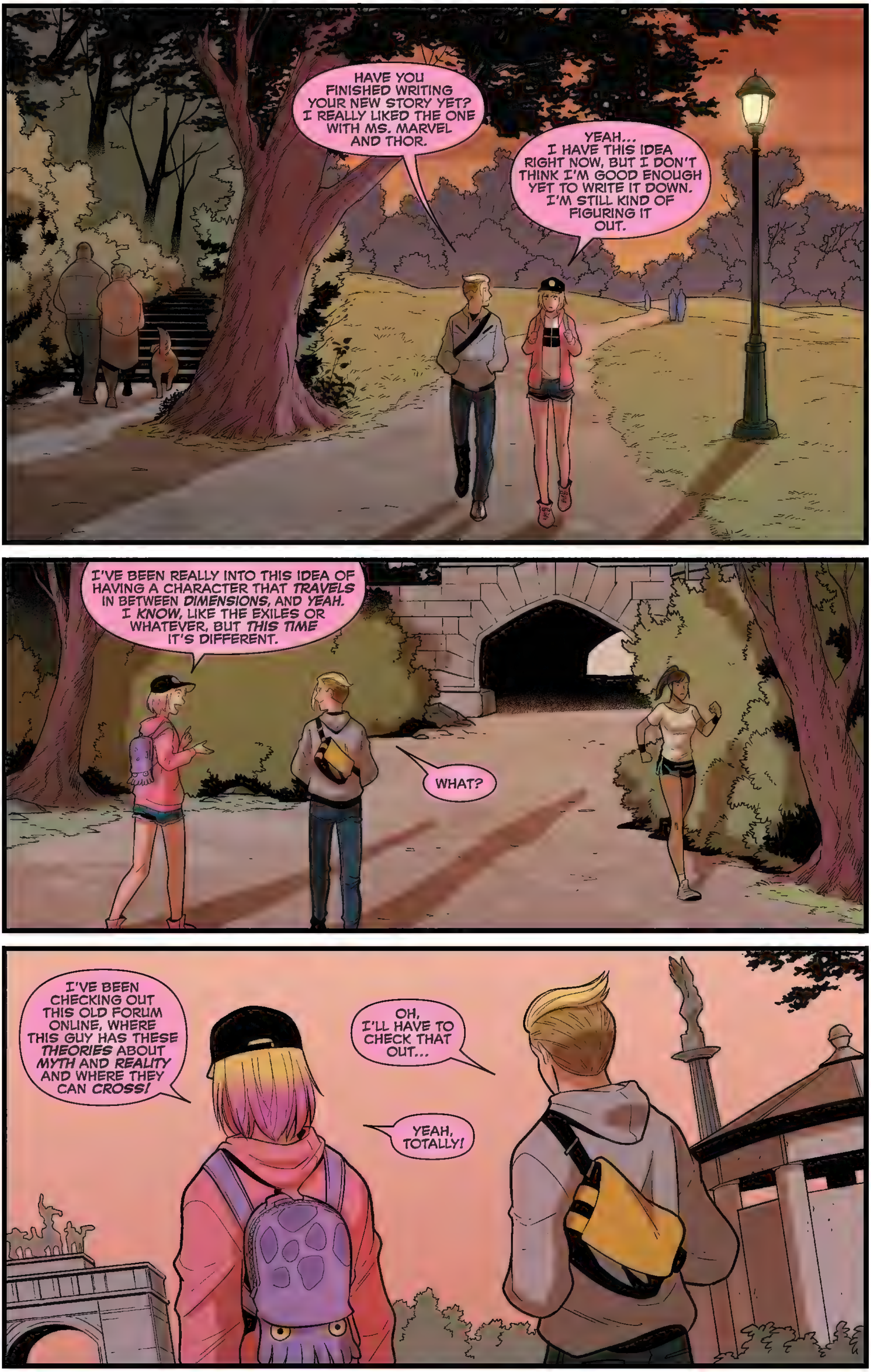

GWEN! YOU'RE UP.
I THOUGHT YOU BEAT THAT ONE.
HM? OH. YEAH, BUT I DON'T HAVE 100 PERCENT ON IT. SO I THINK THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING FOR TODAY.
OKAY. OR...
IT'S REALLY NICE OUT. MAYBE YOU COULD TAKE A WALK AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND SEE IF ANYPLACE IS *HIRING.*
MOM, I TOLD YOU, I TRIED GETTING A JOB, AND THE THING IS, MINIMUM WAGE JOBS ARE REALLY JUST A WASTE OF TIME.
HOLD ON. THAT'S NOT--
SO THE ONLY THING I CAN REALLY DO IS WAIT TABLES. BUT I CAN'T GET THAT HERE! NO RESTAURANT WILL HIRE SOMEONE THAT DOESN'T HAVE *NEW YORK CITY RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE.*
BUT HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET THAT?! I COULD MAYBE GET A JOB AT ONE OF THOSE TIMES SQUARE PLACES *IF* I HAD WAITER EXPERIENCE FROM *OUTSIDE* OF NEW YORK, BUT THEY STILL WANT *EXPERIENCE.*
SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? FIND A JOB IN *NEW JERSEY?*
BESIDES, I *HAVE* A JOB.
YOUR ONE-DAY-A-WEEK SLEEP STUDY IS HARDLY--
I TOLD YOU, IT'S NOT A SLEEP STUDY. IT'S ACTUALLY *REALLY* INTERESTING--
GWEN.
YOU DON'T PAY RENT. YOU HAVE NO BILLS. MINIMUM WAGE WILL DO YOUR PRIVILEGED LITTLE HEINIE JUST FINE.
HIT THE STREETS.

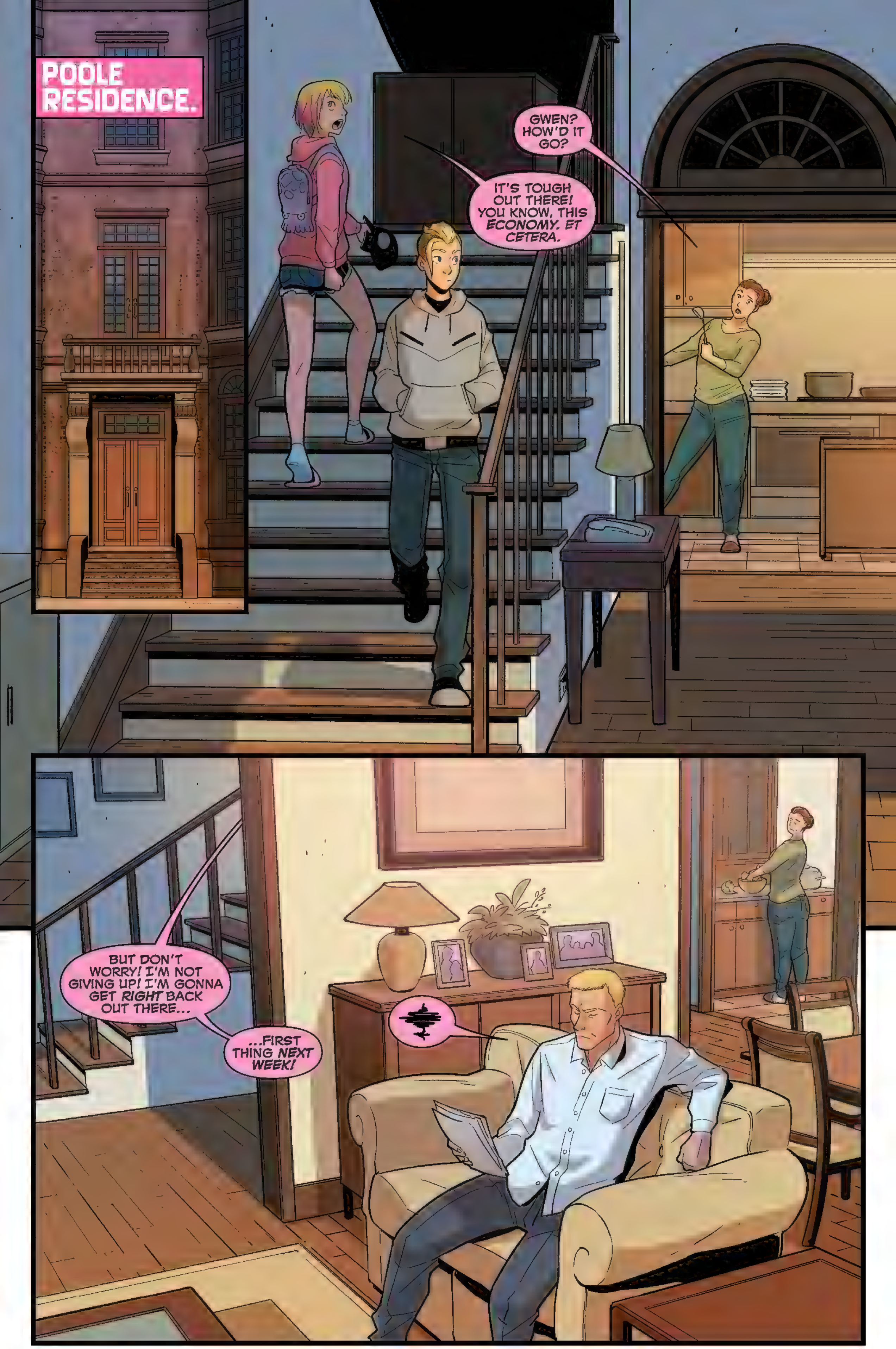

TK TK TK
Mom made me g outside to find a jo blaaaaaa
Gwen
oh what a drag
Alice
You coming home for the holiday weekend?
Gwen
ot sure
lice
not sure
Alice
Are you mad at me?
Gwen
waht? no
*what
m in class. ill talk you later
lice
COMICS
OPEN
UGH.
WHO GRADUATES AND MOVES AWAY FROM NEW YORK?

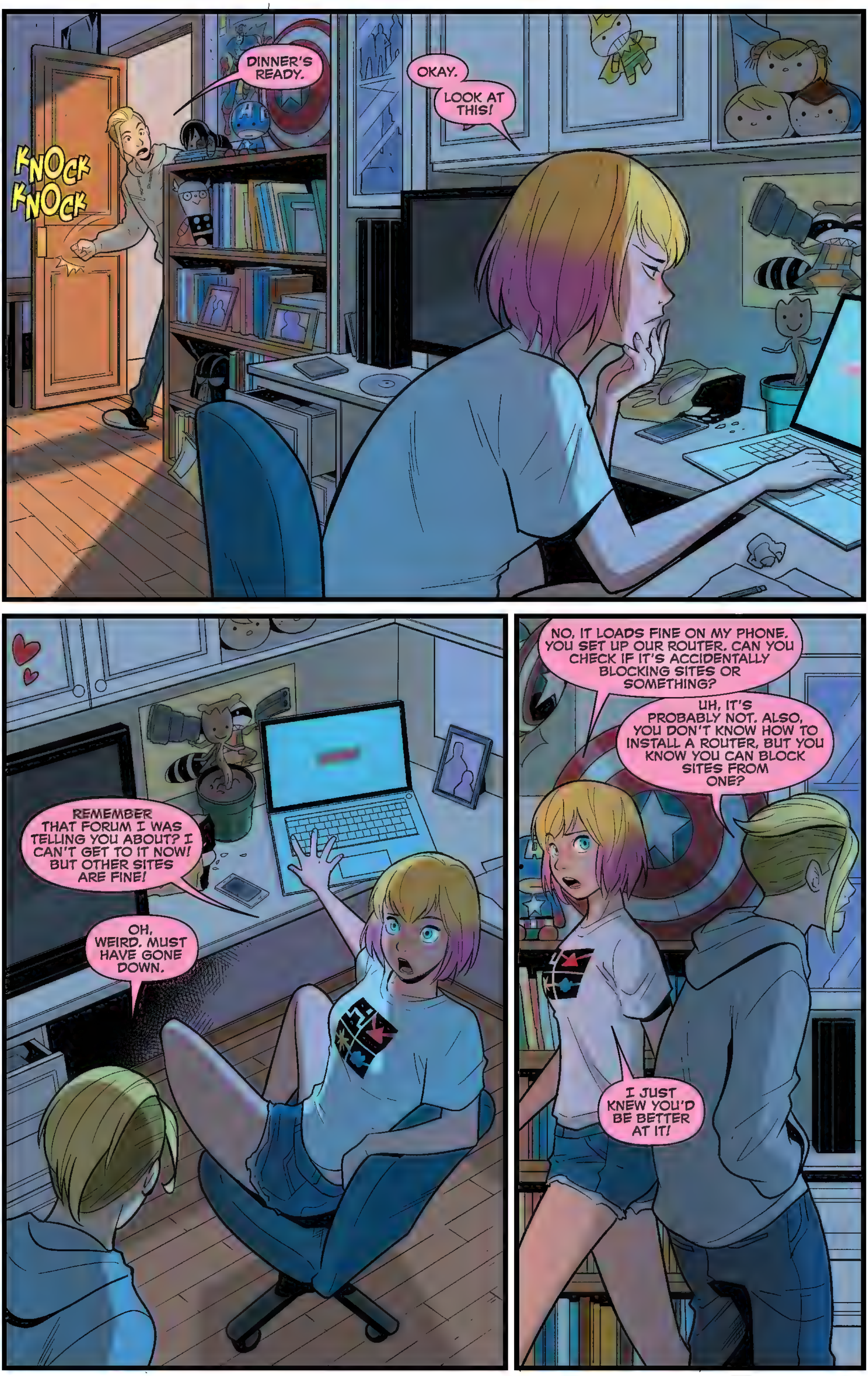

IT'S THE MOST WEDNESDAY-IST DAAAAY OF THE YEAAAAAR!
GWEN. YOUR PULLS.
OOH! SECRET WARS!
NOTHING.
WILL BE.
THE SAME.
IT'S GOOD THAT THEY'RE SORTING OUT ALL THE DIFFERENT UNIVERSES, THOUGH.
YOU EVER WONDERED IF *WE'RE* IN JUST ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE UNIVERSES?
MAYBE *WE'LL* GET CRAMMED IN THERE WHEN THIS CROSSOVER'S FINALLY DONE.
NO, GWEN.
WHY WOULD I WONDER THAT.
I DON'T KNOW. SEEMS LIKE A NICE THOUGHT.
YOU THINK IT WOULD BE NICE IF YOUR ENTIRE WORLD WAS DESTROYED, AND ONLY A FEW SELECT PEOPLE GOT TO LIVE IN *BATTLEWORLD* AS A RESULT?
...YEAH, OKAY.
SO ARE YOU HIRING?
NO.
HAD TO ASK!
BYE!
BYE, GWEN...

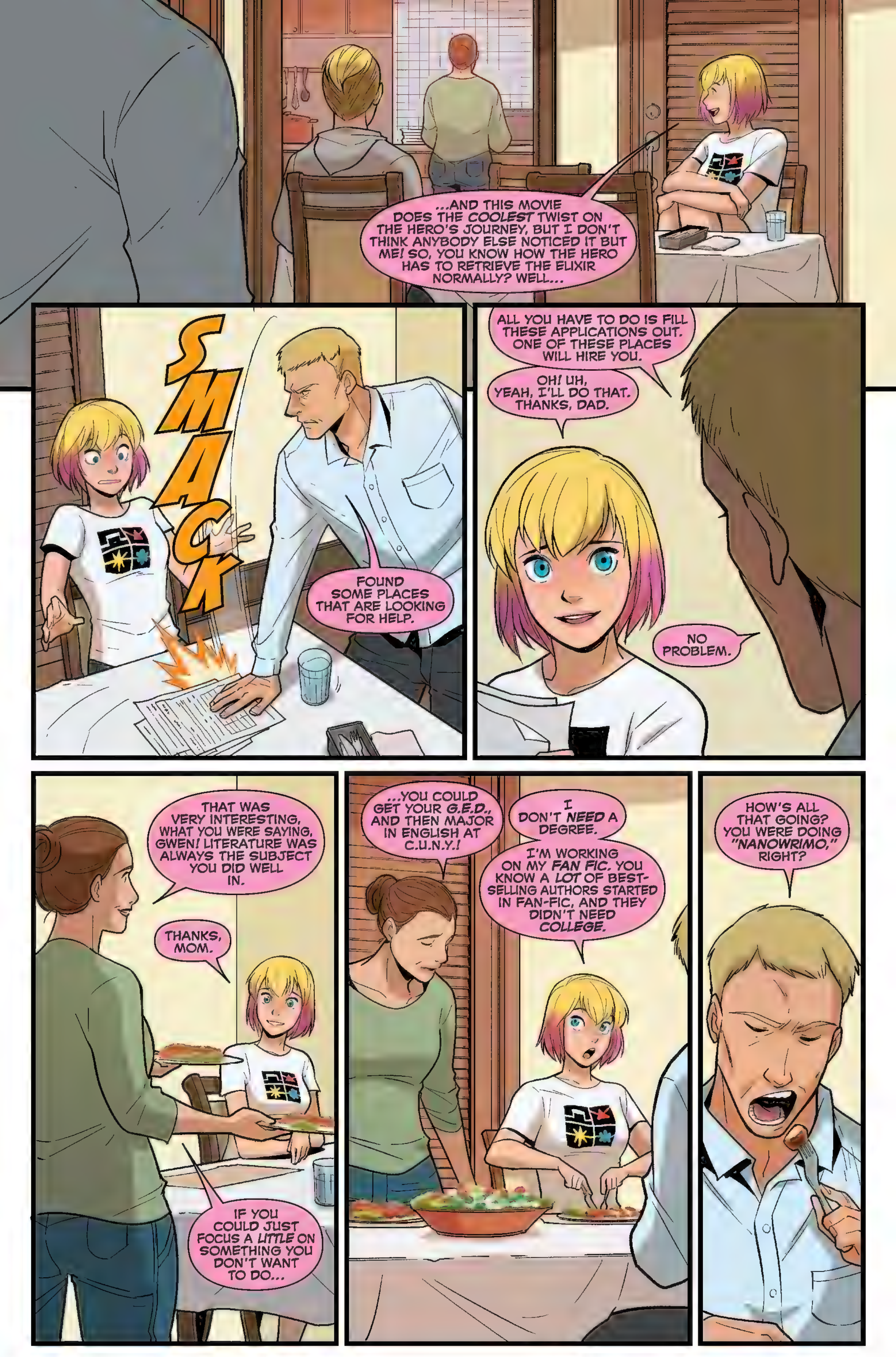

WELL, KIDDO, YOU DID YOUR BEST. TRY AGAIN NEXT WEEK! MAYBE I'LL EVEN HEAD ALL THE WAY OVER TO CARROLL GARDENS.
COMICS
OOH, WHAT'S THAT?
NEW STORE IN TOWN! MAYBE *THEY'RE* HIRING--
WORLDS BETWEEN THE LIGHT
Travel to new universes with only the power of crystals and imagination
OH...

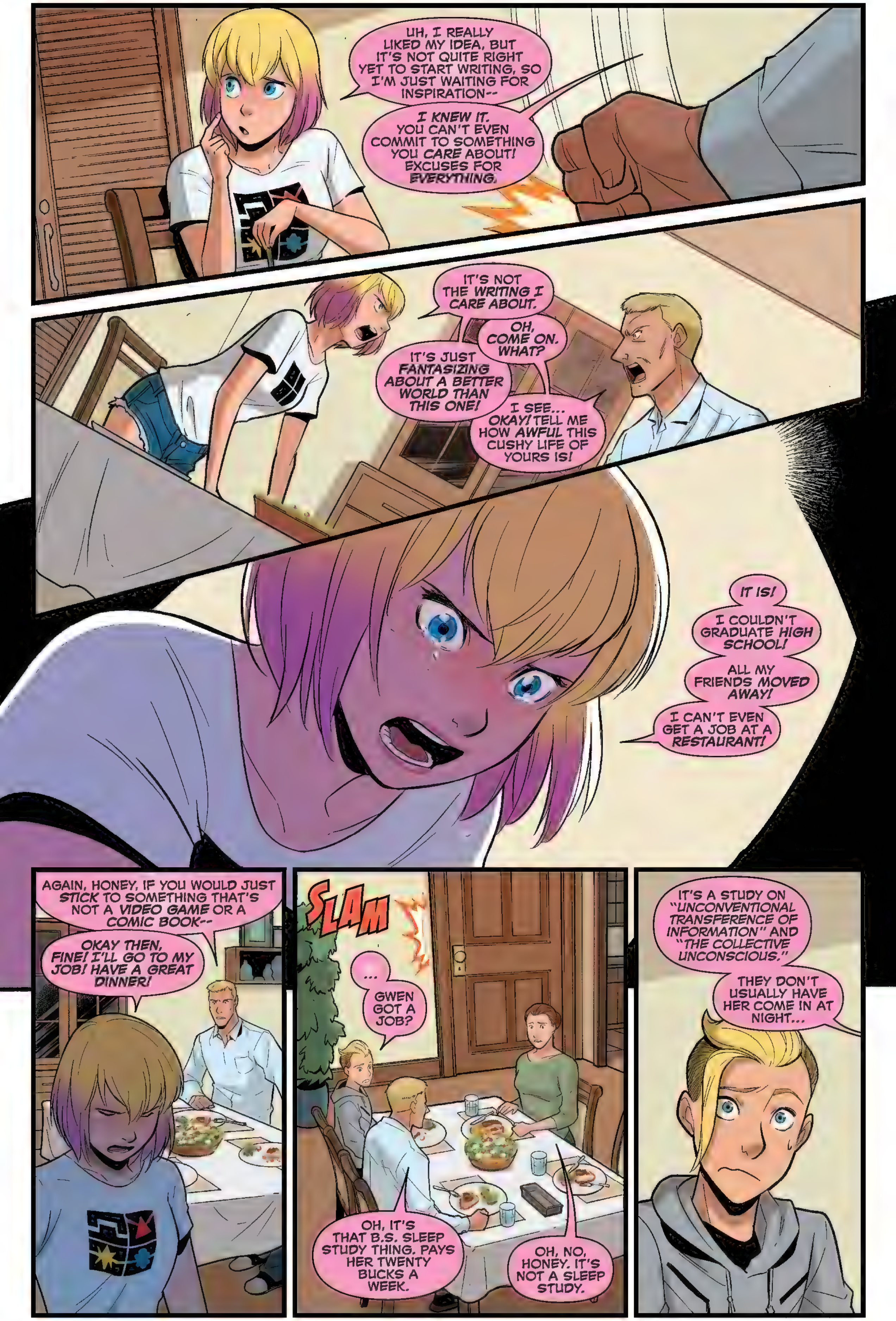

HEY, GWEN!
AH!
TEDDY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I LIVE IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD.
LIKE YOU.
WE LIVE IN THE SAME *HOUSE* EVEN, I'M NOT SURE IF YOU REMEMBER?
HYUK!
I'M WALKING HOME FROM SCHOOL.
OH! IT'S THAT LATE ALREADY? GOSH, TODAY JUST FLEW BY.
YOU GO AHEAD HOME! I'M GONNA CHECK THIS SHOP OUT. MOM SENT ME OUT TO LOOK FOR A JOB, AND THIS IS NEW SO MAYBE...
THE WITCHY CRYSTAL STORE?
ISN'T THIS THE PLACE OWNED BY THAT CULT LEADER THAT WAS IN THE NEWS A WHILE AGO?
UH... I WAS NOT AWARE.
I THINK IT IS. CAN WE GO?
YEAH! YEAH, FOR SURE. DON'T WANT TO GO MESSING WITH THAT.

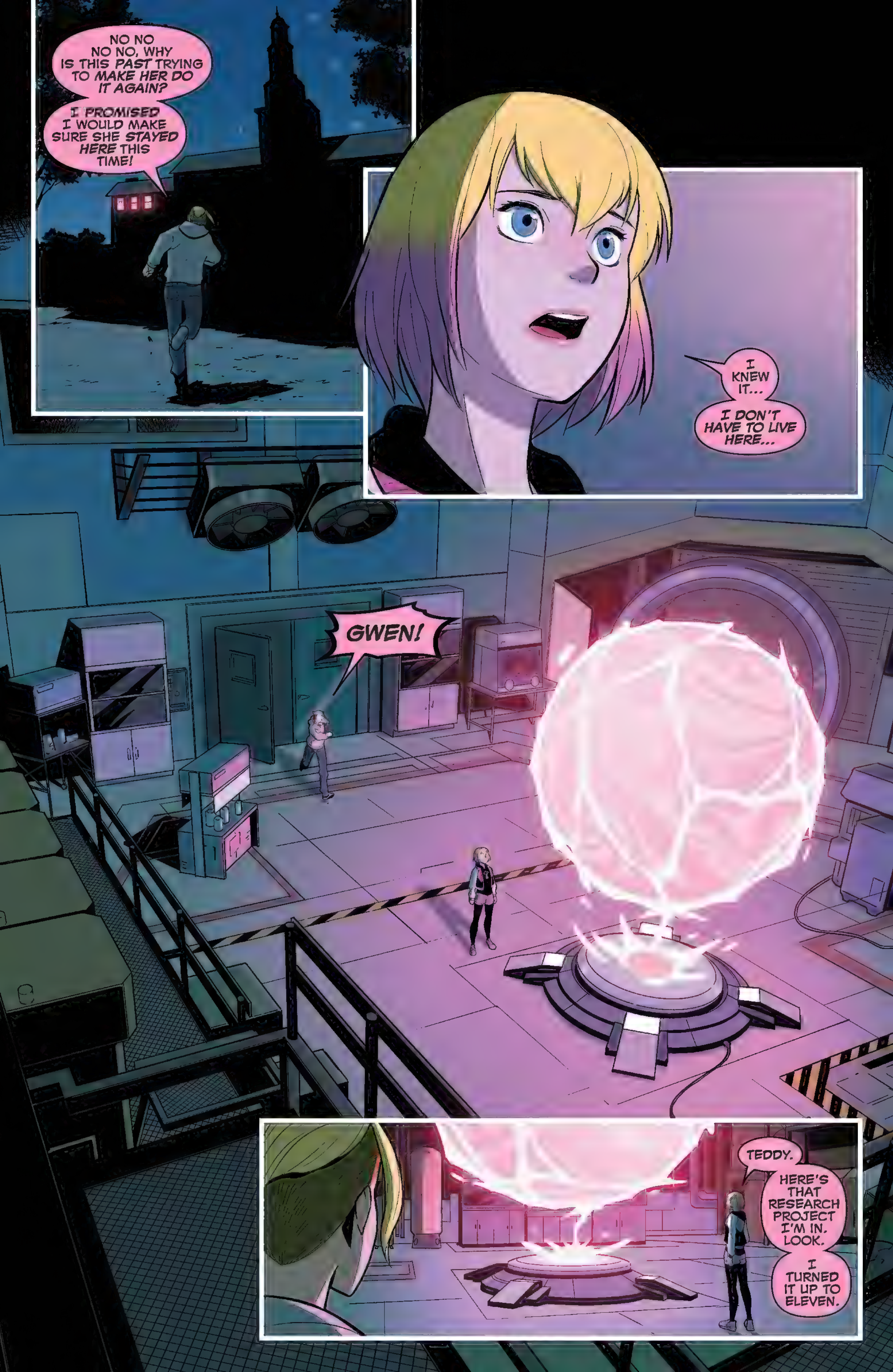

HAVE YOU FINISHED WRITING YOUR NEW STORY YET? I REALLY LIKED THE ONE WITH MS. MARVEL AND THOR.
YEAH... I HAVE THIS IDEA RIGHT NOW, BUT I DON'T THINK I'M GOOD ENOUGH YET TO WRITE IT DOWN. I'M STILL KIND OF FIGURING IT OUT.
I'VE BEEN REALLY INTO THIS IDEA OF HAVING A CHARACTER THAT *TRAVELS* IN BETWEEN *DIMENSIONS*, AND *YEAH.* I *KNOW*, LIKE THE EXILES OR WHATEVER, BUT *THIS TIME* IT'S DIFFERENT.
WHAT?
I'VE BEEN CHECKING OUT THIS OLD FORUM ONLINE, WHERE THIS GUY HAS THESE *THEORIES* ABOUT *MYTH* AND *REALITY* AND WHERE THEY CAN *CROSS!*
OH, I'LL HAVE TO CHECK THAT OUT...
YEAH, TOTALLY!

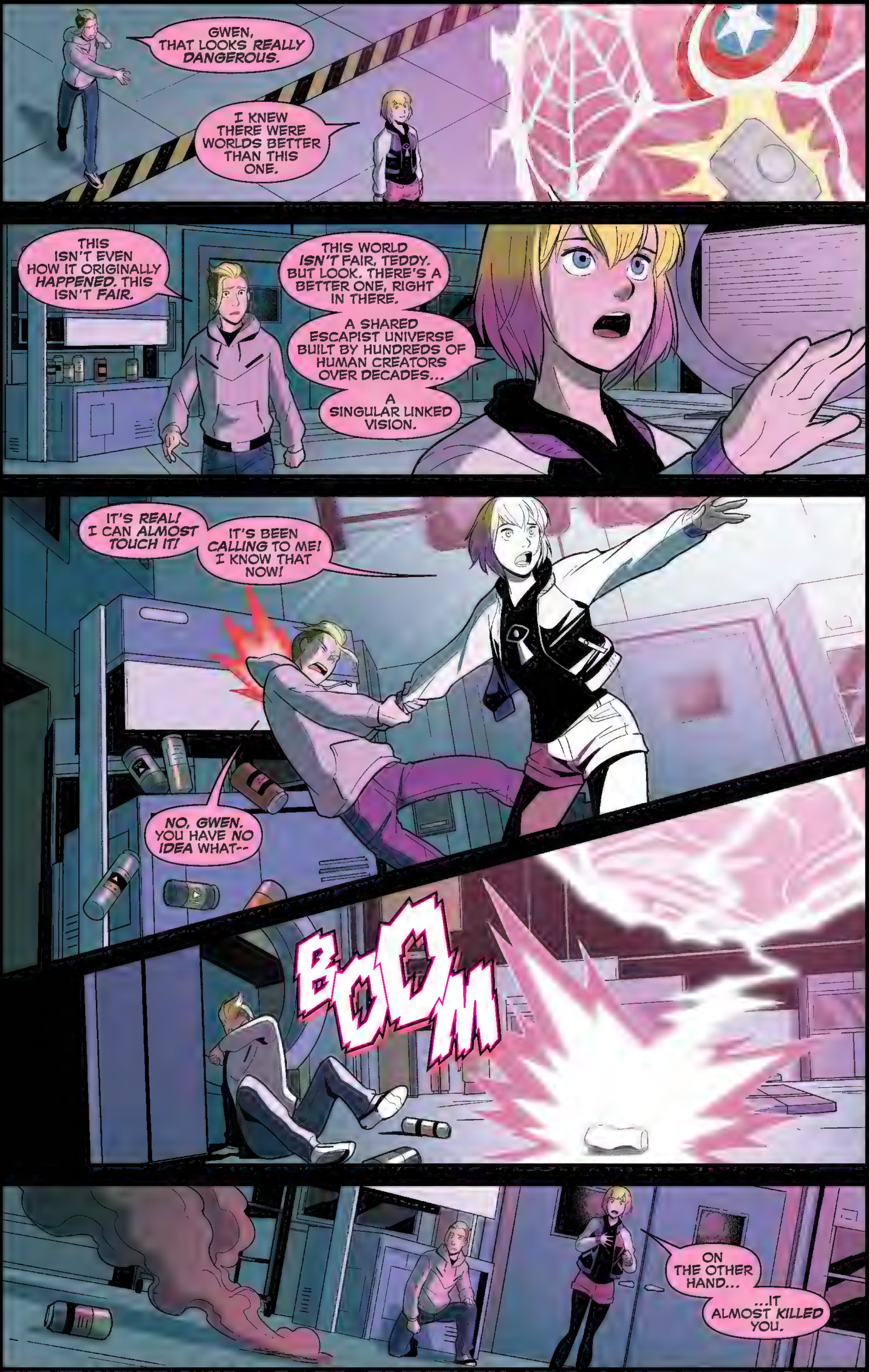

POOLE RESIDENCE.
GWEN? HOW'D IT GO?
IT'S TOUGH OUT THERE! YOU KNOW, THIS *ECONOMY*. ET CETERA.
BUT DON'T WORRY! I'M NOT GIVING UP! I'M GONNA GET *RIGHT* BACK OUT THERE...
...FIRST THING *NEXT* WEEK!

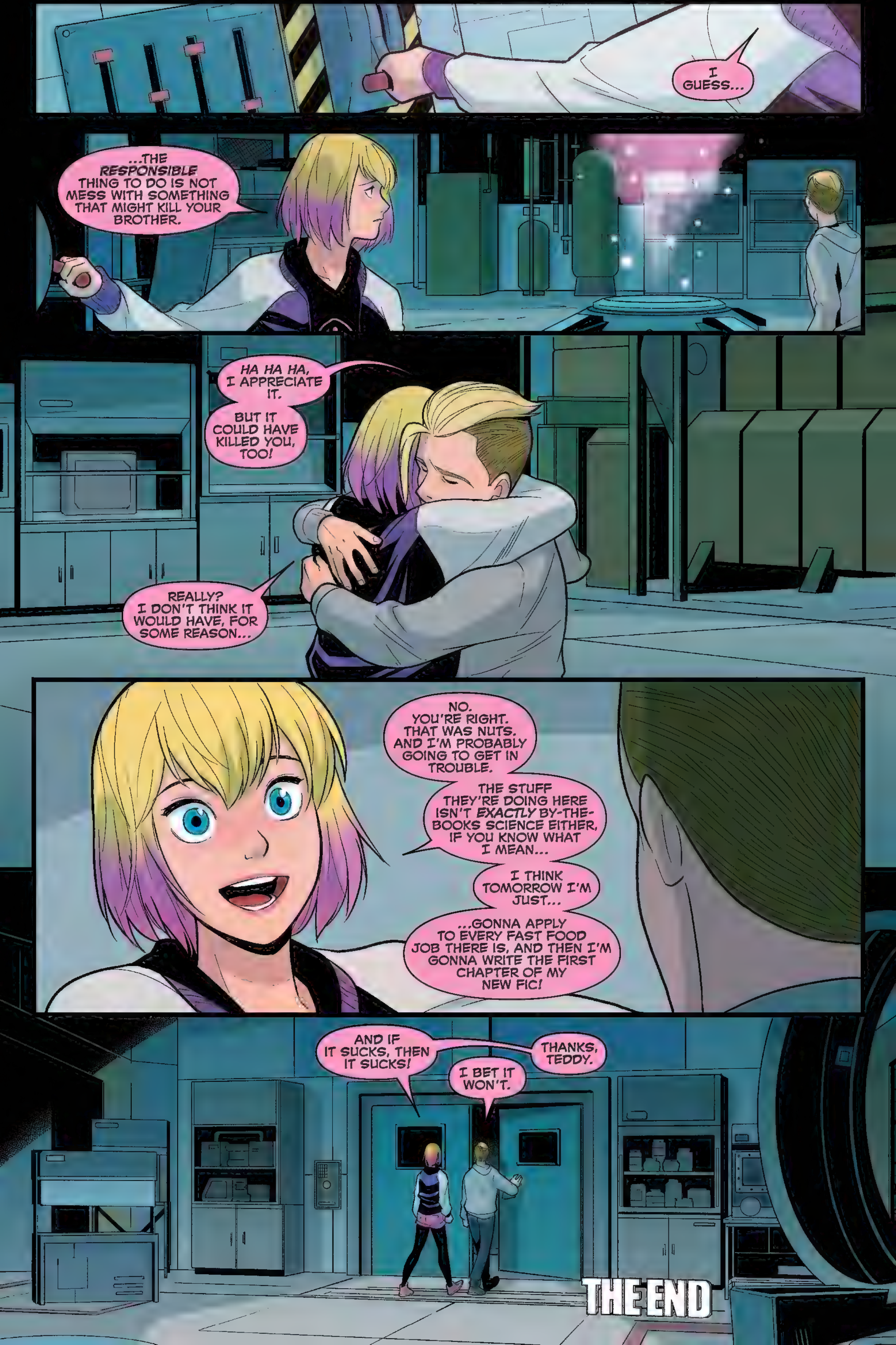

KNOCK KNOCK
DINNER'S READY.
OKAY.
LOOK AT THIS!
REMEMBER THAT FORUM I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT? I CAN'T GET TO IT NOW! BUT OTHER SITES ARE FINE!
OH, WEIRD. MUST HAVE GONE DOWN.
NO, IT LOADS FINE ON MY PHONE. YOU SET UP OUR ROUTER. CAN YOU CHECK IF IT'S ACCIDENTALLY BLOCKING SITES OR SOMETHING?
UH, IT'S PROBABLY NOT. ALSO, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO INSTALL A ROUTER, BUT YOU KNOW YOU CAN BLOCK SITES FROM ONE?
I JUST KNEW YOU'D BE BETTER AT IT!


...AND THIS MOVIE DOES THE *COOLEST* TWIST ON THE HERO'S JOURNEY, BUT I DON'T THINK ANYBODY ELSE NOTICED IT BUT ME! SO, YOU KNOW HOW THE HERO HAS TO RETRIEVE THE ELIXIR NORMALLY? WELL...
SMACK
FOUND SOME PLACES THAT ARE LOOKING FOR HELP.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FILL THESE APPLICATIONS OUT. ONE OF THESE PLACES WILL HIRE YOU.
OH! UH, YEAH, I'LL DO THAT. THANKS, DAD.
NO PROBLEM.
THAT WAS VERY INTERESTING, WHAT YOU WERE SAYING, GWEN! LITERATURE WAS ALWAYS THE SUBJECT YOU DID WELL IN.
THANKS, MOM.
IF YOU COULD JUST FOCUS A *LITTLE* ON SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT TO DO...
...YOU COULD GET YOUR *G.E.D.,* AND THEN MAJOR IN ENGLISH AT C.U.N.Y.!
I DON'T *NEED* A DEGREE.
I'M WORKING ON MY *FAN FIC.* YOU KNOW A *LOT* OF BEST-SELLING AUTHORS STARTED IN FAN-FIC, AND THEY DIDN'T NEED *COLLEGE.*
HOW'S ALL THAT GOING? YOU WERE DOING *"NANOWRIMO,"* RIGHT?


UH, I REALLY LIKED MY IDEA, BUT IT'S NOT QUITE RIGHT YET TO START WRITING, SO I'M JUST WAITING FOR INSPIRATION--
I KNEW IT. YOU CAN'T EVEN COMMIT TO SOMETHING YOU CARE ABOUT! EXCUSES FOR EVERYTHING.
IT'S NOT THE WRITING I CARE ABOUT.
OH, COME ON. WHAT?
IT'S JUST FANTASIZING ABOUT A BETTER WORLD THAN THIS ONE!
I SEE... OKAY! TELL ME HOW AWFUL THIS CUSHY LIFE OF YOURS IS!
IT IS!
I COULDN'T GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL!
ALL MY FRIENDS MOVED AWAY!
I CAN'T EVEN GET A JOB AT A RESTAURANT!
AGAIN, HONEY, IF YOU WOULD JUST STICK TO SOMETHING THAT'S NOT A VIDEO GAME OR A COMIC BOOK--
OKAY THEN, FINE! I'LL GO TO MY JOB! HAVE A GREAT DINNER!
SLAM
... GWEN GOT A JOB?
OH, IT'S THAT B.S. SLEEP STUDY THING. PAYS HER TWENTY BUCKS A WEEK.
OH, NO, HONEY. IT'S NOT A SLEEP STUDY.
IT'S A STUDY ON "UNCONVENTIONAL TRANSFERENCE OF INFORMATION" AND "THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS."
THEY DON'T USUALLY HAVE HER COME IN AT NIGHT...


NO NO NO NO, WHY IS THIS *PAST* TRYING TO *MAKE HER DO IT AGAIN?*
I PROMISED I WOULD MAKE SURE SHE *STAYED HERE* THIS TIME!
I KNEW IT...
I DON'T HAVE TO LIVE HERE...
GWEN!
TEDDY.
HERE'S THAT RESEARCH PROJECT I'M IN. LOOK.
I TURNED IT UP TO ELEVEN.


GWEN, THAT LOOKS *REALLY DANGEROUS*.
I KNEW THERE WERE WORLDS BETTER THAN THIS ONE.
THIS ISN'T EVEN HOW IT ORIGINALLY *HAPPENED*. THIS ISN'T *FAIR*.
THIS WORLD *ISN'T* FAIR, TEDDY. BUT LOOK. THERE'S A BETTER ONE, RIGHT IN THERE.
A SHARED ESCAPIST UNIVERSE BUILT BY HUNDREDS OF HUMAN CREATORS OVER DECADES...
A SINGULAR LINKED VISION.
IT'S *REAL!* I CAN *ALMOST TOUCH IT!*
IT'S BEEN *CALLING* TO ME! I KNOW THAT NOW!
NO, GWEN. YOU HAVE *NO IDEA* WHAT--
BOOM
ON THE OTHER HAND...
...IT ALMOST *KILLED* YOU.


I GUESS...
...THE *RESPONSIBLE* THING TO DO IS NOT MESS WITH SOMETHING THAT MIGHT KILL YOUR BROTHER.
HA HA HA, I APPRECIATE IT.
BUT IT COULD HAVE KILLED YOU, TOO!
REALLY? I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HAVE, FOR SOME REASON...
NO. YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT WAS NUTS. AND I'M PROBABLY GOING TO GET IN TROUBLE.
THE STUFF THEY'RE DOING HERE ISN'T *EXACTLY* BY-THE-BOOKS SCIENCE EITHER, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN...
I THINK TOMORROW I'M JUST...
...GONNA APPLY TO EVERY FAST FOOD JOB THERE IS, AND THEN I'M GONNA WRITE THE FIRST CHAPTER OF MY NEW FIC!
AND IF IT SUCKS, THEN IT SUCKS!
THANKS, TEDDY.
I BET IT WON'T.
THE END

Gwen's P.O.O.L.E.

(PILE OF ORDINARY LETTERS TO THE EDITORS)

Hey there, True Believers! Editor Heather Antos here! Unfortunately, we couldn't figure out how to get Gwen out of the comic to answer her own fan mail–stupid fourth-wall limitations–so you're going to have to settle for the next best thing: Resident Gwen Poole expert ME!

Shout out to Marco Juan for helping come up with our column title! Send YOUR mail to Gwen at OfficeX@Marvel.com!

Hiya, Gwen!

A lady on the internet told me to write you. Did I do good?

Sincerely,
Tim C.

You did great!

Dear Gwenpool,

Despite what anyone says, you are an inspiration to all people, including actual Deadpool because you are better than he is. Keep pursuing your dreams of ruling the world and kicking M.O.D.O.K.'s butt. I will watch gloriously and cheer you on from the sidelines. You never cease to amaze me. You hilarious, adorable antihero. I love you.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Garcia

GWEN LOVES YOU, TOO! And I'm sure she would agree–she is MUCH better than that pesky Deadpool!

Hi Gwenpool,

Given your current existence as a Marvel Fan who slipped into the Marvel Universe, wouldn't it make sense for the editors to give you a letters page to read? I know there is already a large amount of content in your book, so adding a page might be hard, but I thought you'd be interested in having communication coming from the universe in which you are now only making an appearance in print.

Make Mine Marvel,
Daryl

You know, it DOES make sense for Gwen to have her own letters page. And now she does–thanks to fans like you for writing in! Make sure you tell your friends to write in, too, so we can do another letters page!

Heather Antos on Twitter told me to send some fan mail, so here I am...

But in all honesty, GWENPOOL is one of my favorites. Beyond clever, and if I can get my grandfather to enjoy a comic, GWENPOOL does the job beautifully!

Love,
Josh E

Wow! You read GWENPOOL with your grandfather?! That's AWESOME! KEEP SPREADING THE GWENPOOL LOVE!

Hey Gwen,

How are things with you and Kamala going since the Christmas party?

Jack

Did you read CHAMPIONS #5? Gwen teams up with...well...the CHAMPIONS! She and Kamala don't exactly see eye to eye on how one best handles bad guys. But I won't spoil the issue for you here–be sure to go to your local comic shop and check it out for yourself!

Hey, Heather Gwen!

Whatever happened to the pet scapegoat sweetie, Gwen-Pig? The adorable piggy was last seen in the arms of Mega Tony after the resolution of the Teuthidan invasion. Is Tony taking care of it now? Will we ever see Gwen-Pig again in more adventures? I must know! Clearly I'm asking the important questions.

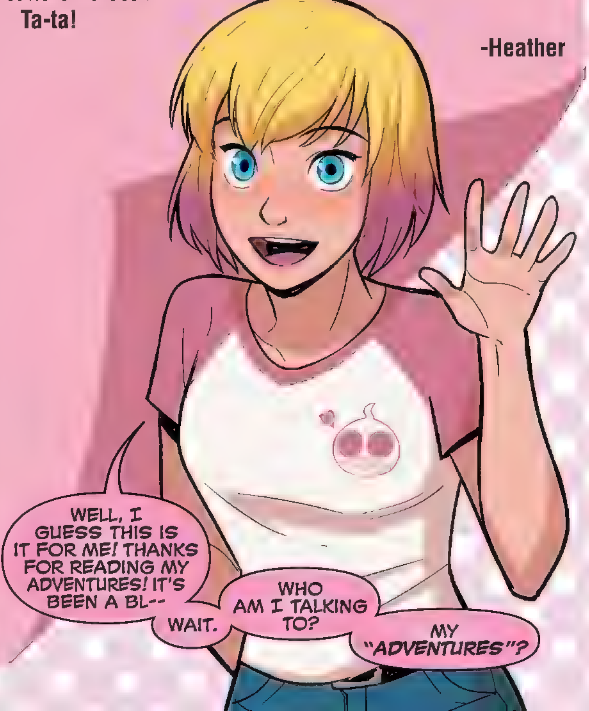
Brian D, a True Believer

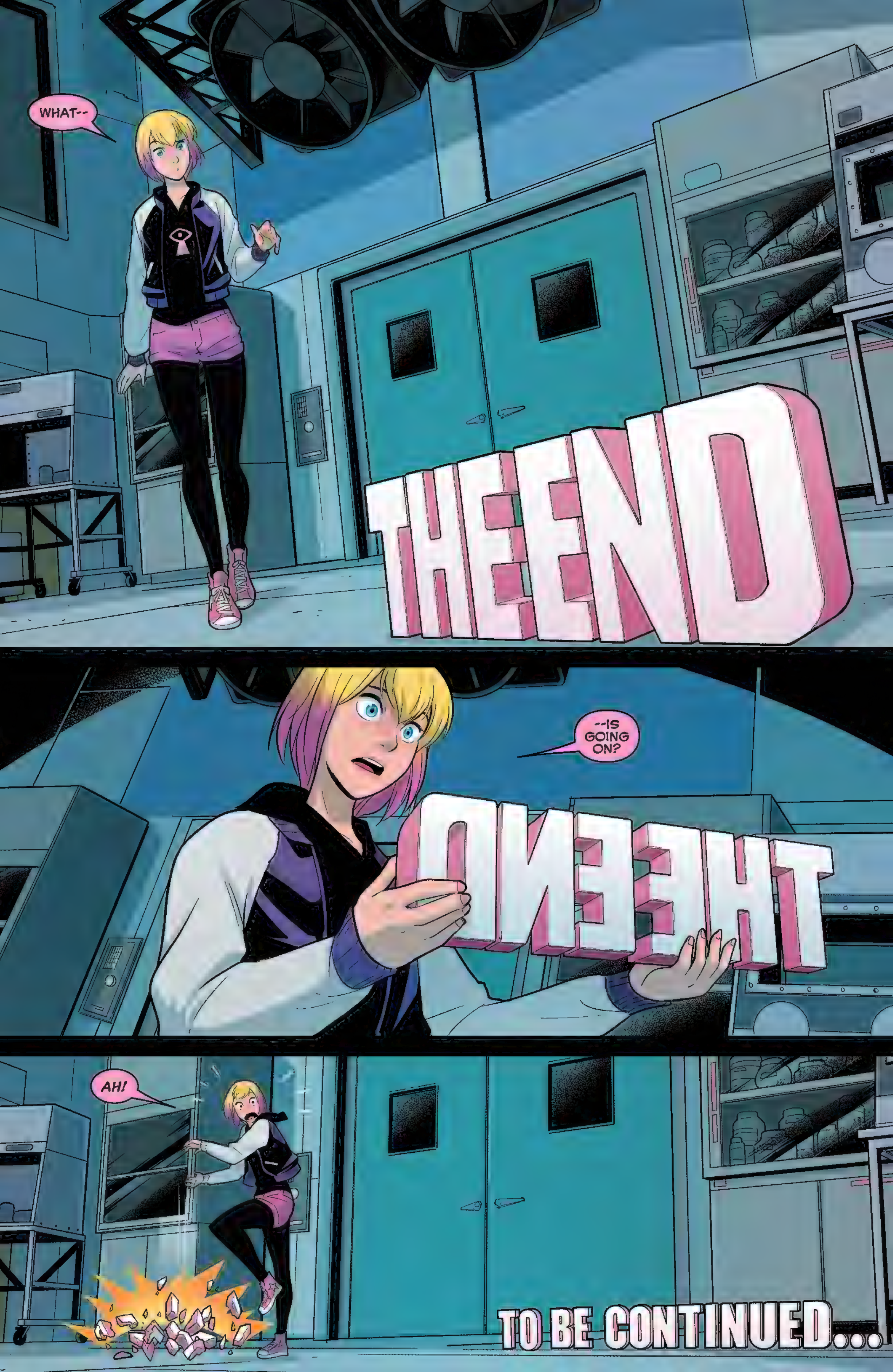
FINALLY! Someone who asks the IMPORTANT questions! Pig-Gwen has become an in-office favorite here at Marvel–so never fear! He is in good hands! In fact, he even made an appearance on the top of this letters page. Something tells me we'll be seeing him again soon...

Well, that's it for this round, pals! Be sure to send Gwen your fan mail at OfficeX@Marvel.com. Don't forget to say "Okay to print"! Who knows? Maybe one of these days she'll bust her way through the page and answer your letters herself!

Ta-ta!

-Heather

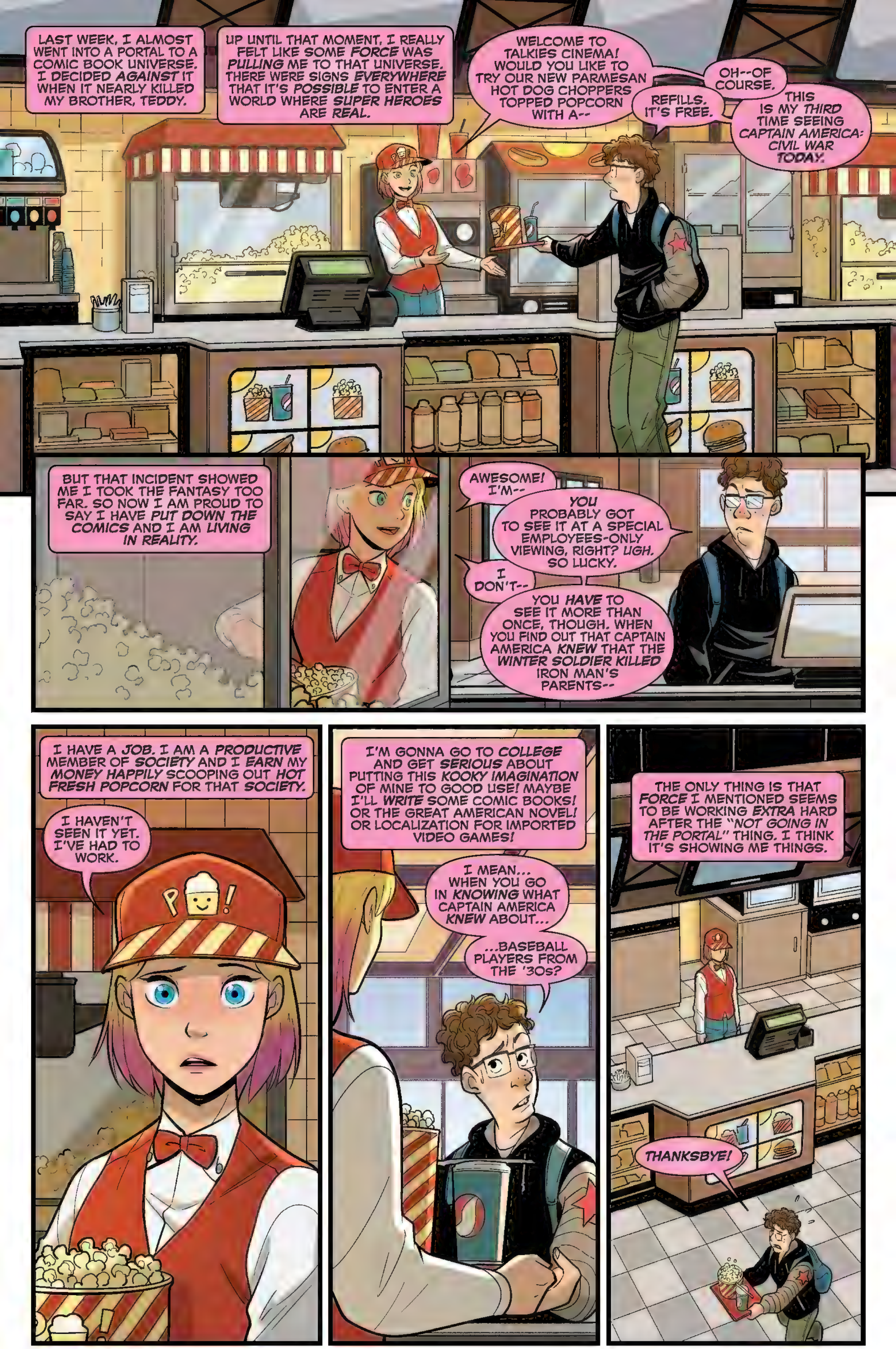

WELL, I GUESS THIS IS IT FOR ME! THANKS FOR READING MY ADVENTURES! IT'S BEEN A BL--
WAIT.
WHO AM I TALKING TO?
MY "ADVENTURES"?

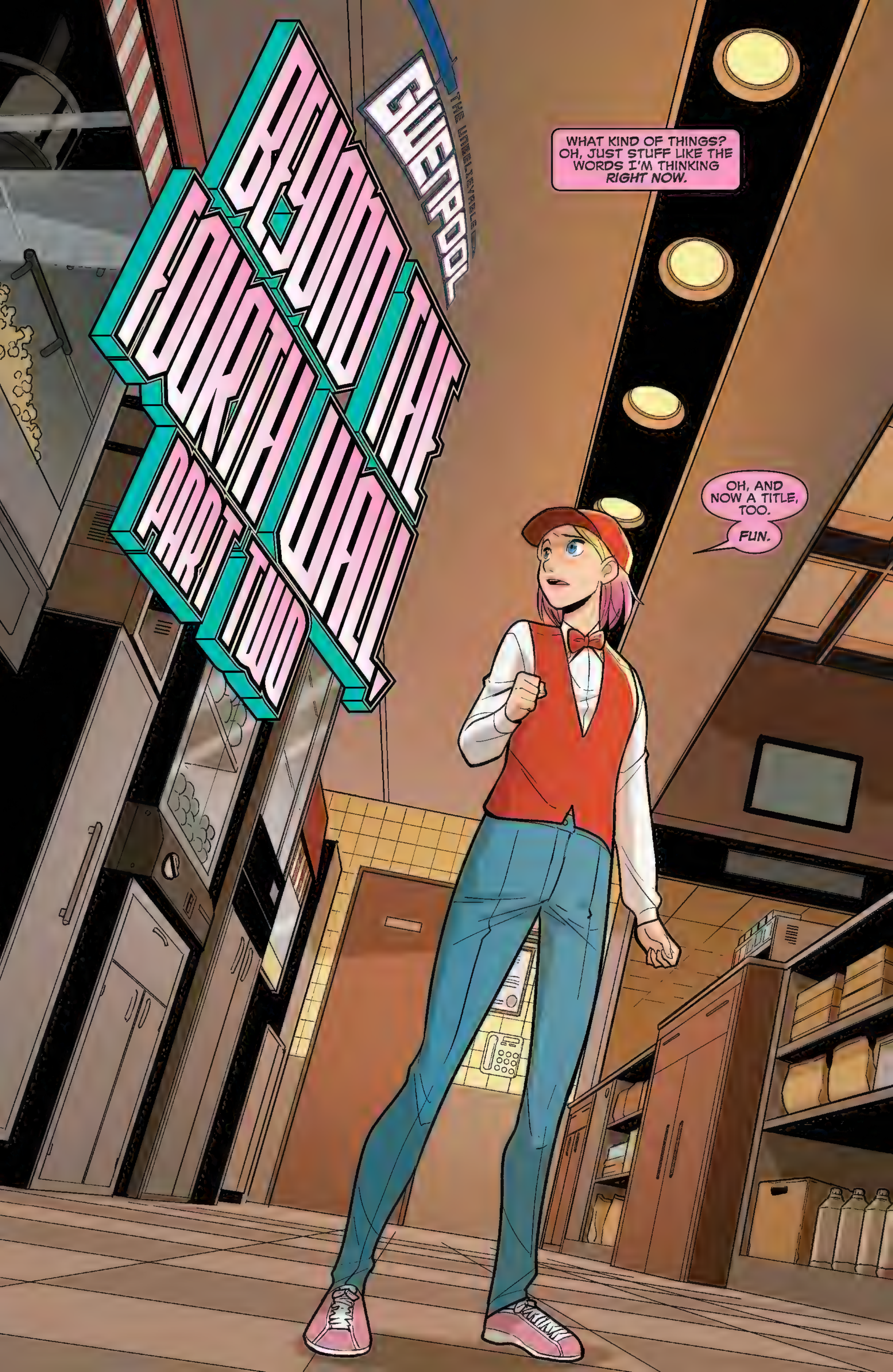

WHAT--
THE END
--IS GOING ON?
THE END
AH!
TO BE CONTINUED...

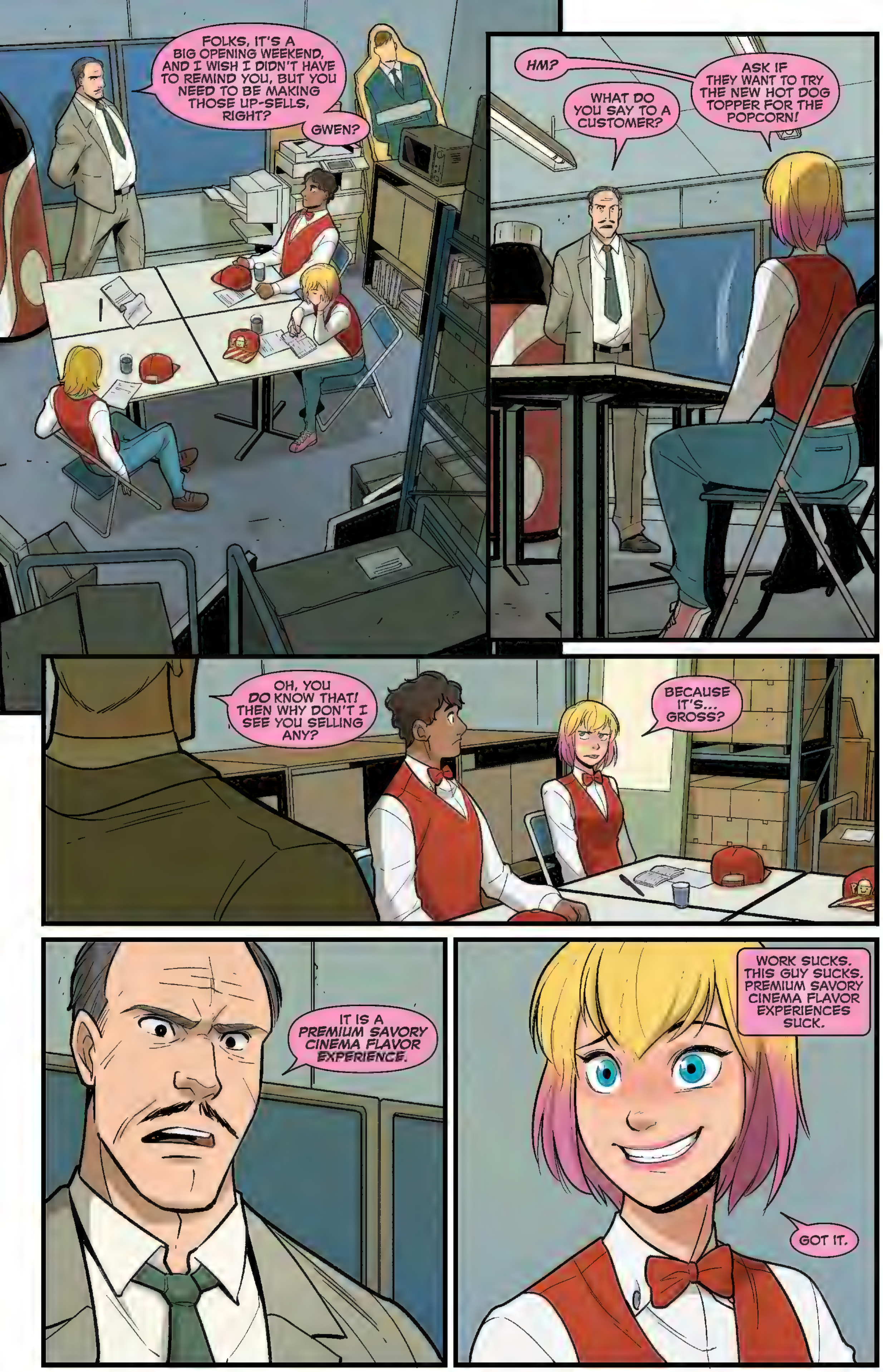
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL
CRASH
HASTINGS
GURIHIRU
GURI HIRU!

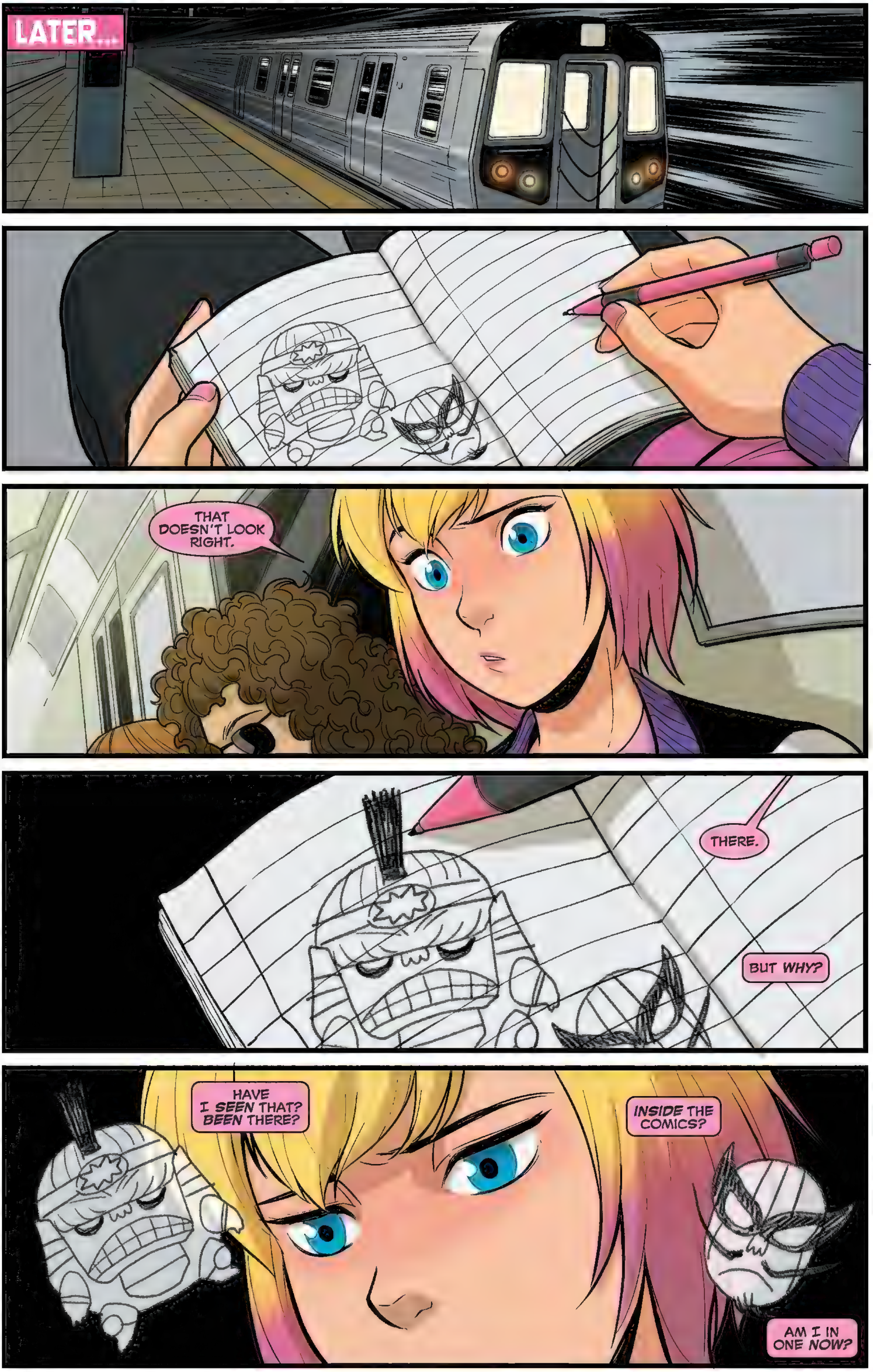
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #17

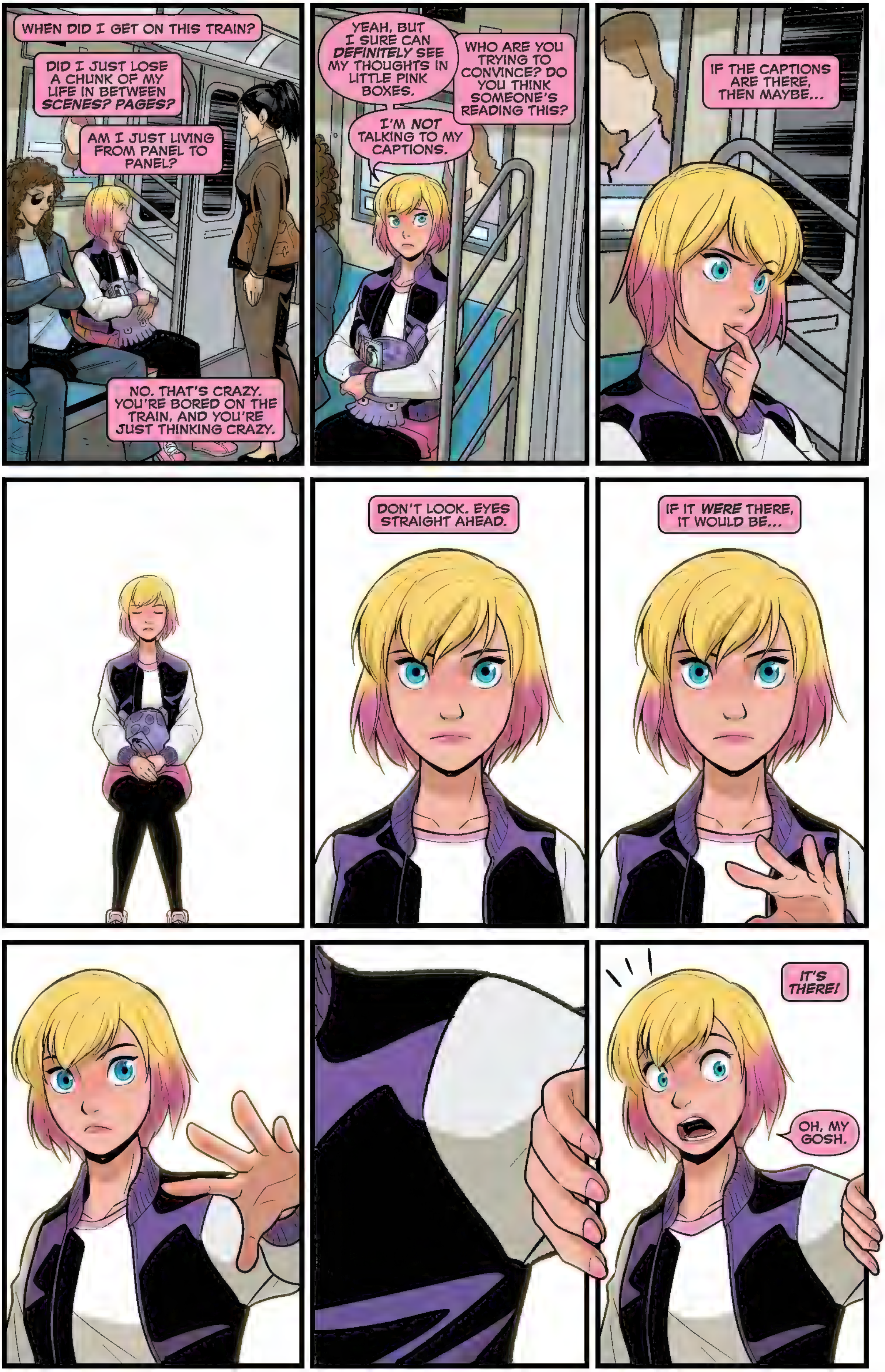
"BEYOND THE FOURTH WALL, PART TWO"

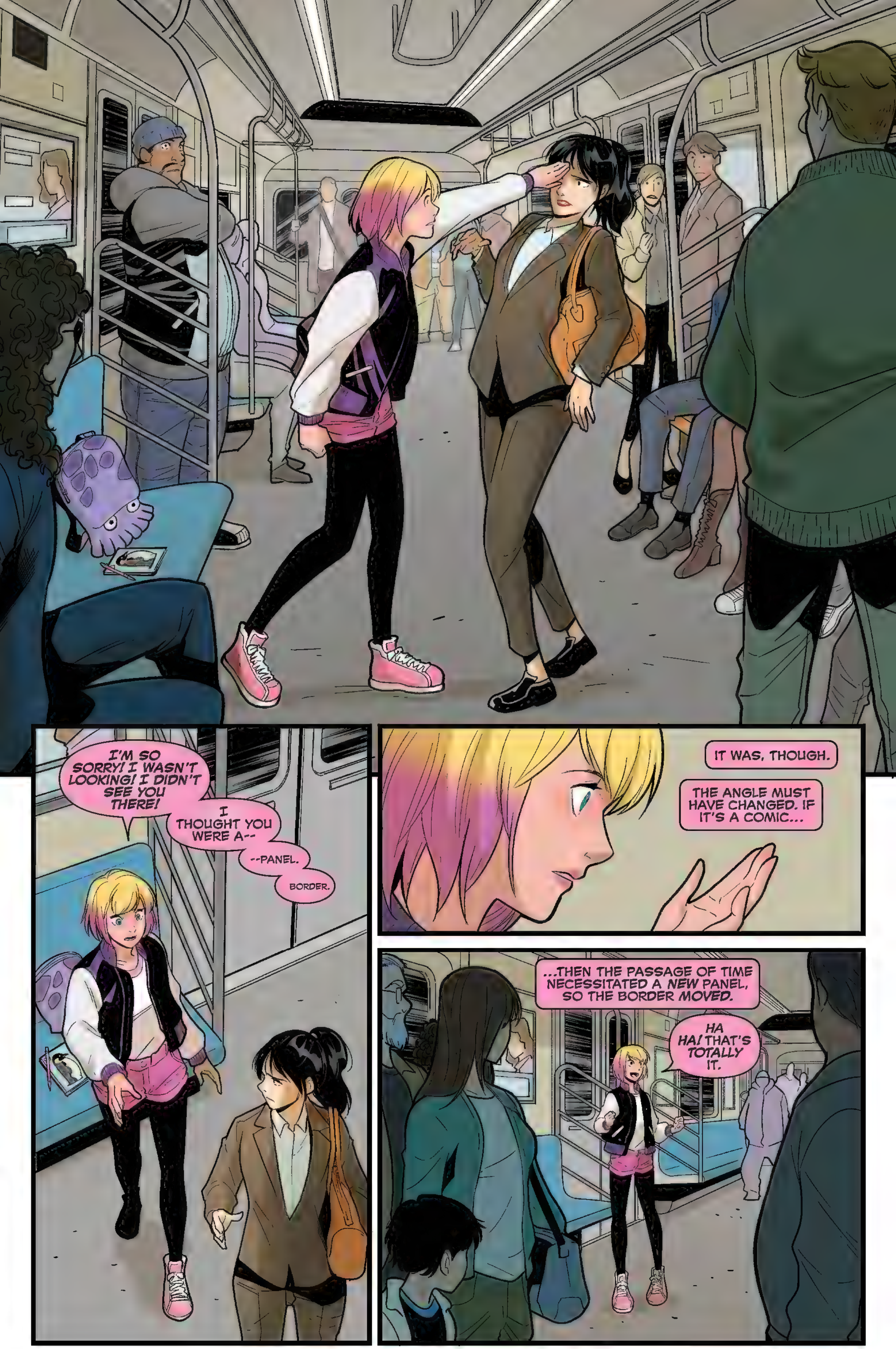

LAST WEEK, I ALMOST WENT INTO A PORTAL TO A COMIC BOOK UNIVERSE. I DECIDED *AGAINST* IT WHEN IT NEARLY KILLED MY BROTHER, TEDDY.
UP UNTIL THAT MOMENT, I REALLY FELT LIKE SOME *FORCE* WAS *PULLING* ME TO THAT UNIVERSE. THERE WERE SIGNS *EVERYWHERE* THAT IT'S *POSSIBLE* TO ENTER A WORLD WHERE *SUPER HEROES* ARE *REAL*.
WELCOME TO TALKIES CINEMA! WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY OUR NEW PARMESAN HOT DOG CHOPPERS TOPPED POPCORN WITH A--
REFILLS. IT'S FREE.
OH--OF COURSE.
THIS IS MY *THIRD* TIME SEEING *CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR TODAY.*
BUT THAT INCIDENT SHOWED ME I TOOK THE FANTASY TOO FAR. SO NOW I AM PROUD TO SAY I HAVE *PUT DOWN THE COMICS* AND I AM *LIVING IN REALITY.*
AWESOME! I'M--
YOU PROBABLY GOT TO SEE IT AT A SPECIAL EMPLOYEES-ONLY VIEWING, RIGHT? *UGH.* SO LUCKY.
I DON'T--
YOU *HAVE* TO SEE IT MORE THAN ONCE, THOUGH. WHEN YOU FIND OUT THAT CAPTAIN AMERICA *KNEW* THAT THE *WINTER SOLDIER KILLED* IRON MAN'S PARENTS--
I HAVE A *JOB*. I AM A *PRODUCTIVE* MEMBER OF *SOCIETY* AND I *EARN* MY *MONEY HAPPILY* SCOOPING OUT *HOT FRESH POPCORN* FOR THAT *SOCIETY.*
I HAVEN'T SEEN IT YET. I'VE HAD TO WORK.
P!
I'M GONNA GO TO *COLLEGE* AND GET *SERIOUS* ABOUT PUTTING THIS *KOOKY IMAGINATION* OF MINE TO GOOD USE! MAYBE I'LL *WRITE* SOME COMIC BOOKS! OR THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL! OR LOCALIZATION FOR IMPORTED VIDEO GAMES!
I MEAN... WHEN YOU GO IN *KNOWING* WHAT CAPTAIN AMERICA *KNEW* ABOUT...
...BASEBALL PLAYERS FROM THE '30s?
THE ONLY THING IS THAT *FORCE* I MENTIONED SEEMS TO BE WORKING *EXTRA* HARD AFTER THE *"NOT GOING IN THE PORTAL"* THING. I THINK IT'S SHOWING ME THINGS.
THANKSBYE!

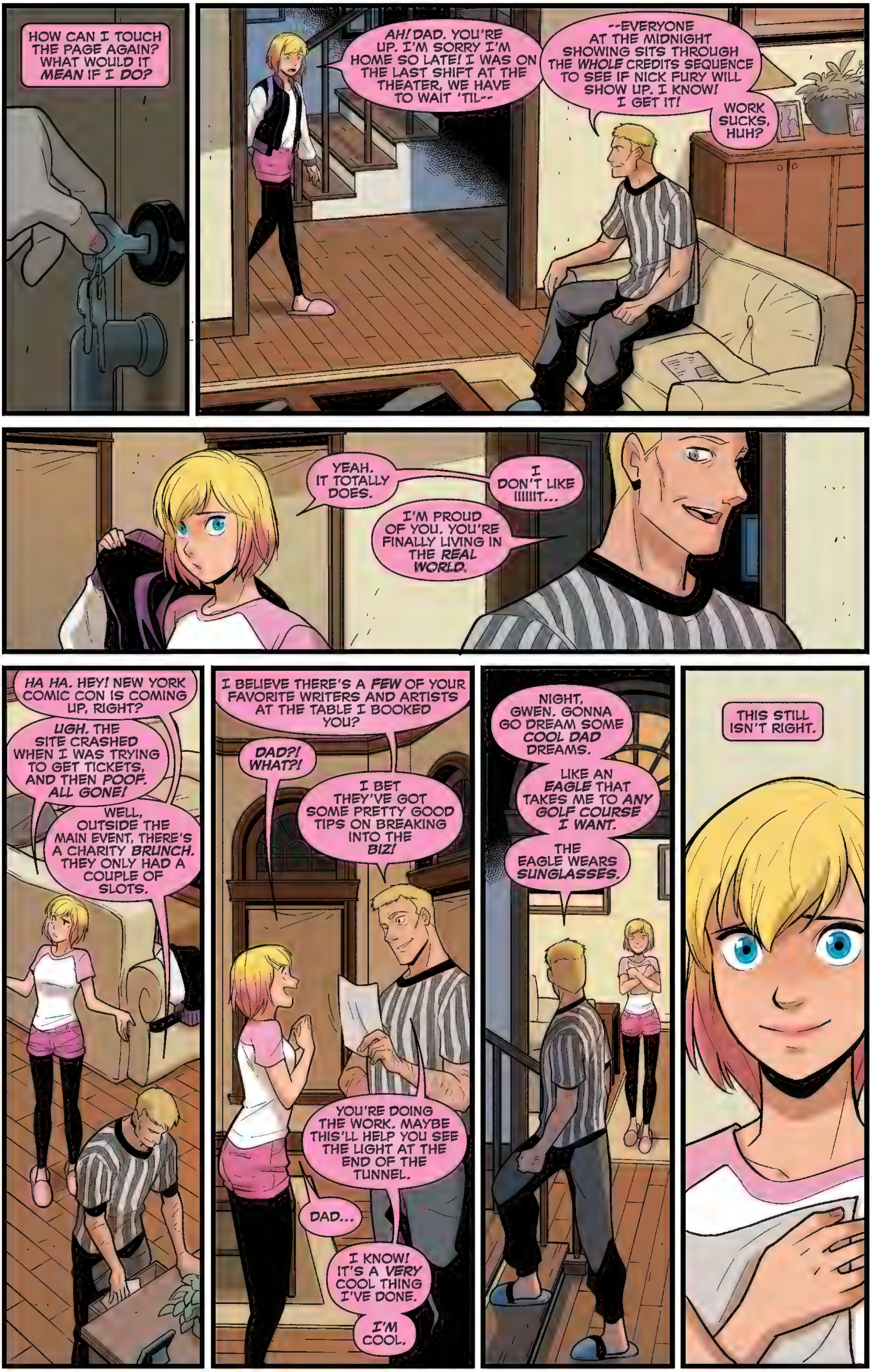

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
BEYOND THE FOURTH WALL, PART TWO
WHAT KIND OF THINGS? OH, JUST STUFF LIKE THE WORDS I'M THINKING *RIGHT NOW.*
OH, AND NOW A TITLE, TOO.
FUN.

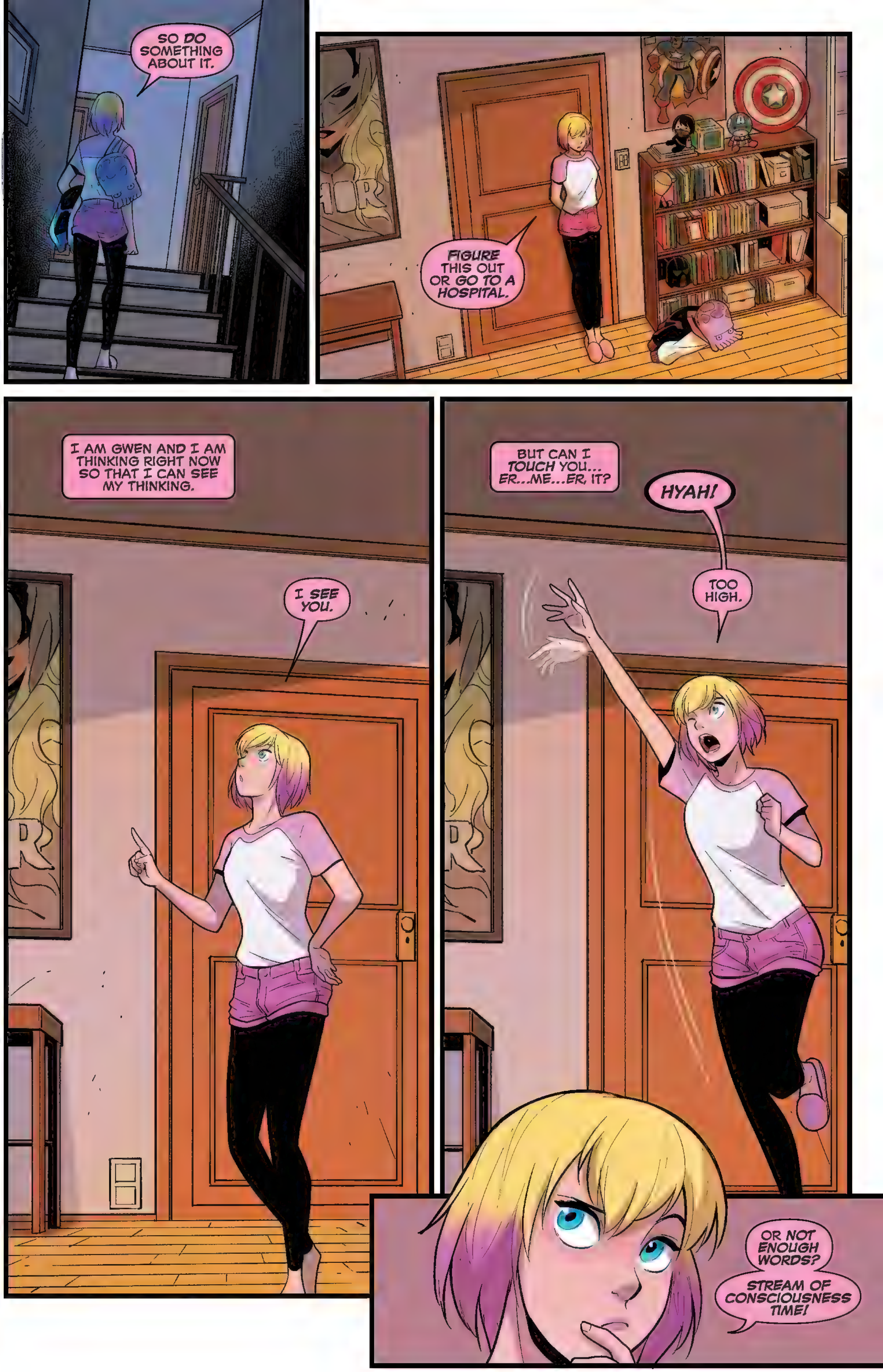

FOLKS, IT'S A BIG OPENING WEEKEND, AND I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO REMIND YOU, BUT YOU NEED TO BE MAKING THOSE UP-SELLS, RIGHT?
GWEN?
HM?
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A CUSTOMER?
ASK IF THEY WANT TO TRY THE NEW HOT DOG TOPPER FOR THE POPCORN!
OH, YOU *DO* KNOW THAT! THEN WHY DON'T I SEE YOU SELLING ANY?
BECAUSE IT'S... GROSS?
IT IS A *PREMIUM SAVORY CINEMA FLAVOR EXPERIENCE.*
WORK SUCKS. THIS GUY SUCKS. PREMIUM SAVORY CINEMA FLAVOR EXPERIENCES SUCK.
GOT IT.

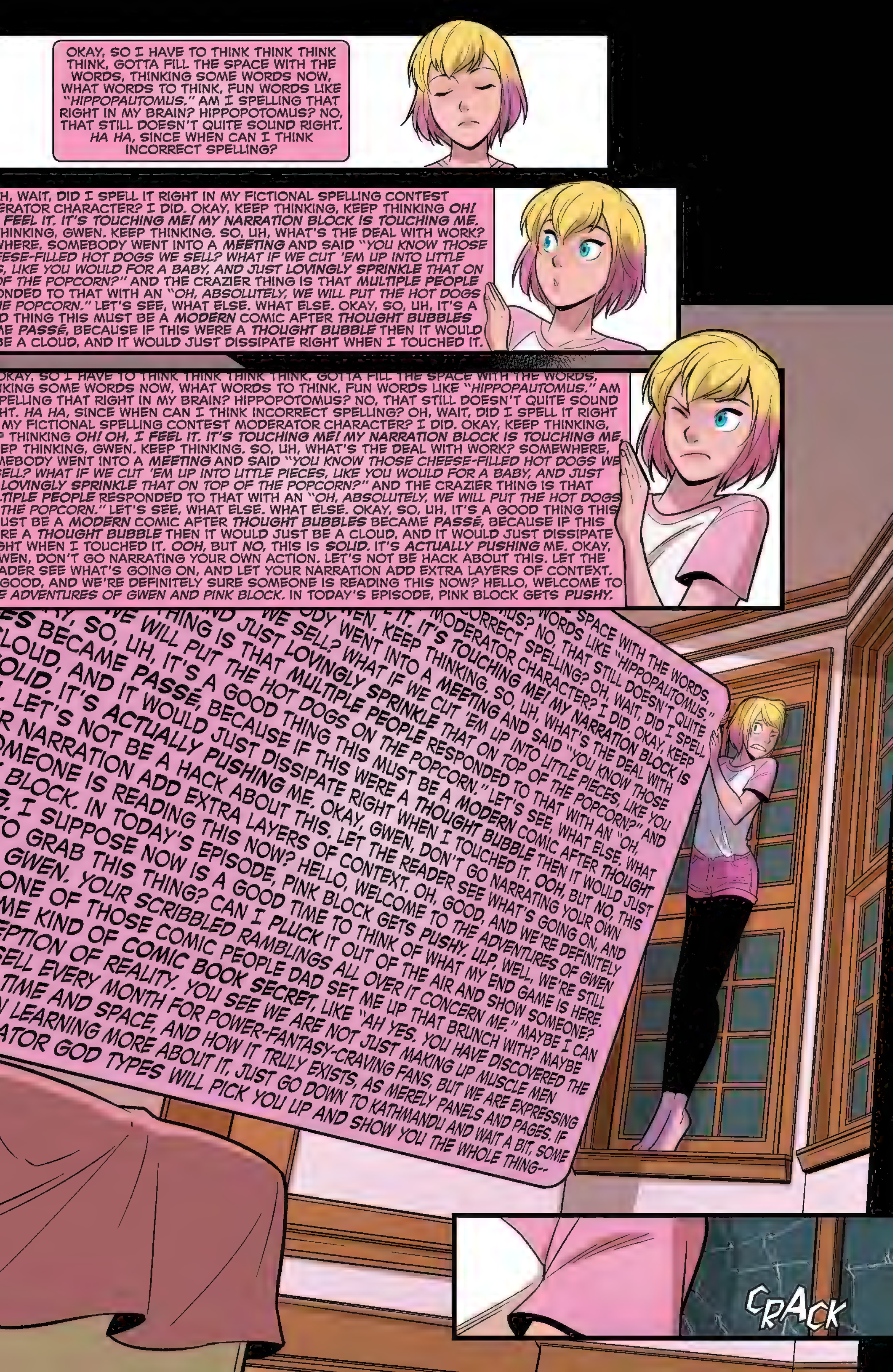

LATER...
THAT DOESN'T LOOK RIGHT.
THERE.
BUT WHY?
HAVE I SEEN THAT? BEEN THERE?
INSIDE THE COMICS?
AM I IN ONE NOW?


WHEN DID I GET ON THIS TRAIN?
DID I JUST LOSE A CHUNK OF MY LIFE IN BETWEEN *SCENES? PAGES?*
AM I JUST LIVING FROM PANEL TO PANEL?
NO. THAT'S CRAZY. YOU'RE BORED ON THE TRAIN, AND YOU'RE JUST THINKING CRAZY.
YEAH, BUT I SURE CAN *DEFINITELY* SEE MY THOUGHTS IN LITTLE PINK BOXES.
WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO CONVINCE? DO YOU THINK SOMEONE'S READING THIS?
I'M *NOT* TALKING TO MY CAPTIONS.
IF THE CAPTIONS ARE THERE, THEN MAYBE...
DON'T LOOK. EYES STRAIGHT AHEAD.
IF IT *WERE* THERE, IT WOULD BE...
IT'S THERE!
OH, MY GOSH.


I'M SO SORRY! I WASN'T LOOKING! I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A--
--PANEL.
BORDER.
IT WAS, THOUGH.
THE ANGLE MUST HAVE CHANGED. IF IT'S A COMIC...
...THEN THE PASSAGE OF TIME NECESSITATED A *NEW* PANEL, SO THE BORDER *MOVED.*
HA HA! THAT'S *TOTALLY* IT.


HOW CAN I TOUCH THE PAGE AGAIN? WHAT WOULD IT *MEAN* IF I *DO?*
AH! DAD. YOU'RE UP. I'M SORRY I'M HOME SO LATE! I WAS ON THE LAST SHIFT AT THE THEATER, WE HAVE TO WAIT 'TIL--
--EVERYONE AT THE MIDNIGHT SHOWING SITS THROUGH THE *WHOLE* CREDITS SEQUENCE TO SEE IF NICK FURY WILL SHOW UP. I KNOW! I GET IT!
WORK SUCKS, HUH?
YEAH. IT TOTALLY DOES.
I DON'T LIKE IIIIIIT...
I'M PROUD OF YOU. YOU'RE FINALLY LIVING IN THE *REAL WORLD.*
HA HA. HEY! NEW YORK COMIC CON IS COMING UP, RIGHT?
UGH. THE SITE CRASHED WHEN I WAS TRYING TO GET TICKETS, AND THEN *POOF. ALL GONE!*
WELL, OUTSIDE THE MAIN EVENT, THERE'S A CHARITY *BRUNCH.* THEY ONLY HAD A COUPLE OF SLOTS.
I BELIEVE THERE'S A *FEW* OF YOUR FAVORITE WRITERS AND ARTISTS AT THE TABLE I BOOKED YOU?
DAD?! WHAT?!
I BET THEY'VE GOT SOME PRETTY GOOD TIPS ON BREAKING INTO THE *BIZ!*
YOU'RE DOING THE WORK. MAYBE THIS'LL HELP YOU SEE THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.
DAD...
I KNOW! IT'S A *VERY* COOL THING I'VE DONE.
I'M COOL.
NIGHT, GWEN. GONNA GO DREAM SOME *COOL DAD* DREAMS.
LIKE AN *EAGLE* THAT TAKES ME TO *ANY GOLF COURSE I WANT.*
THE EAGLE WEARS *SUNGLASSES.*
THIS STILL ISN'T RIGHT.


SO *DO* SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
FIGURE THIS OUT OR *GO TO A HOSPITAL.*
I AM GWEN AND I AM THINKING RIGHT NOW SO THAT I CAN SEE MY THINKING.
I *SEE* YOU.
BUT CAN I *TOUCH* YOU... ER...ME...ER, IT?
HYAH!
TOO HIGH.
OR NOT ENOUGH WORDS?
STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS TIME!


OKAY, SO I HAVE TO THINK THINK THINK THINK, GOTTA FILL THE SPACE WITH THE WORDS, THINKING SOME WORDS NOW, WHAT WORDS TO THINK, FUN WORDS LIKE "HIPPOPAUTOMUS." AM I SPELLING THAT RIGHT IN MY BRAIN? HIPPOPOTOMUS? NO, THAT STILL DOESN'T QUITE SOUND RIGHT. HA HA, SINCE WHEN CAN I THINK INCORRECT SPELLING?
H, WAIT, DID I SPELL IT RIGHT IN MY FICTIONAL SPELLING CONTEST
ERATOR CHARACTER? I DID. OKAY, KEEP THINKING, KEEP THINKING OH!
FEEL IT. IT'S TOUCHING ME! MY NARRATION BLOCK IS TOUCHING ME.
HINKING, GWEN. KEEP THINKING. SO, UH, WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH WORK?
WHERE, SOMEBODY WENT INTO A MEETING AND SAID "YOU KNOW THOSE
EESE-FILLED HOT DOGS WE SELL? WHAT IF WE CUT 'EM UP INTO LITTLE
S, LIKE YOU WOULD FOR A BABY, AND JUST LOVINGLY SPRINKLE THAT ON
OF THE POPCORN?" AND THE CRAZIER THING IS THAT MULTIPLE PEOPLE
ONDED TO THAT WITH AN "OH, ABSOLUTELY, WE WILL PUT THE HOT DOGS
HE POPCORN." LET'S SEE, WHAT ELSE. WHAT ELSE. OKAY, SO, UH, IT'S A
D THING THIS MUST BE A MODERN COMIC AFTER THOUGHT BUBBLES
ME PASSÉ, BECAUSE IF THIS WERE A THOUGHT BUBBLE THEN IT WOULD
BE A CLOUD, AND IT WOULD JUST DISSIPATE RIGHT WHEN I TOUCHED IT.
OKAY, SO I HAVE TO THINK THINK THINK, GOTTA FILL THE SPACE WITH THE WORDS,
NKING SOME WORDS NOW, WHAT WORDS TO THINK, FUN WORDS LIKE "HIPPOPAUTOMUS." AM
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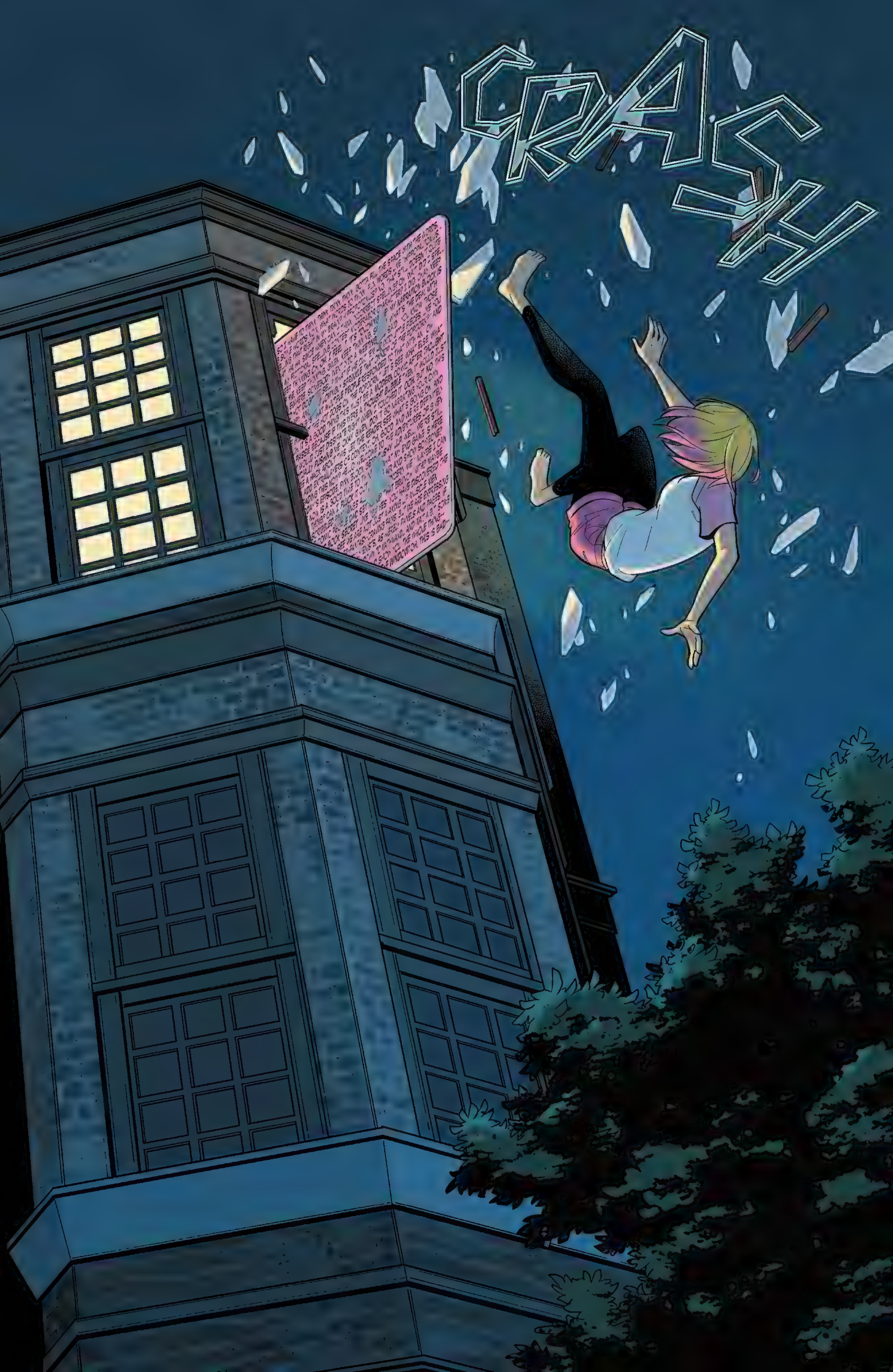
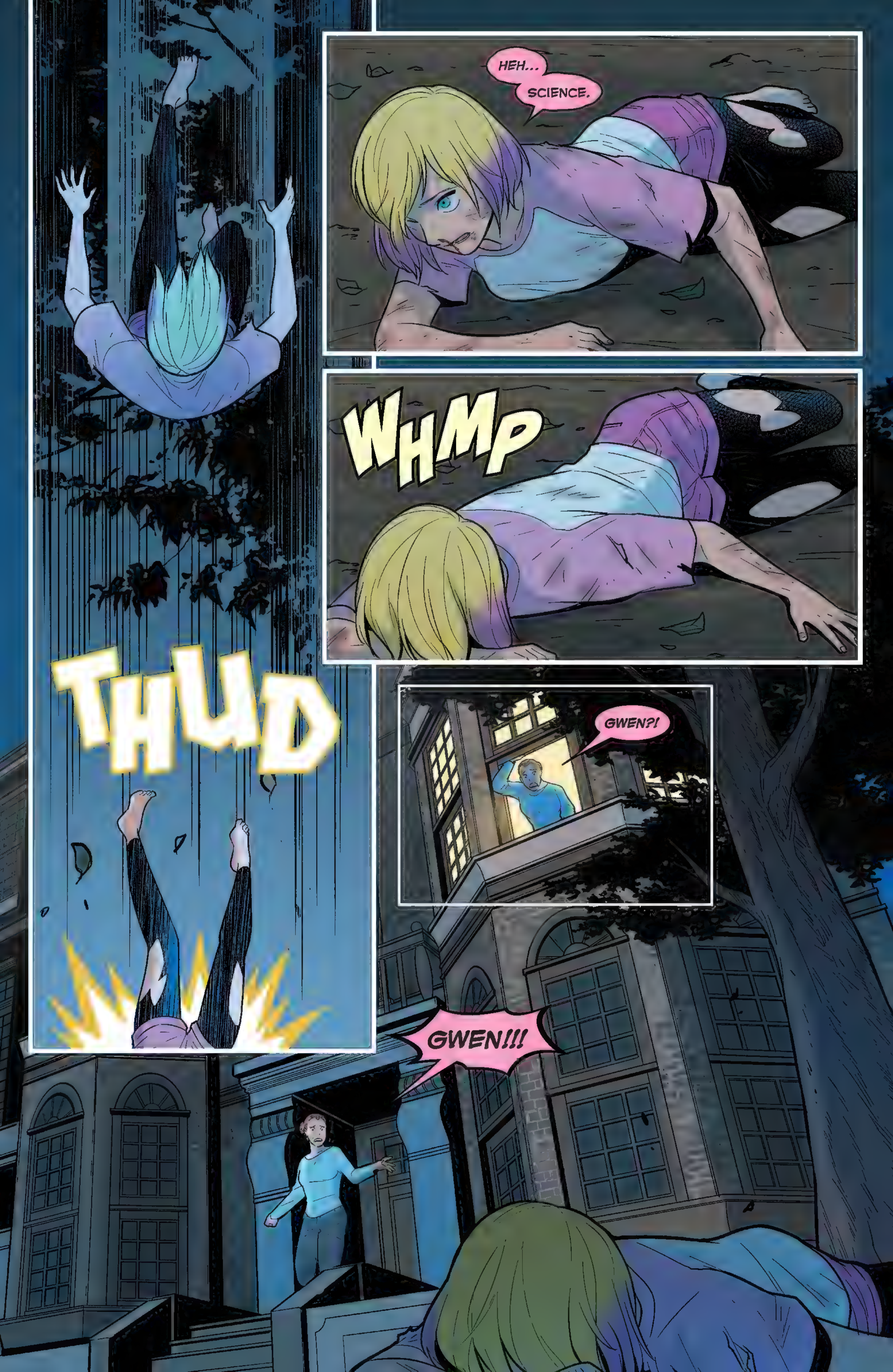
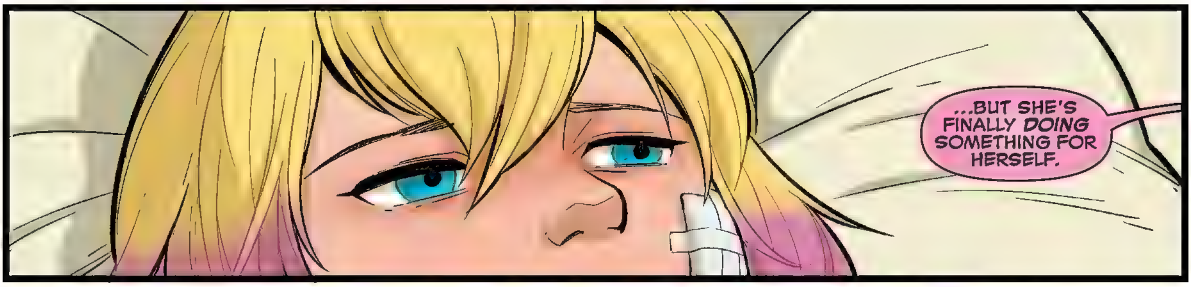
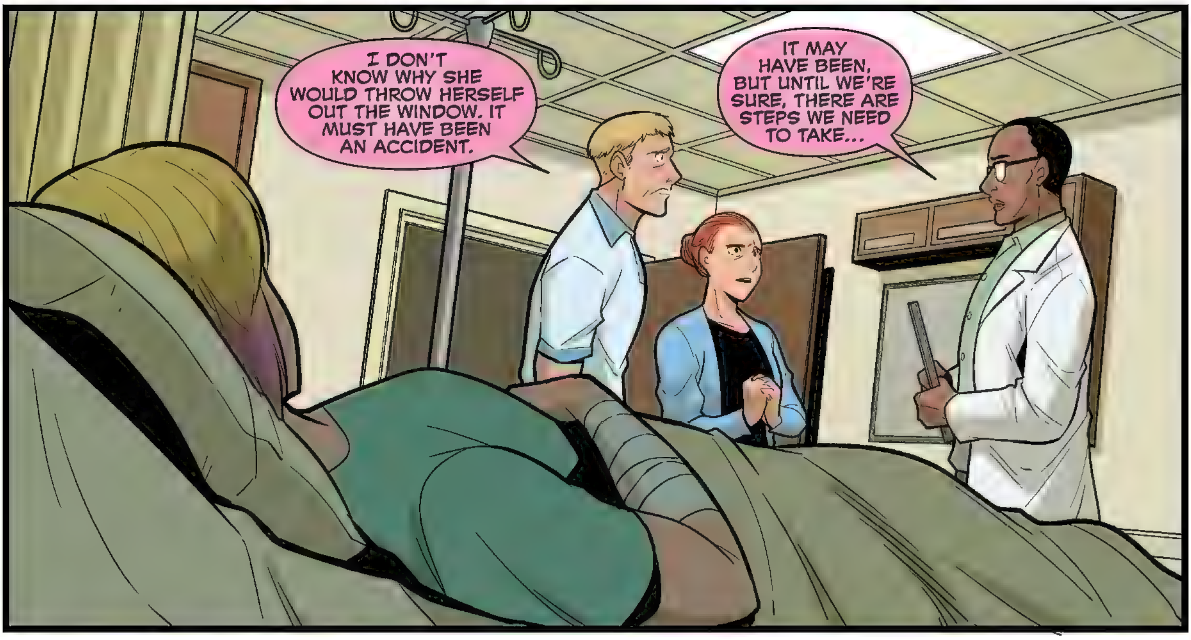
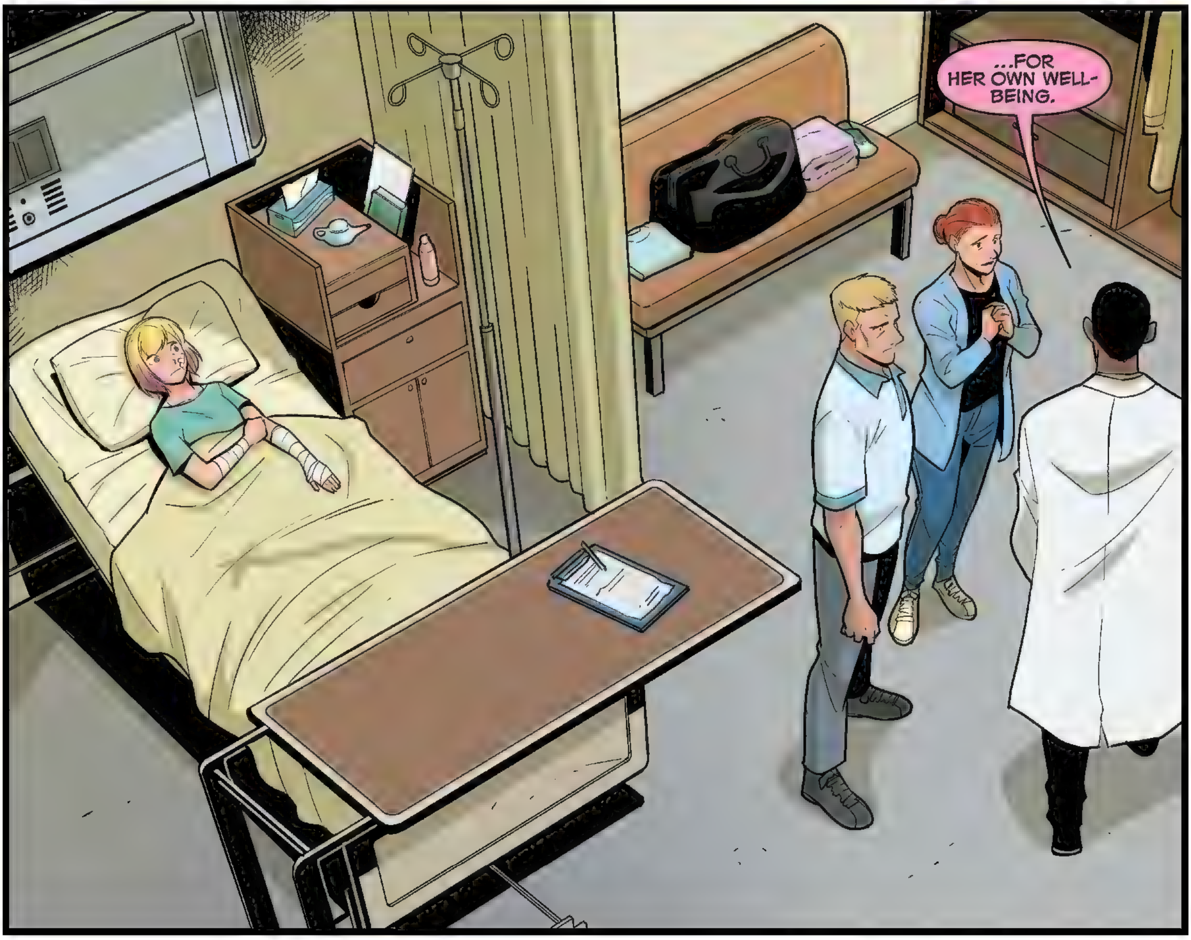
GHT. HA HA, SINCE WHEN CAN I THINK INCORRECT SPELLING? OH, WAIT, DID I SPELL IT RIGHT
MY FICTIONAL SPELLING CONTEST MODERATOR CHARACTER? I DID. OKAY, KEEP THINKING,
P THINKING OH! OH, I FEEL IT. IT'S TOUCHING ME! MY NARRATION BLOCK IS TOUCHING ME.
EP THINKING, GWEN. KEEP THINKING. SO, UH, WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH WORK? SOMEWHERE,
MEBODY WENT INTO A MEETING AND SAID "YOU KNOW THOSE CHEESE-FILLED HOT DOGS WE
SELL? WHAT IF WE CUT 'EM UP INTO LITTLE PIECES, LIKE YOU WOULD FOR A BABY, AND JUST
LOVINGLY SPRINKLE THAT ON TOP OF THE POPCORN?" AND THE CRAZIER THING IS THAT
LTIPLE PEOPLE RESPONDED TO THAT WITH AN "OH, ABSOLUTELY, WE WILL PUT THE HOT DOGS
THE POPCORN." LET'S SEE, WHAT ELSE. WHAT ELSE. OKAY, SO, UH, IT'S A GOOD THING THIS
UST BE A MODERN COMIC AFTER THOUGHT BUBBLES BECAME PASSÉ, BECAUSE IF THIS
RE A THOUGHT BUBBLE THEN IT WOULD JUST BE A CLOUD, AND IT WOULD JUST DISSIPATE
GHT WHEN I TOUCHED IT. OOH, BUT NO, THIS IS SOLID. IT'S ACTUALLY PUSHING ME. OKAY,
WEN, DON'T GO NARRATING YOUR OWN ACTION. LET'S NOT BE HACK ABOUT THIS. LET THE
ADER SEE WHAT'S GOING ON, AND LET YOUR NARRATION ADD EXTRA LAYERS OF CONTEXT.
GOOD, AND WE'RE DEFINITELY SURE SOMEONE IS READING THIS NOW? HELLO, WELCOME TO
E ADVENTURES OF GWEN AND PINK BLOCK. IN TODAY'S EPISODE, PINK BLOCK GETS PUSHY.
SPACE WITH THE WORDS,
WORDS LIKE "HIPPOPAUTOMUS."
US? NO, THAT STILL DOESN'T QUITE
CORRECT SPELLING? OH, WAIT, DID I SPELL
MODERATOR CHARACTER? I DID. OKAY, KEEP
E IT. IT'S TOUCHING ME! MY NARRATION BLOCK IS
EN. KEEP THINKING. SO, UH, WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH
ODY WENT INTO A MEETING AND SAID "YOU KNOW THOSE
WE SELL? WHAT IF WE CUT 'EM UP INTO LITTLE PIECES, LIKE YOU
ND JUST LOVINGLY SPRINKLE THAT ON TOP OF THE POPCORN?" AND
THING IS THAT MULTIPLE PEOPLE RESPONDED TO THAT WITH AN "OH,
WE WILL PUT THE HOT DOGS ON THE POPCORN." LET'S SEE, WHAT ELSE. WHAT
Y, SO, UH, IT'S A GOOD THING THIS MUST BE A MODERN COMIC AFTER THOUGHT
ES BECAME PASSÉ, BECAUSE IF THIS WERE A THOUGHT BUBBLE THEN IT WOULD JUST
LOUD, AND IT WOULD JUST DISSIPATE RIGHT WHEN I TOUCHED IT. OOH, BUT NO, THIS
OLID. IT'S ACTUALLY PUSHING ME. OKAY, GWEN, DON'T GO NARRATING YOUR OWN
. LET'S NOT BE A HACK ABOUT THIS. LET THE READER SEE WHAT'S GOING ON, AND
R NARRATION ADD EXTRA LAYERS OF CONTEXT. OH, GOOD, AND WE'RE DEFINITELY
OMEONE IS READING THIS NOW? HELLO, WELCOME TO THE ADVENTURES OF GWEN
BLOCK. IN TODAY'S EPISODE, PINK BLOCK GETS PUSHY. ULP, WELL, WE'RE STILL
G. I SUPPOSE NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO THINK OF WHAT MY END GAME IS HERE.
O GRAB THIS THING? CAN I PLUCK IT OUT OF THE AIR AND SHOW SOMEONE?
GWEN. YOUR SCRIBBLED RAMBLINGS ALL OVER IT CONCERN ME." MAYBE I CAN
ONE OF THOSE COMIC PEOPLE DAD SET ME UP THAT BRUNCH WITH? MAYBE
ME KIND OF COMIC BOOK SECRET, LIKE "AH YES. YOU HAVE DISCOVERED THE
EPTION OF REALITY. YOU SEE WE ARE NOT JUST MAKING UP MUSCLE MEN
SELL EVERY MONTH FOR POWER-FANTASY-CRAVING FANS, BUT WE ARE EXPRESSING
TIME AND SPACE, AND HOW IT TRULY EXISTS, AS MERELY PANELS AND PAGES. IF
N LEARNING MORE ABOUT IT, JUST GO DOWN TO KATHMANDU AND WAIT A BIT, SOME
ATOR GOD TYPES WILL PICK YOU UP AND SHOW YOU THE WHOLE THING--
CRACK

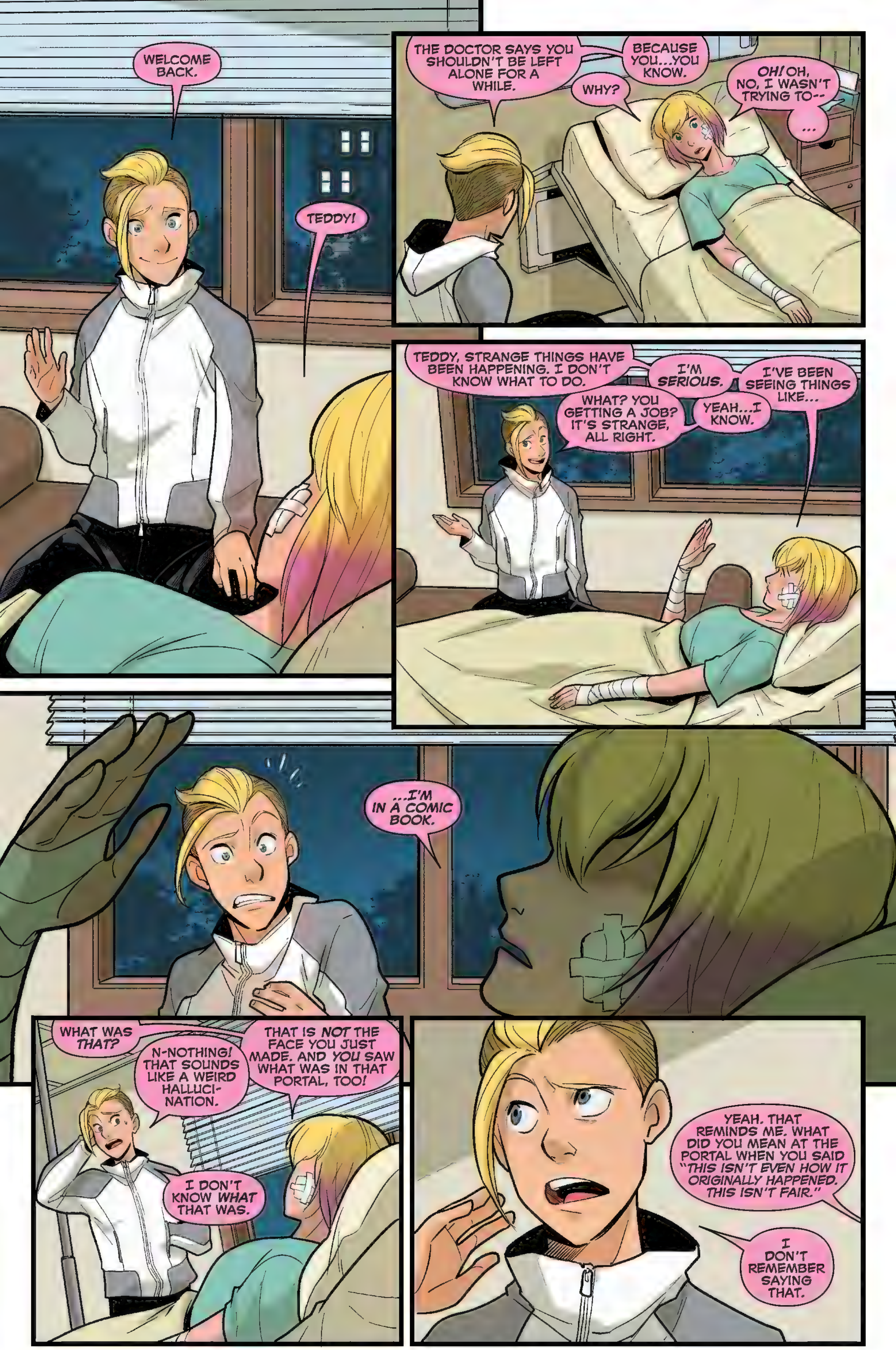

CRASH

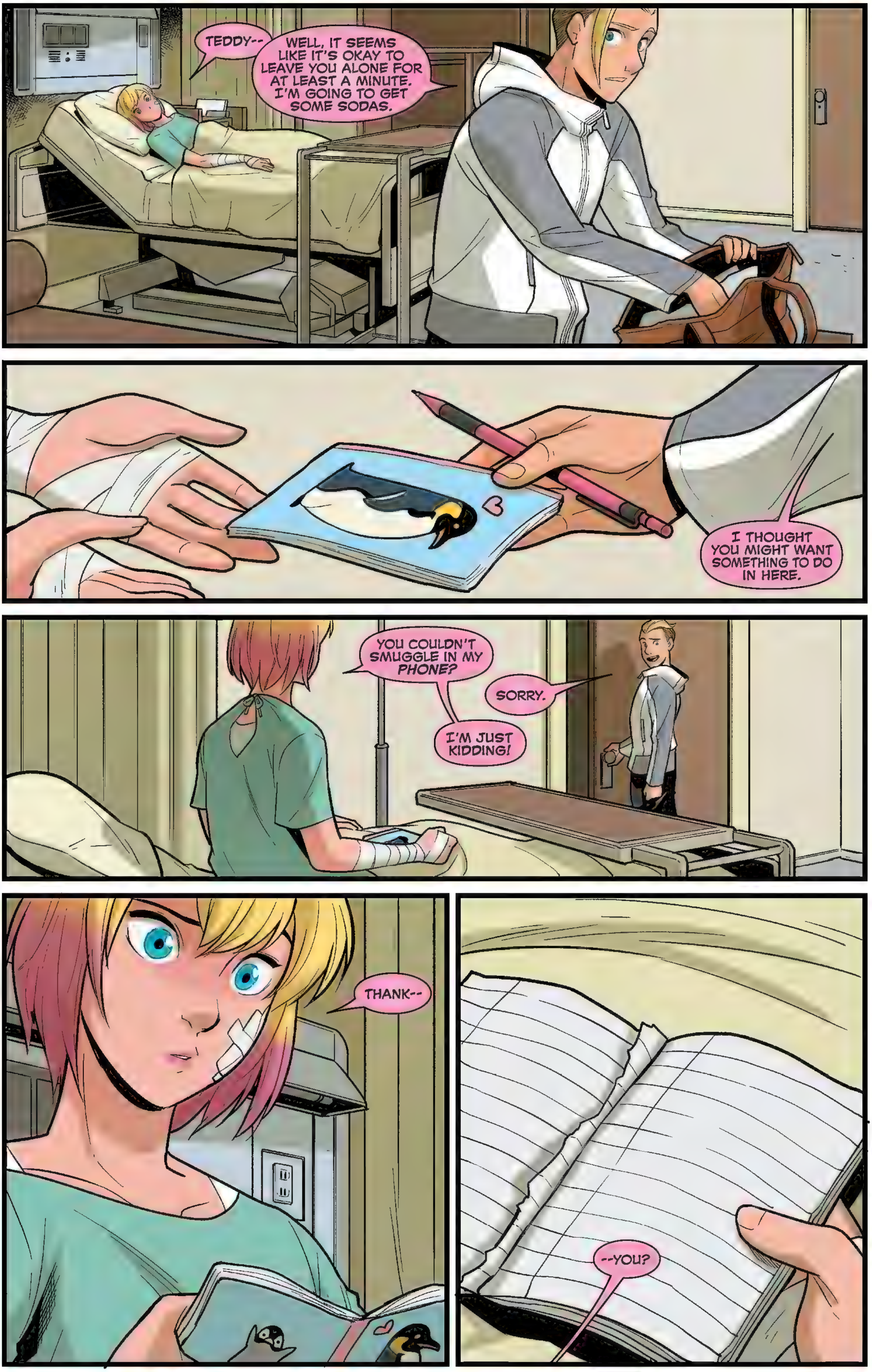

THUD
HEH...
SCIENCE.
WHMP
GWEN?!
GWEN!!!

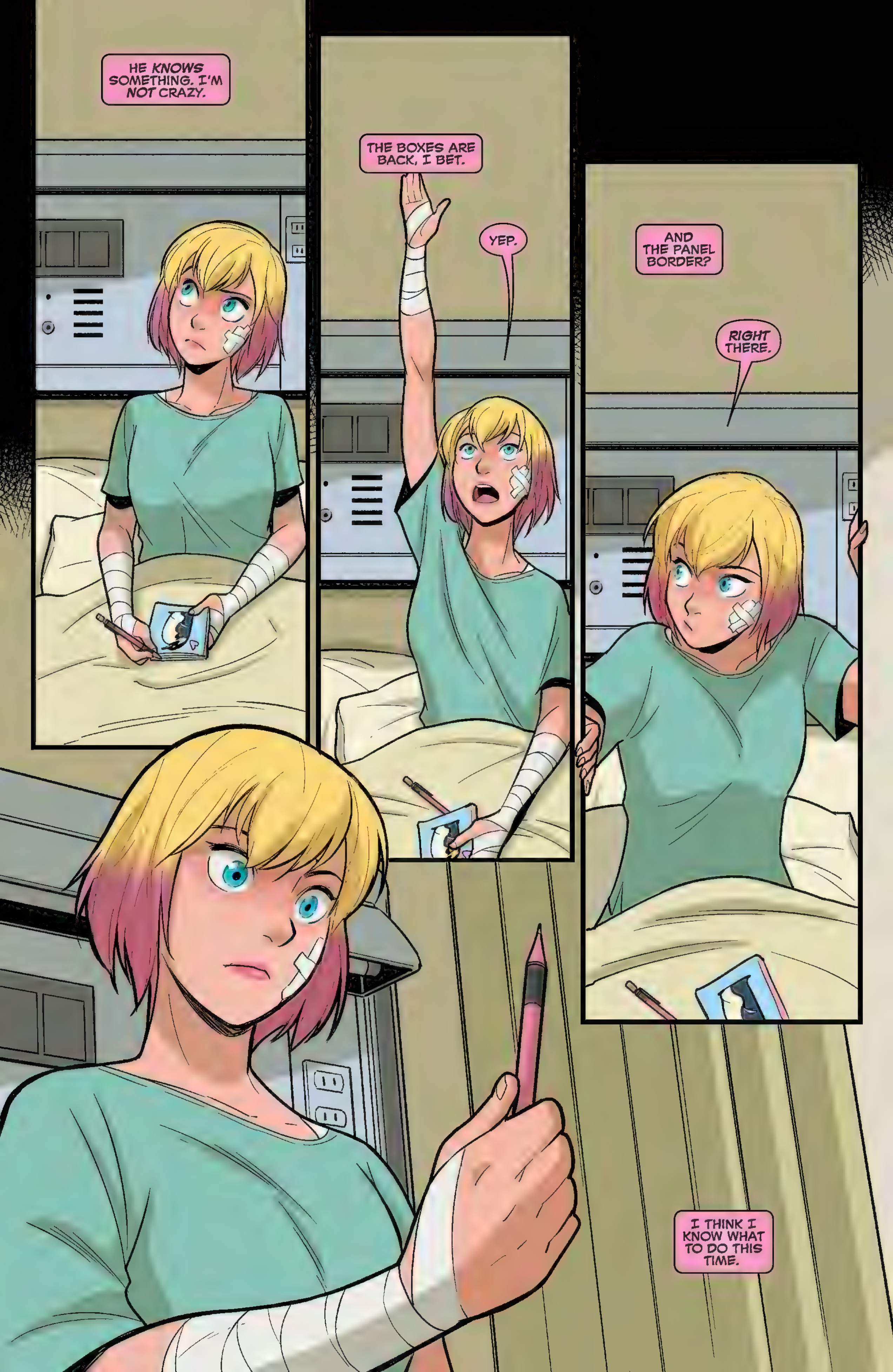

...BUT SHE'S FINALLY *DOING* SOMETHING FOR HERSELF.

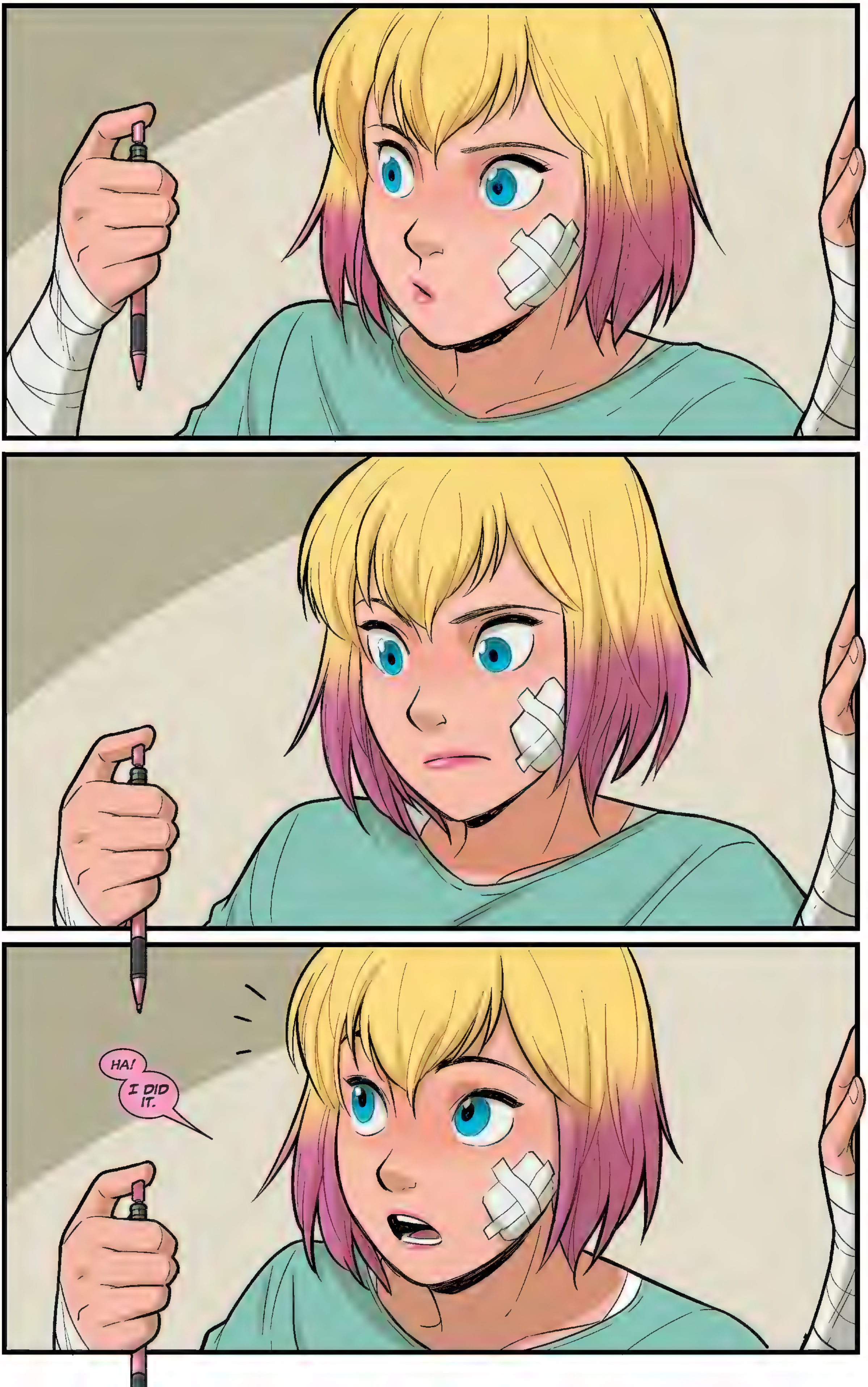

I DON'T KNOW WHY SHE WOULD THROW HERSELF OUT THE WINDOW. IT MUST HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT.
IT MAY HAVE BEEN, BUT UNTIL WE'RE SURE, THERE ARE STEPS WE NEED TO TAKE...

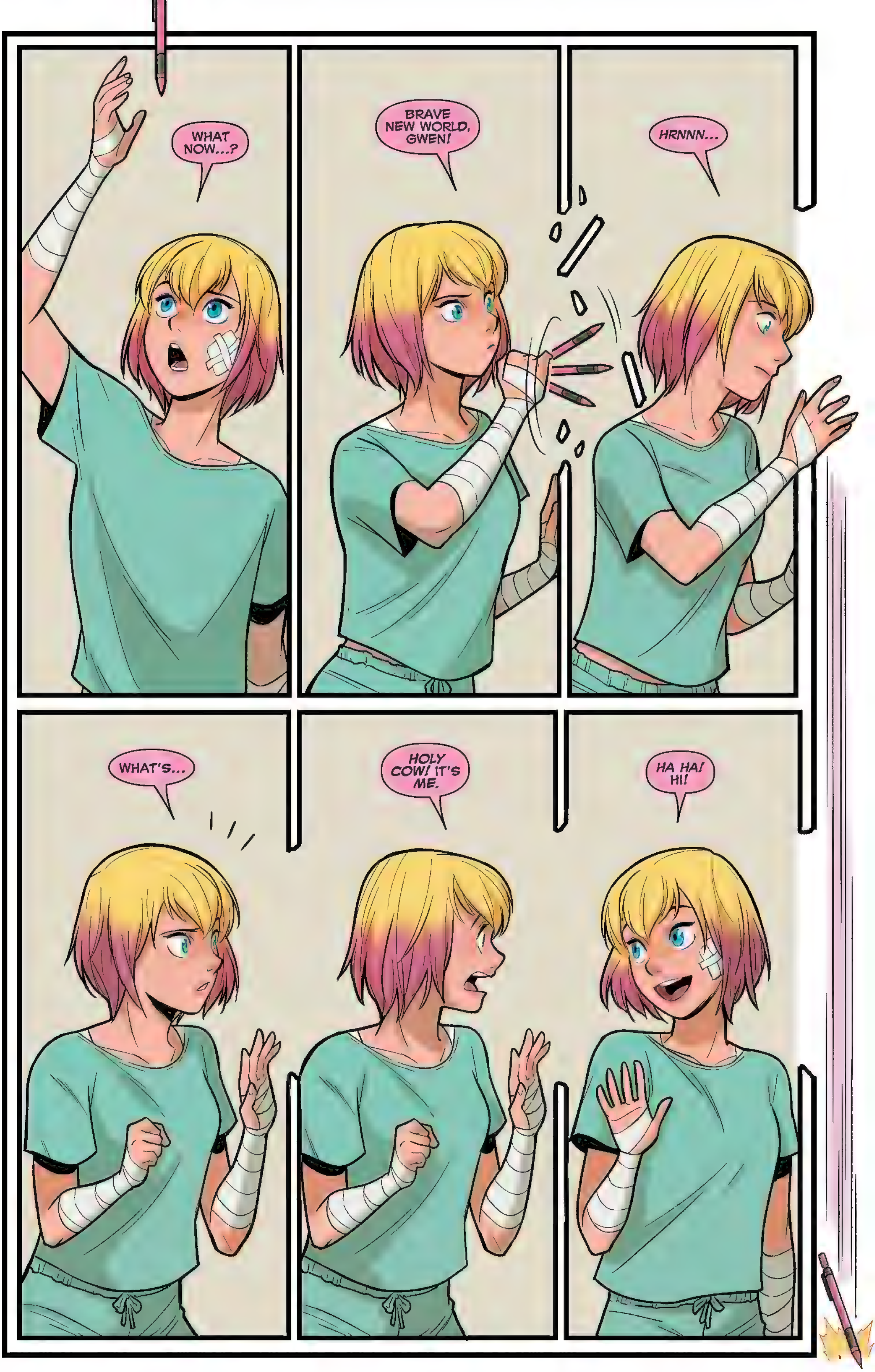

...FOR HER OWN WELL-BEING.

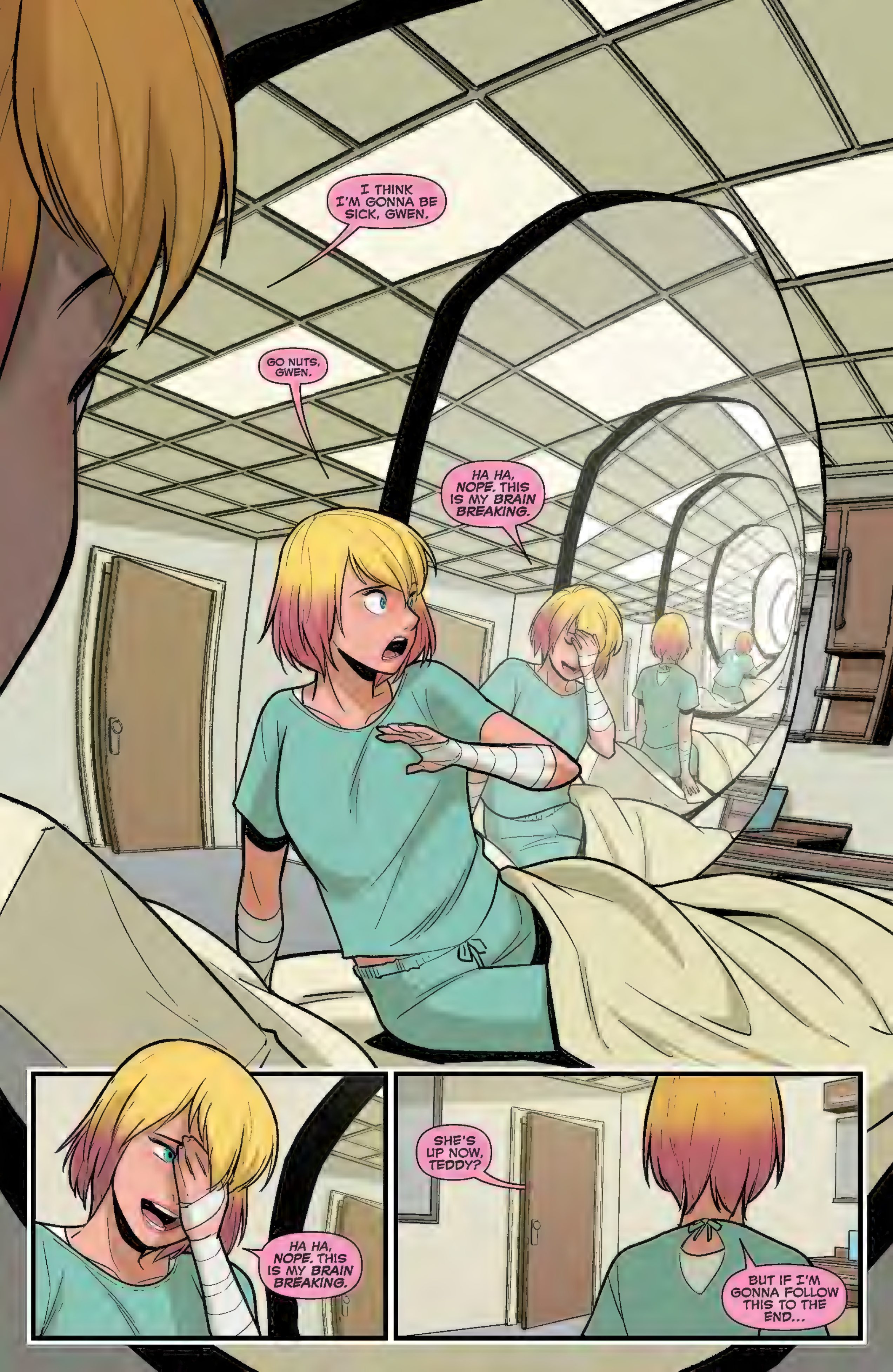

WELCOME BACK.
TEDDY!
THE DOCTOR SAYS YOU SHOULDN'T BE LEFT ALONE FOR A WHILE.
WHY?
BECAUSE YOU...YOU KNOW.
OH! OH, NO, I WASN'T TRYING TO--
...
TEDDY, STRANGE THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
WHAT? YOU GETTING A JOB? IT'S STRANGE, ALL RIGHT.
I'M *SERIOUS.*
YEAH...I KNOW.
I'VE BEEN SEEING THINGS LIKE...
...I'M IN A COMIC BOOK.
WHAT WAS *THAT?*
N-NOTHING! THAT SOUNDS LIKE A WEIRD HALLUCINATION.
THAT IS *NOT* THE FACE YOU JUST MADE. AND *YOU* SAW WHAT WAS IN THAT PORTAL, TOO!
I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* THAT WAS.
YEAH. THAT REMINDS ME. WHAT DID YOU MEAN AT THE PORTAL WHEN YOU SAID *"THIS ISN'T EVEN HOW IT ORIGINALLY HAPPENED. THIS ISN'T FAIR."*
I DON'T REMEMBER SAYING THAT.

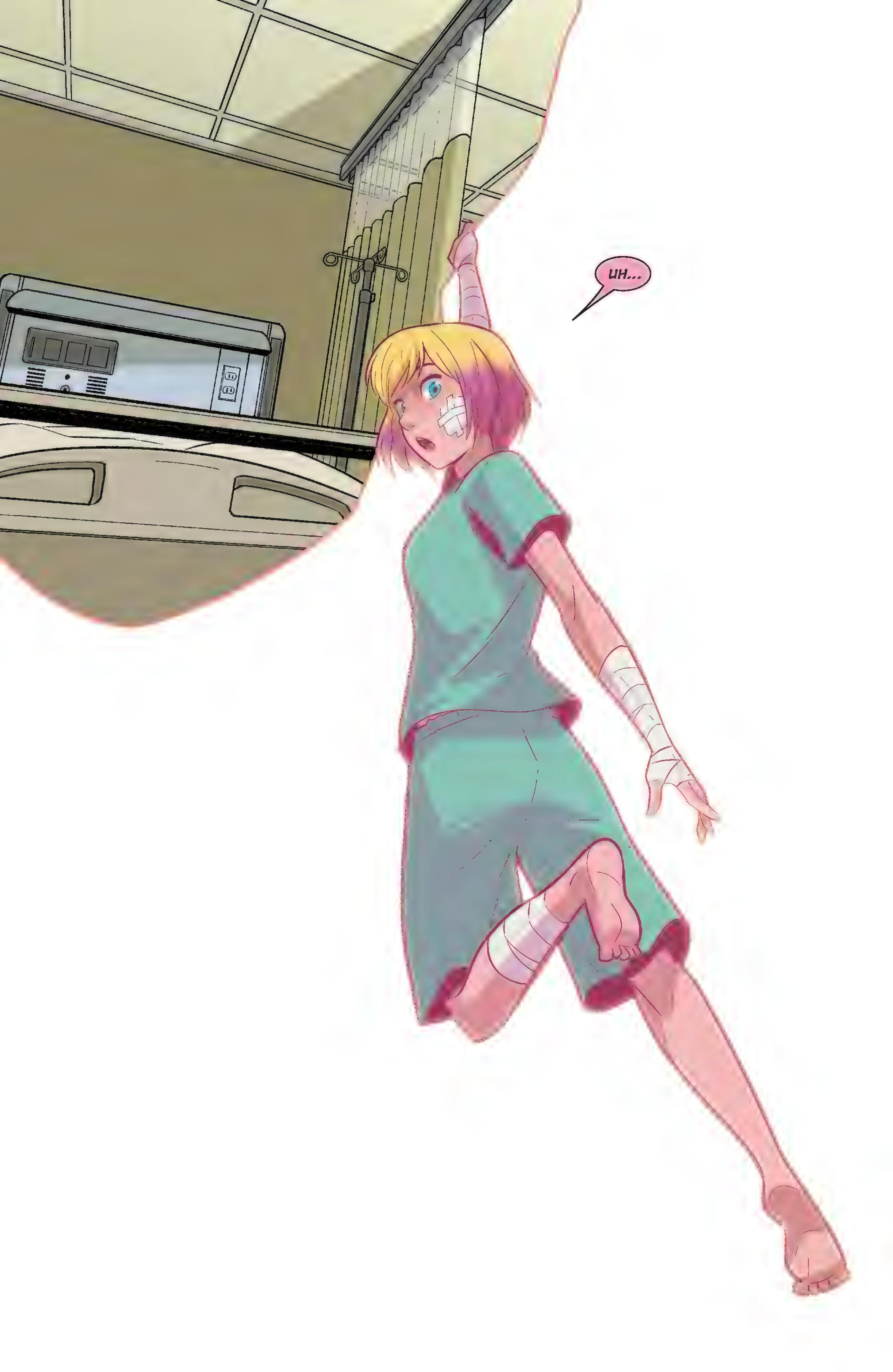

TEDDY--
WELL, IT SEEMS LIKE IT'S OKAY TO LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR AT LEAST A MINUTE. I'M GOING TO GET SOME SODAS.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT SOMETHING TO DO IN HERE.
YOU COULDN'T SMUGGLE IN MY *PHONE?*
SORRY.
I'M JUST KIDDING!
THANK--
--YOU?

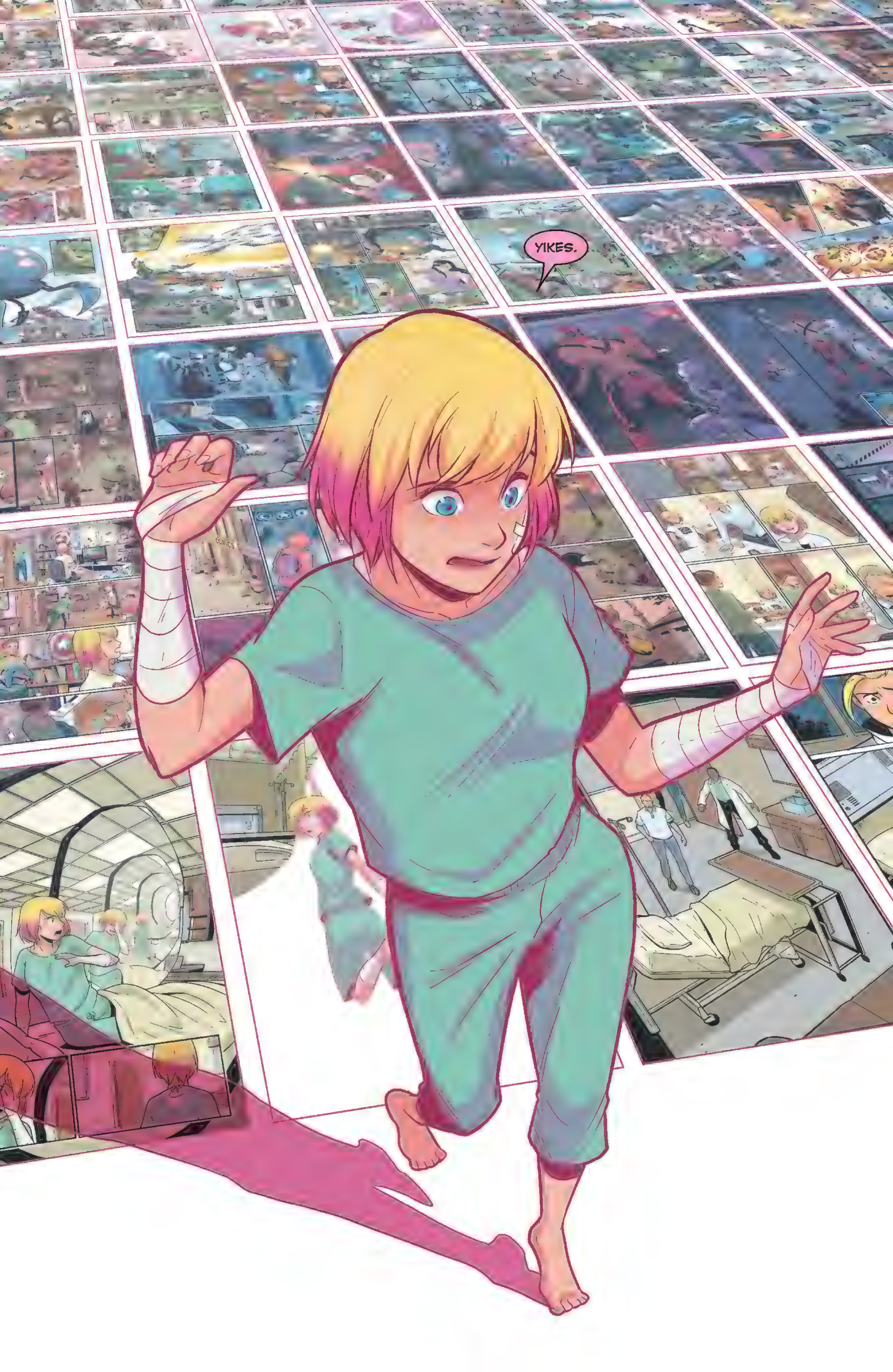

HE *KNOWS* SOMETHING. I'M *NOT* CRAZY.
THE BOXES ARE BACK, I BET.
YEP.
AND THE PANEL BORDER?
RIGHT THERE.
I THINK I KNOW WHAT TO DO THIS TIME.


HA! I DID IT.


WHAT NOW...?
BRAVE NEW WORLD, GWEN!
HRNNN...
WHAT'S...
HOLY COW! IT'S ME.
HA HA! HI!


I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK, GWEN.
GO NUTS, GWEN.
HA HA, *NOPE.* THIS IS MY *BRAIN BREAKING.*
HA HA, *NOPE.* THIS IS MY *BRAIN BREAKING.*
SHE'S UP NOW, TEDDY?
BUT IF I'M GONNA FOLLOW THIS TO THE END...


UH...


YIKES.

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #18

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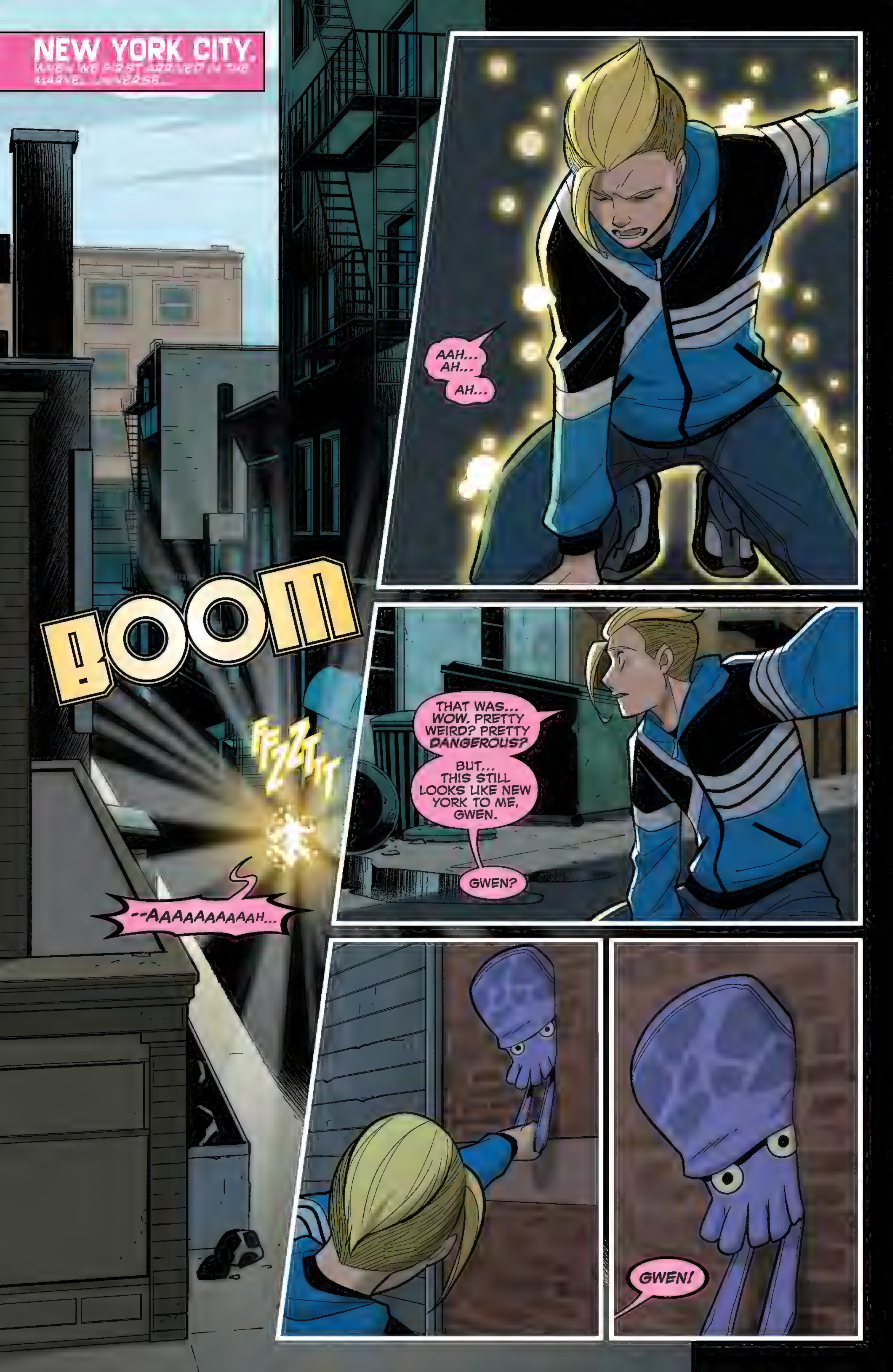
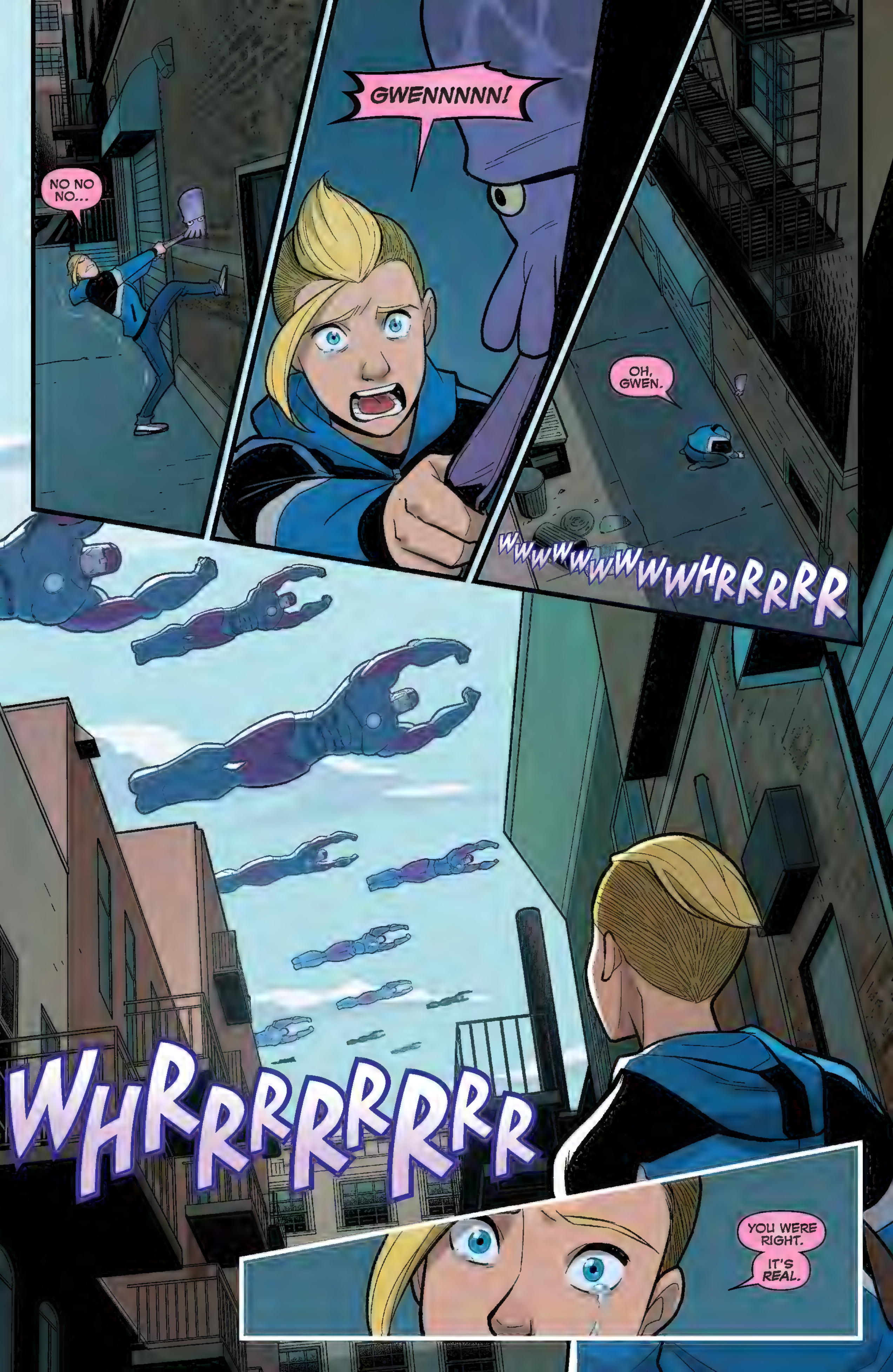
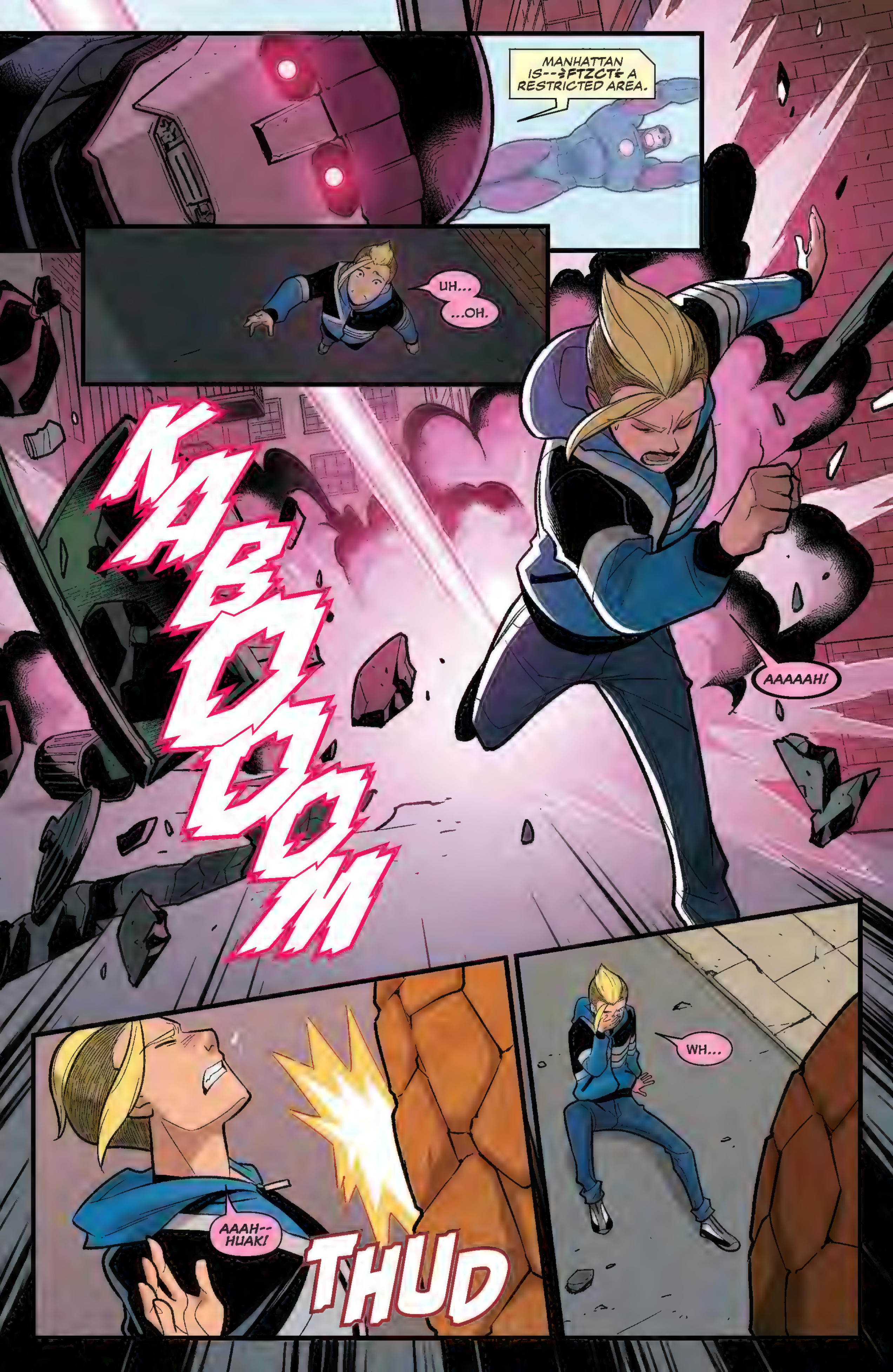
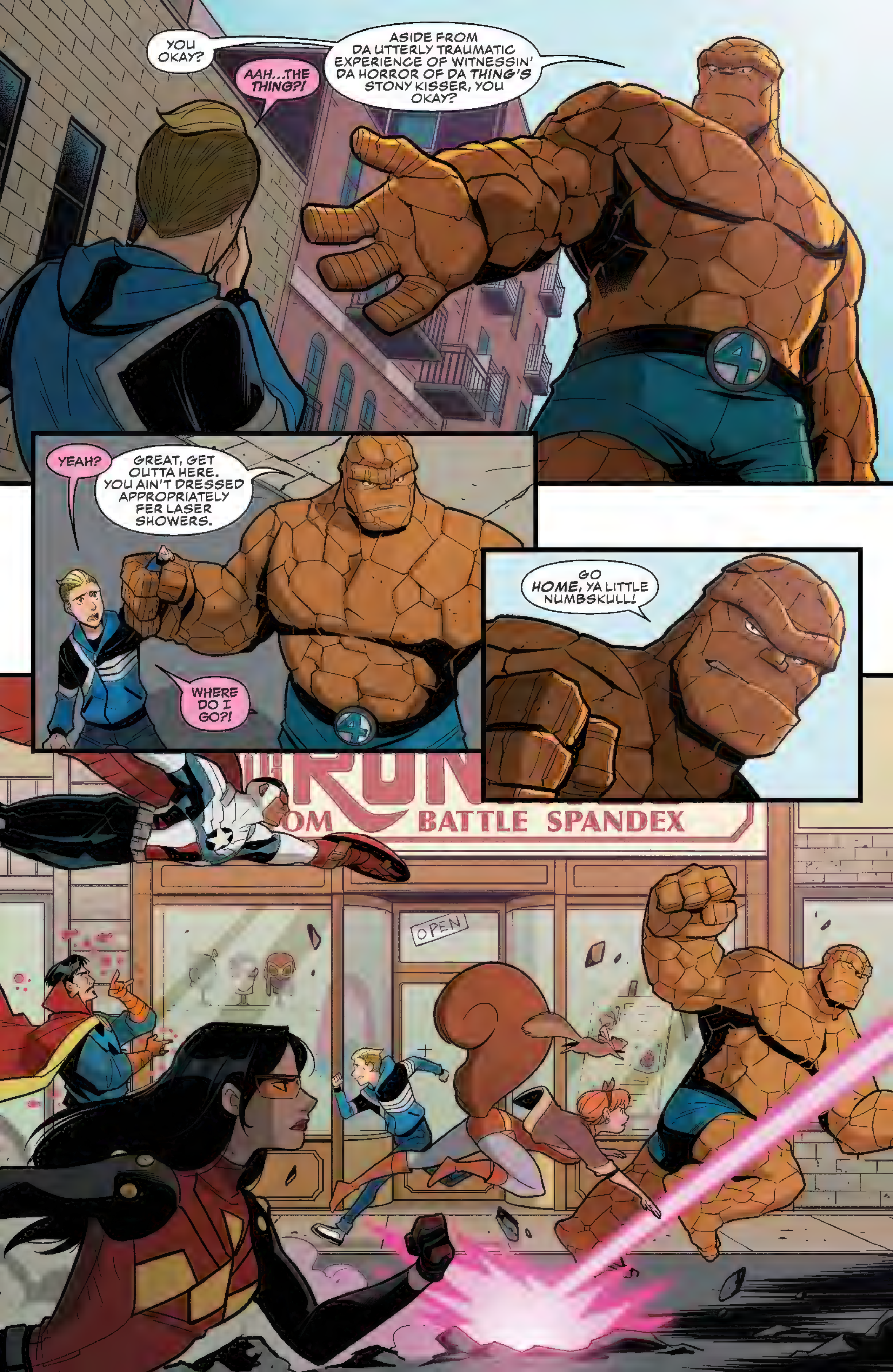
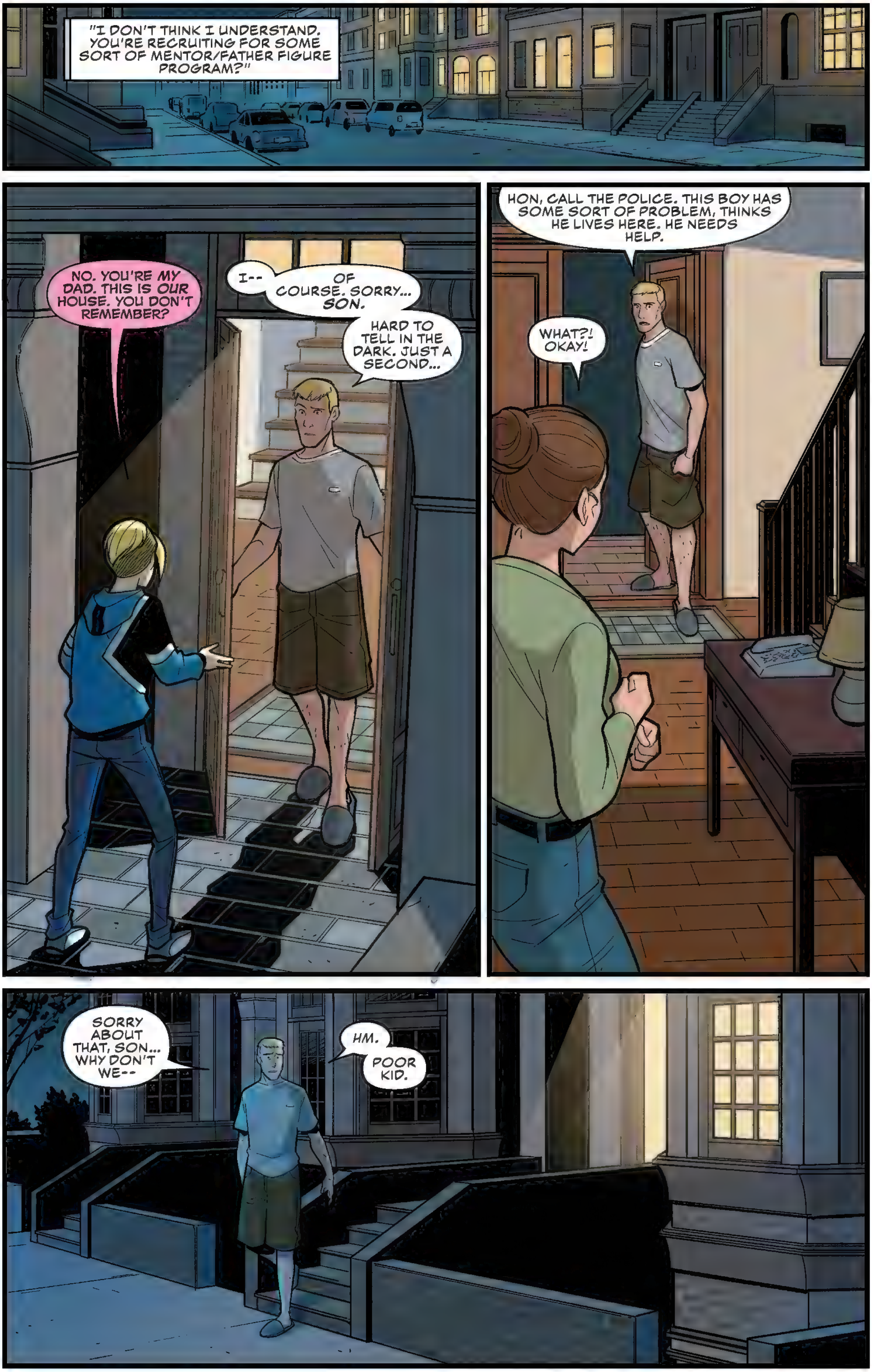
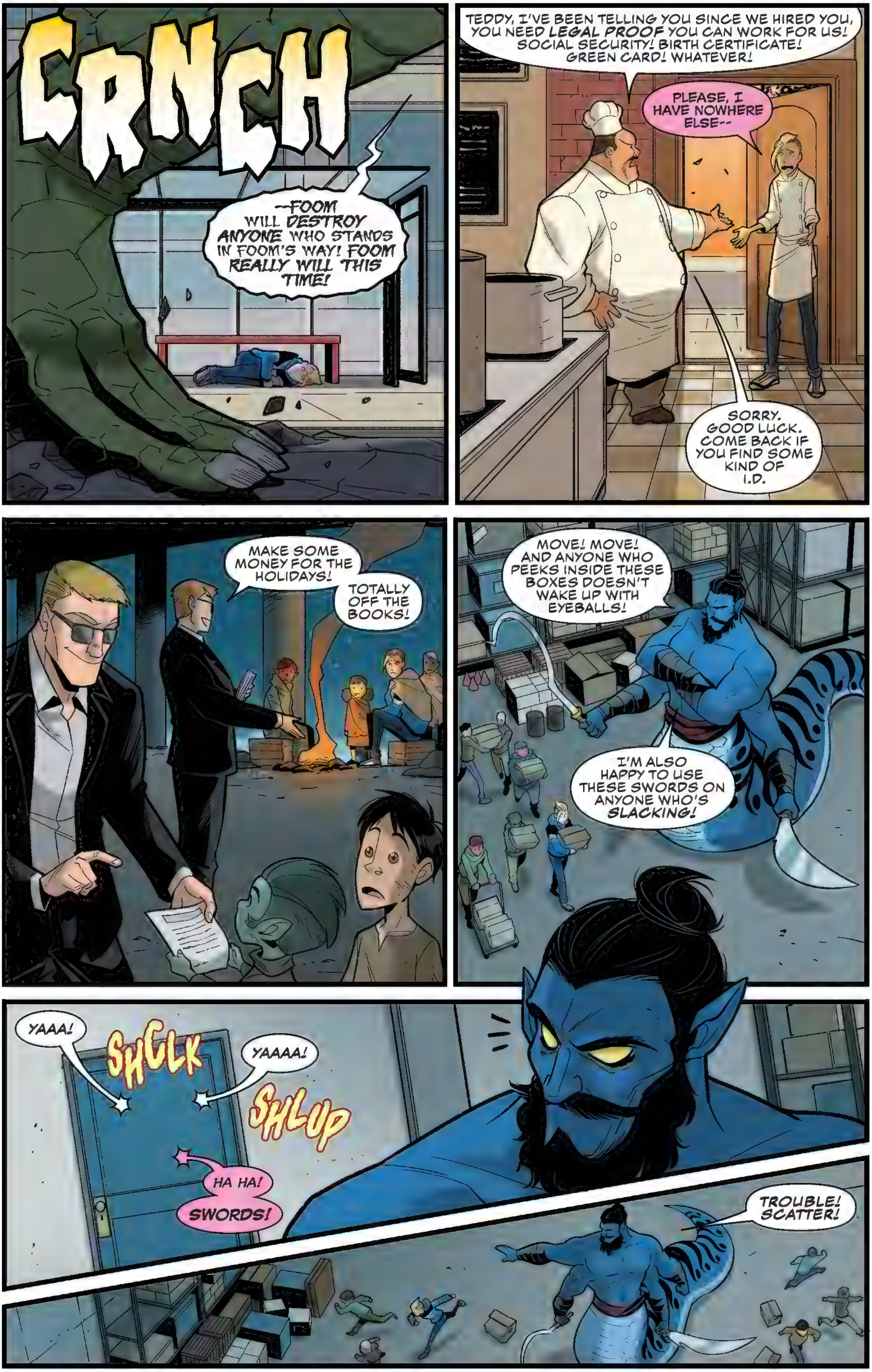

NEW YORK CITY.
WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE...
AAH... AH... AH...
BOOM
FFZZTTT
--AAAAAAAAAAH...
THAT WAS... WOW. PRETTY WEIRD? PRETTY DANGEROUS?
BUT... THIS STILL LOOKS LIKE NEW YORK TO ME, GWEN.
GWEN?
GWEN!

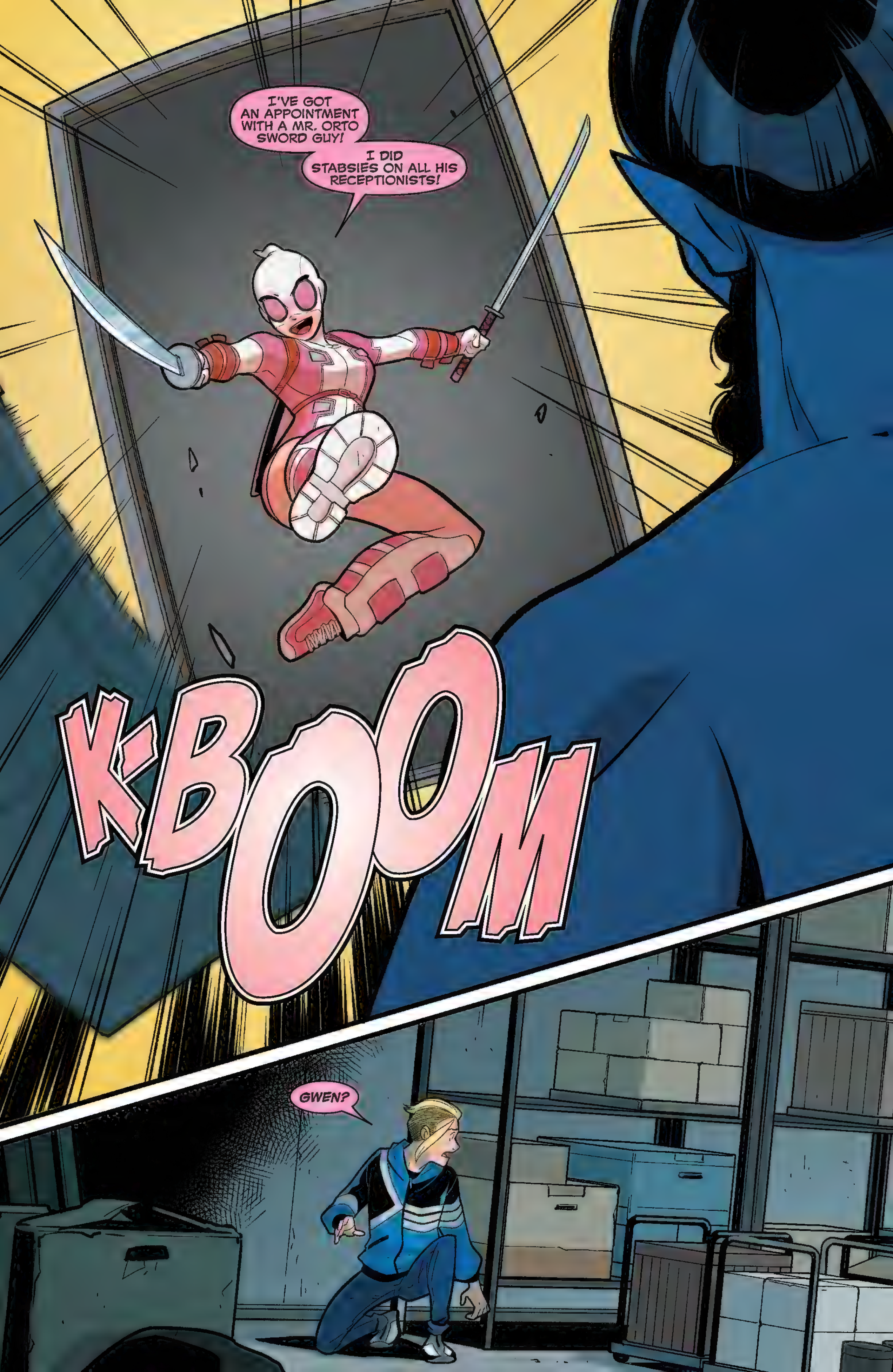

NO NO NO...
GWENNNNN!
OH, GWEN.
WWWWWWWWWWHRRRRRR
WHRRRRRRRR
YOU WERE RIGHT.
IT'S REAL.

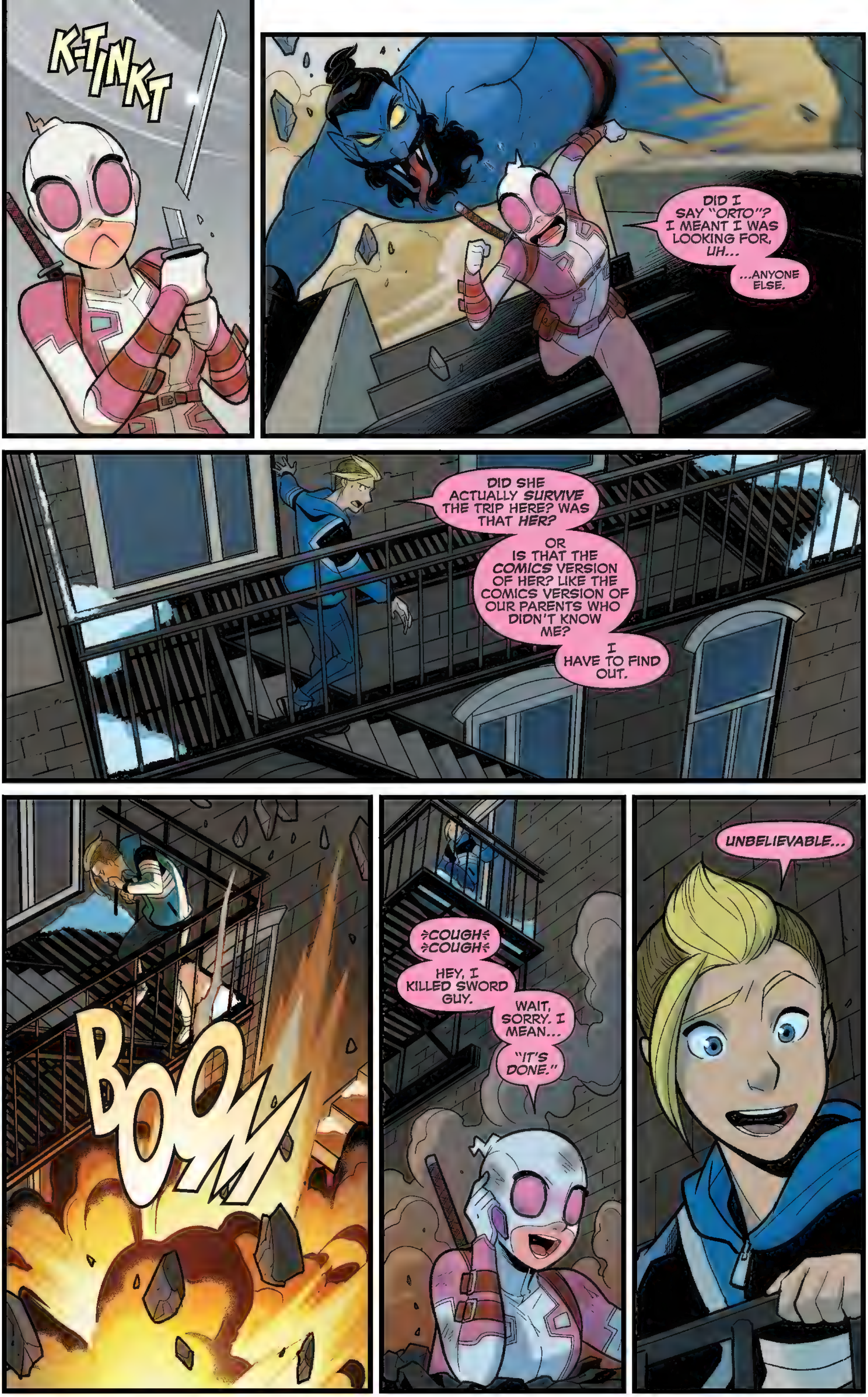

MANHATTAN IS--⫸FTZCT⫷ A RESTRICTED AREA.
UH...
...OH.
KABOOOM
AAAAAH!
AAAH--HUAK!
THUD
WH...

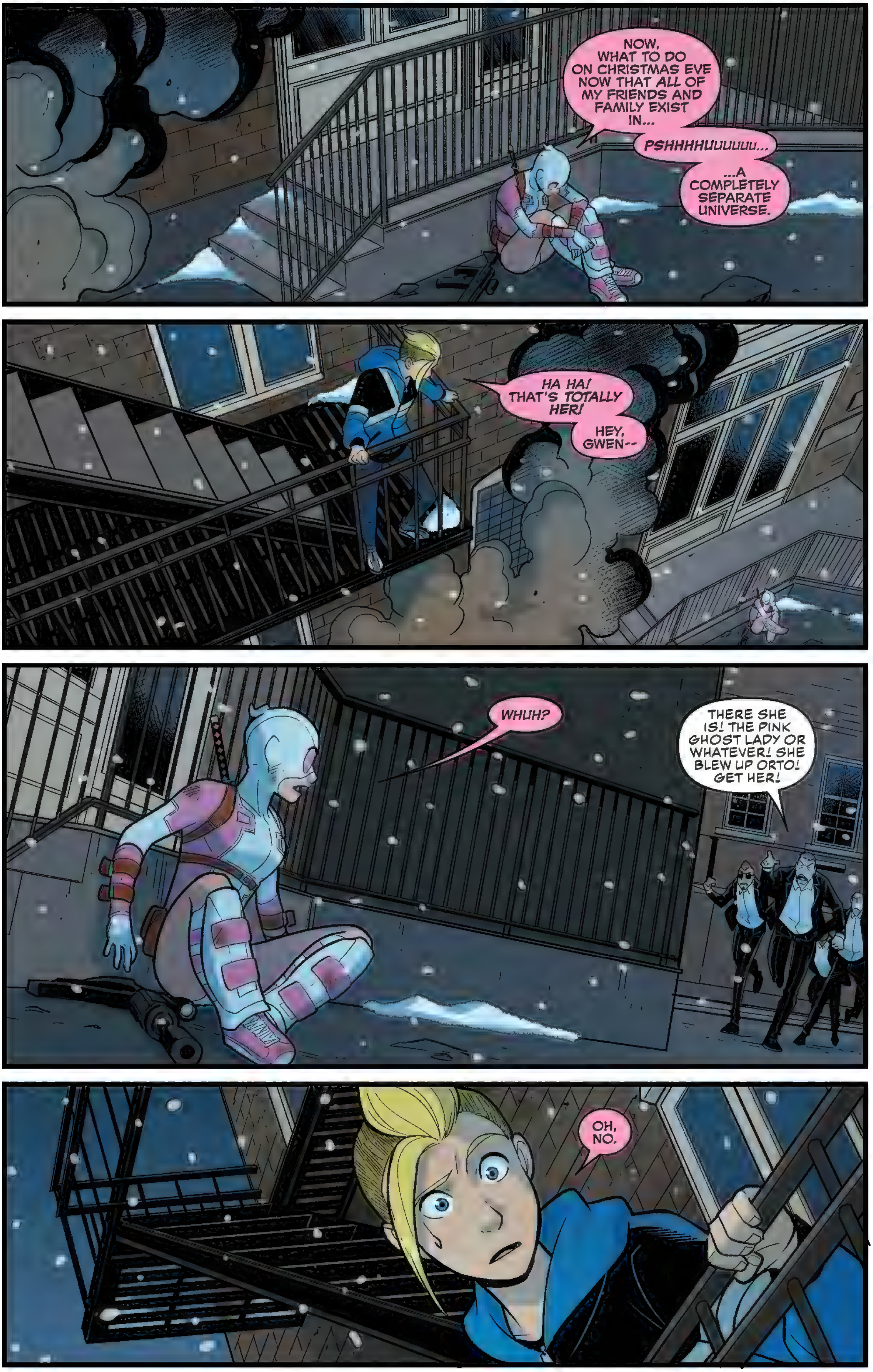

YOU OKAY?
AAH...THE *THING*?!
ASIDE FROM DA UTTERLY TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF WITNESSIN' DA HORROR OF DA *THING'S* STONY KISSER, YOU OKAY?
YEAH?
GREAT, GET OUTTA HERE. YOU AIN'T DRESSED APPROPRIATELY FER LASER SHOWERS.
WHERE DO I GO?!
GO *HOME*, YA LITTLE NUMBSKULL!
RON
OM BATTLE SPANDEX
OPEN

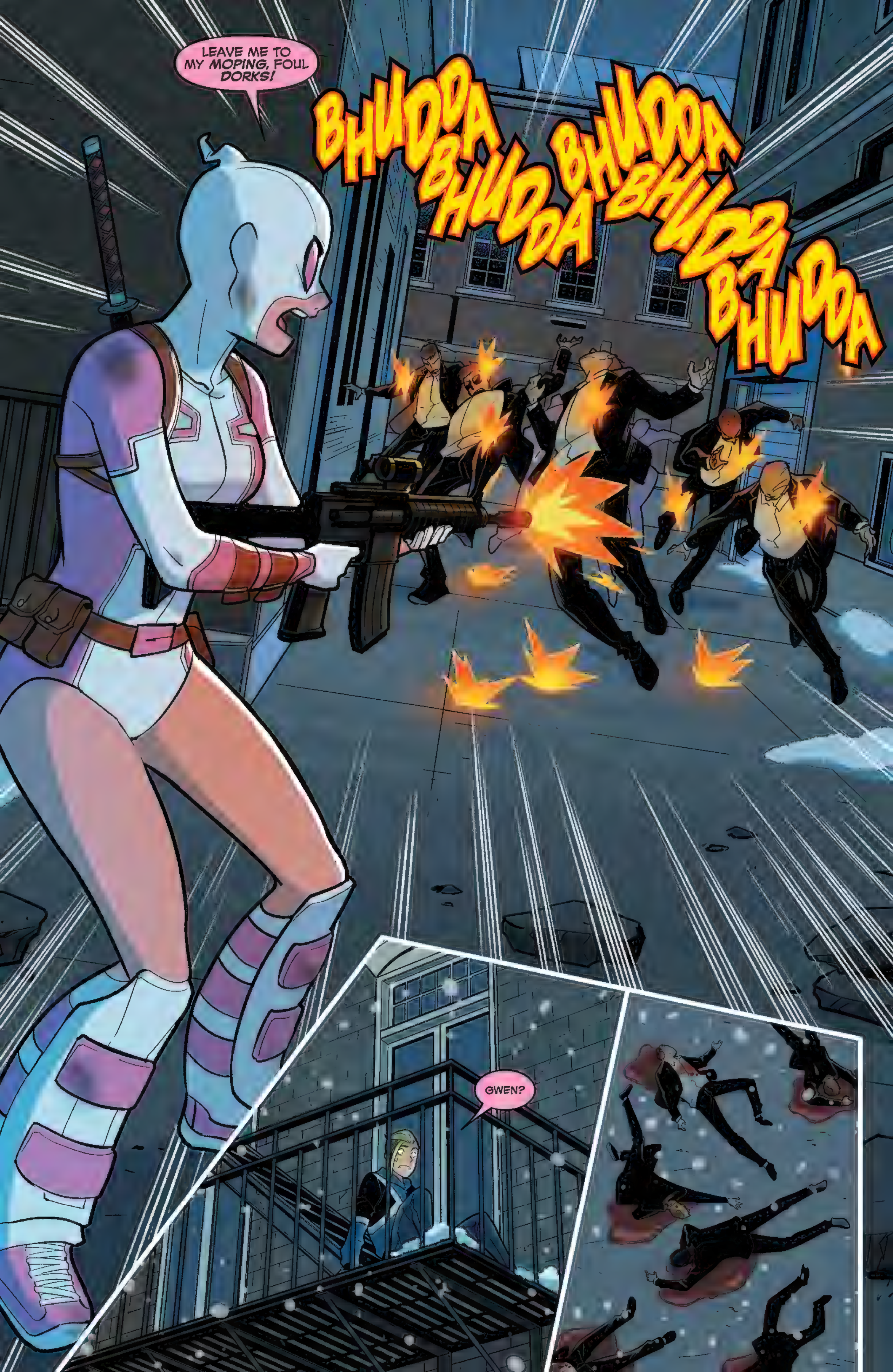

"I DON'T THINK I UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE RECRUITING FOR SOME SORT OF MENTOR/FATHER FIGURE PROGRAM?"
NO. YOU'RE MY DAD. THIS IS OUR HOUSE. YOU DON'T REMEMBER?
I--
OF COURSE. SORRY... SON.
HARD TO TELL IN THE DARK. JUST A SECOND...
HON, CALL THE POLICE. THIS BOY HAS SOME SORT OF PROBLEM, THINKS HE LIVES HERE. HE NEEDS HELP.
WHAT?! OKAY!
SORRY ABOUT THAT, SON... WHY DON'T WE--
HM.
POOR KID.

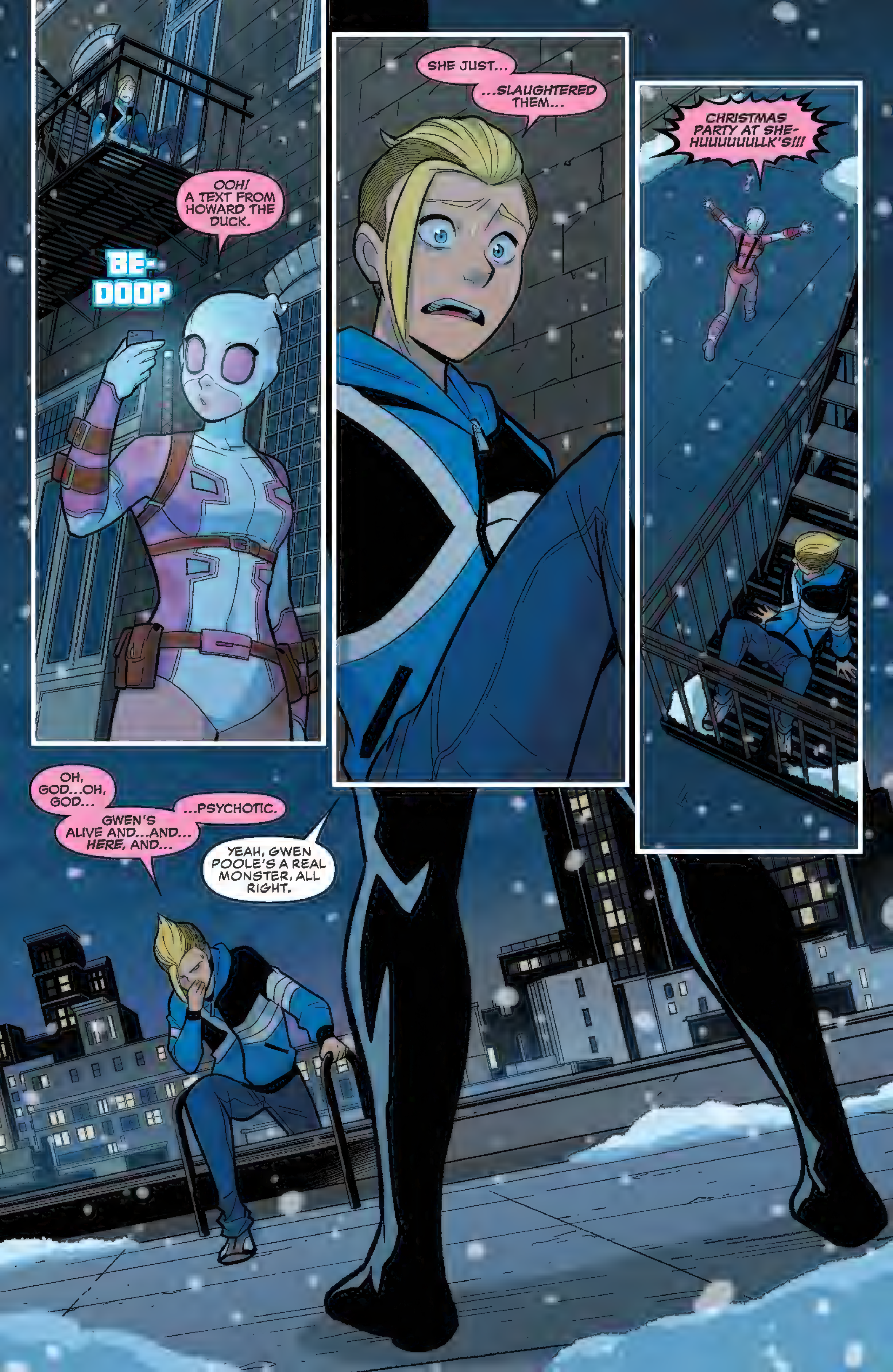

CRNCH
--FOOM WILL DESTROY ANYONE WHO STANDS IN FOOM'S WAY! FOOM REALLY WILL THIS TIME!
TEDDY, I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU SINCE WE HIRED YOU, YOU NEED LEGAL PROOF YOU CAN WORK FOR US! SOCIAL SECURITY! BIRTH CERTIFICATE! GREEN CARD! WHATEVER!
PLEASE, I HAVE NOWHERE ELSE--
SORRY. GOOD LUCK. COME BACK IF YOU FIND SOME KIND OF I.D.
MAKE SOME MONEY FOR THE HOLIDAYS!
TOTALLY OFF THE BOOKS!
MOVE! MOVE! AND ANYONE WHO PEEKS INSIDE THESE BOXES DOESN'T WAKE UP WITH EYEBALLS!
I'M ALSO HAPPY TO USE THESE SWORDS ON ANYONE WHO'S SLACKING!
YAAA!
SHCLK
YAAAA!
SHLUP
HA HA! SWORDS!
TROUBLE! SCATTER!

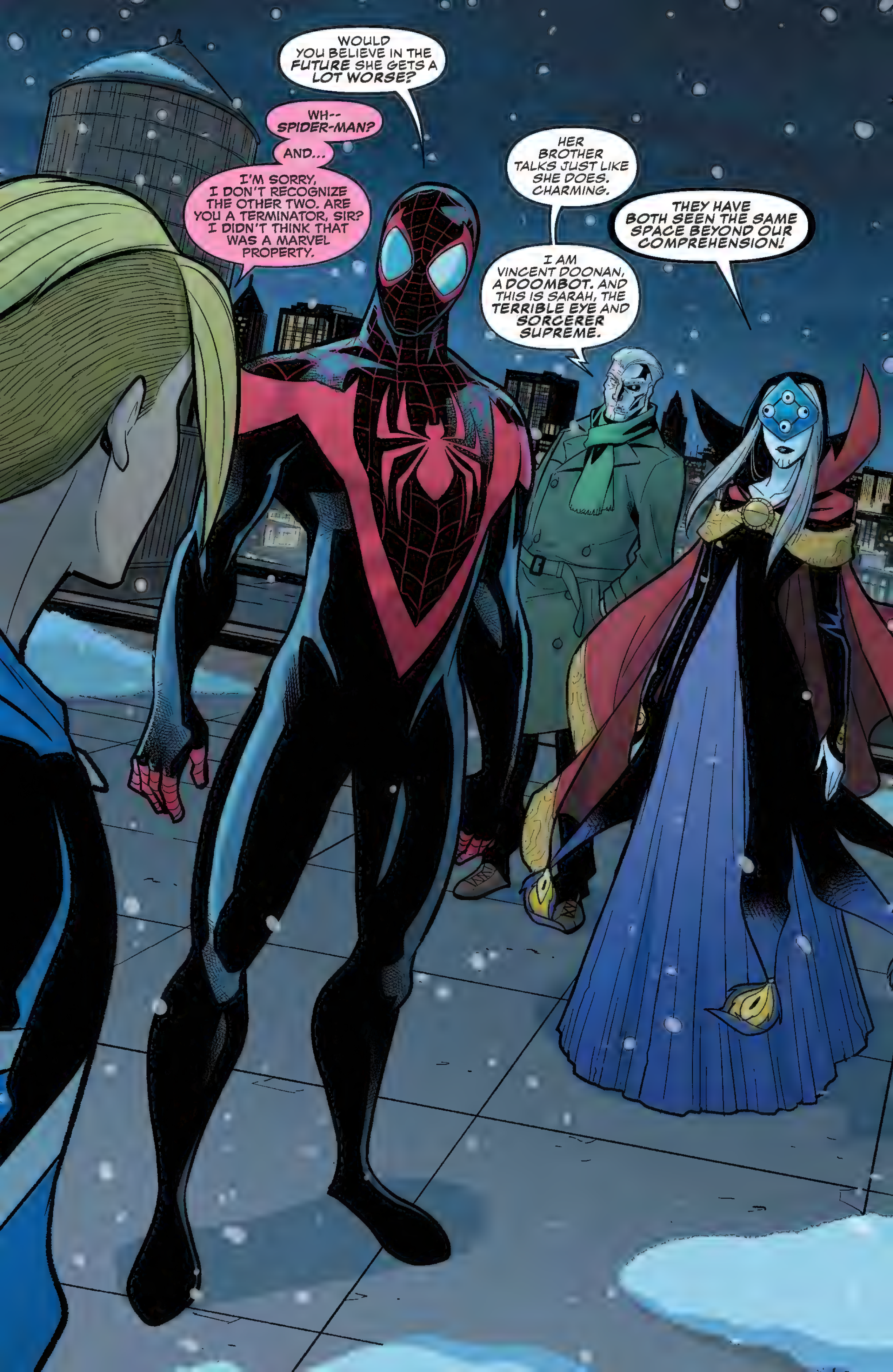

I'VE GOT AN APPOINTMENT WITH A MR. ORTO SWORD GUY!
I DID STABSIES ON ALL HIS RECEPTIONISTS!
K-BOOM
GWEN?

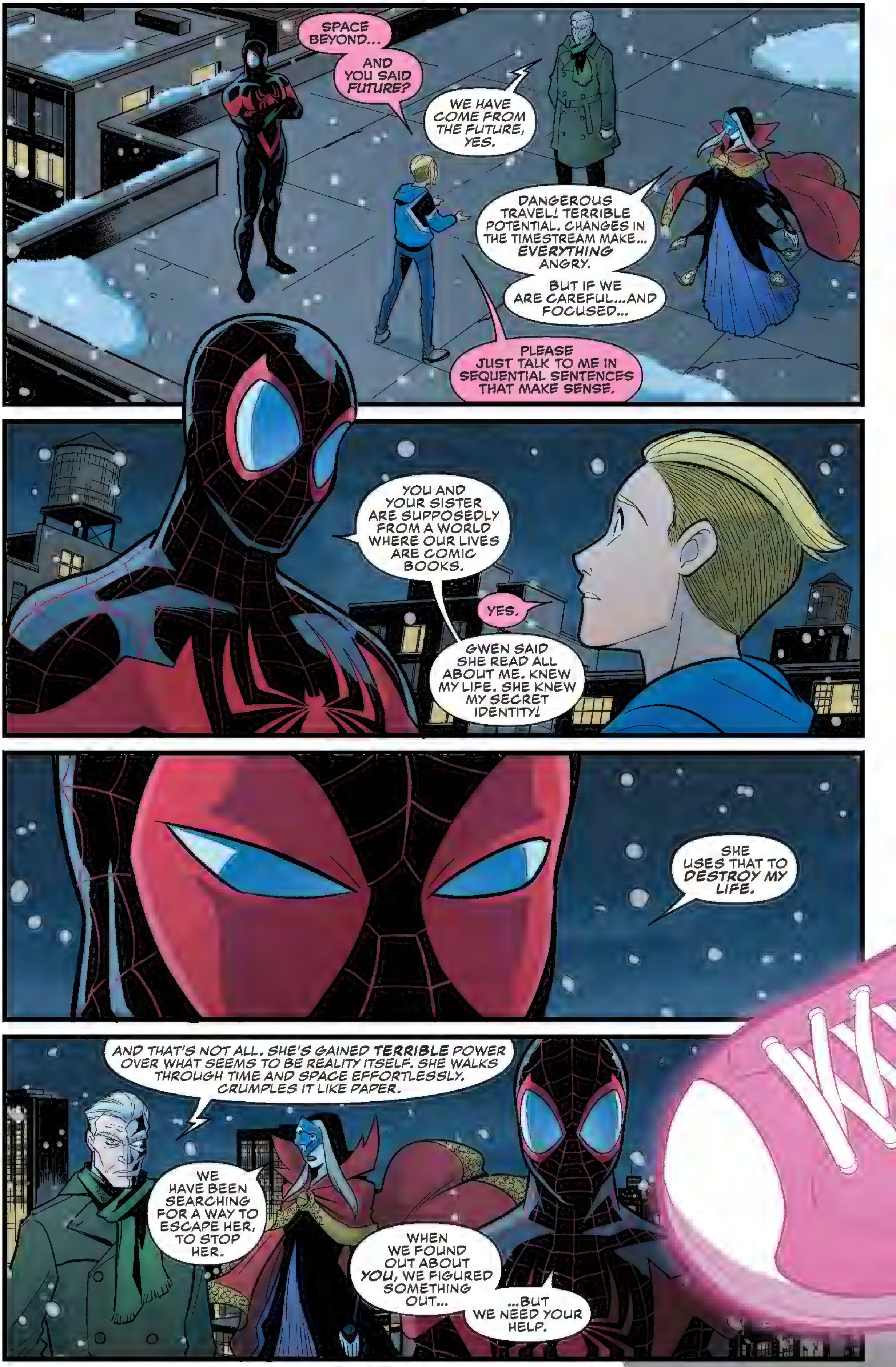

K-TINKT
DID I SAY "*ORTO*"? I MEANT I WAS LOOKING FOR, *UH...*
...ANYONE ELSE.
DID SHE ACTUALLY *SURVIVE* THE TRIP HERE? WAS THAT *HER?*
OR IS THAT THE *COMICS* VERSION OF HER? LIKE THE COMICS VERSION OF OUR PARENTS WHO DIDN'T KNOW ME?
I HAVE TO FIND OUT.
BOOM
COUGH *COUGH*
HEY, I KILLED SWORD GUY.
WAIT, SORRY. I MEAN...
"IT'S DONE."
UNBELIEVABLE...

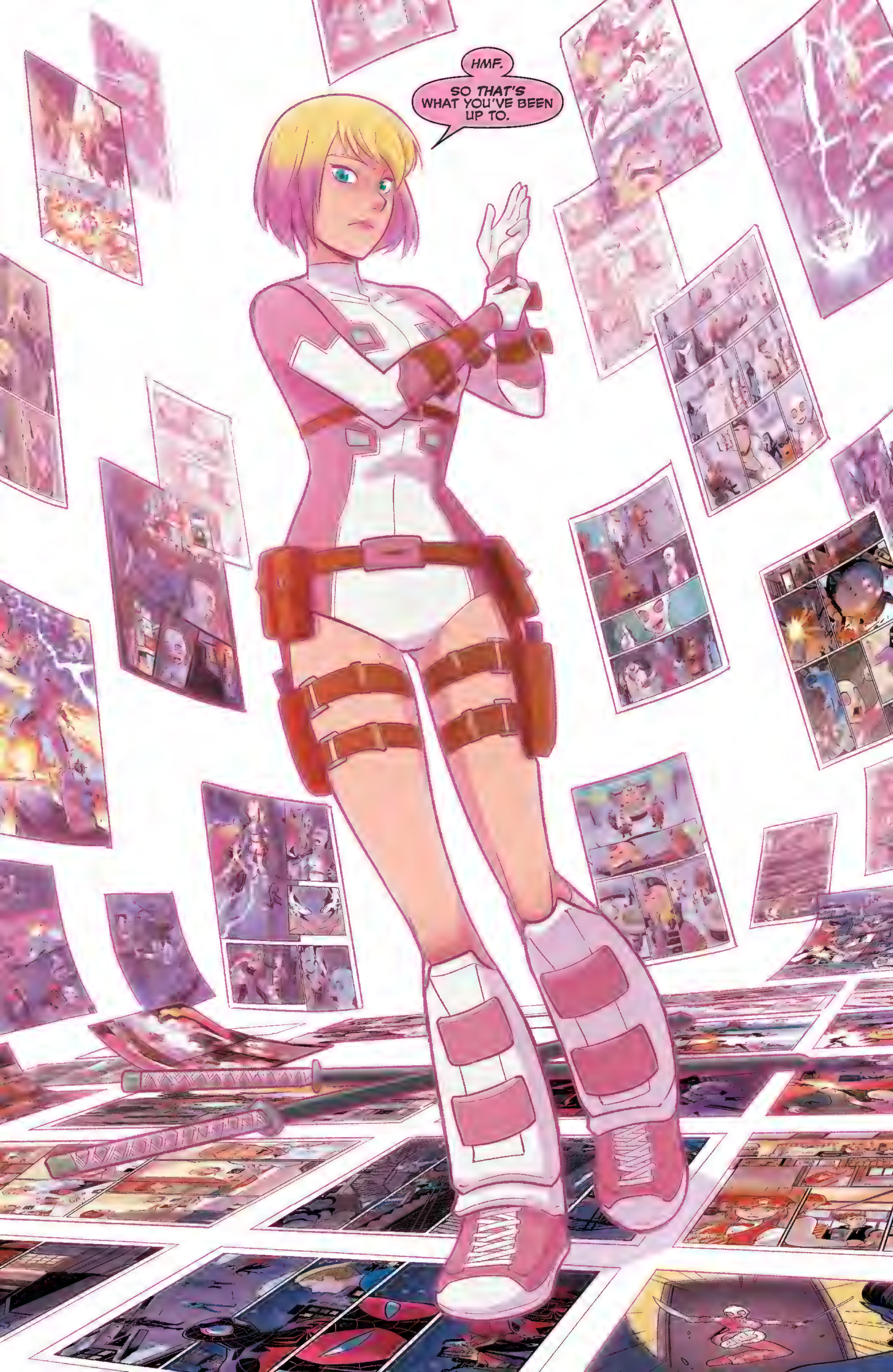

NOW, WHAT TO DO ON CHRISTMAS EVE NOW THAT *ALL* OF MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY EXIST IN...
PSHHHHUUUUUU...
...A COMPLETELY SEPARATE UNIVERSE.
HA HA! THAT'S *TOTALLY* HER!
HEY, GWEN--
WHUH?
THERE SHE IS! THE PINK GHOST LADY OR WHATEVER! SHE BLEW UP ORTO! GET HER!
OH, NO.

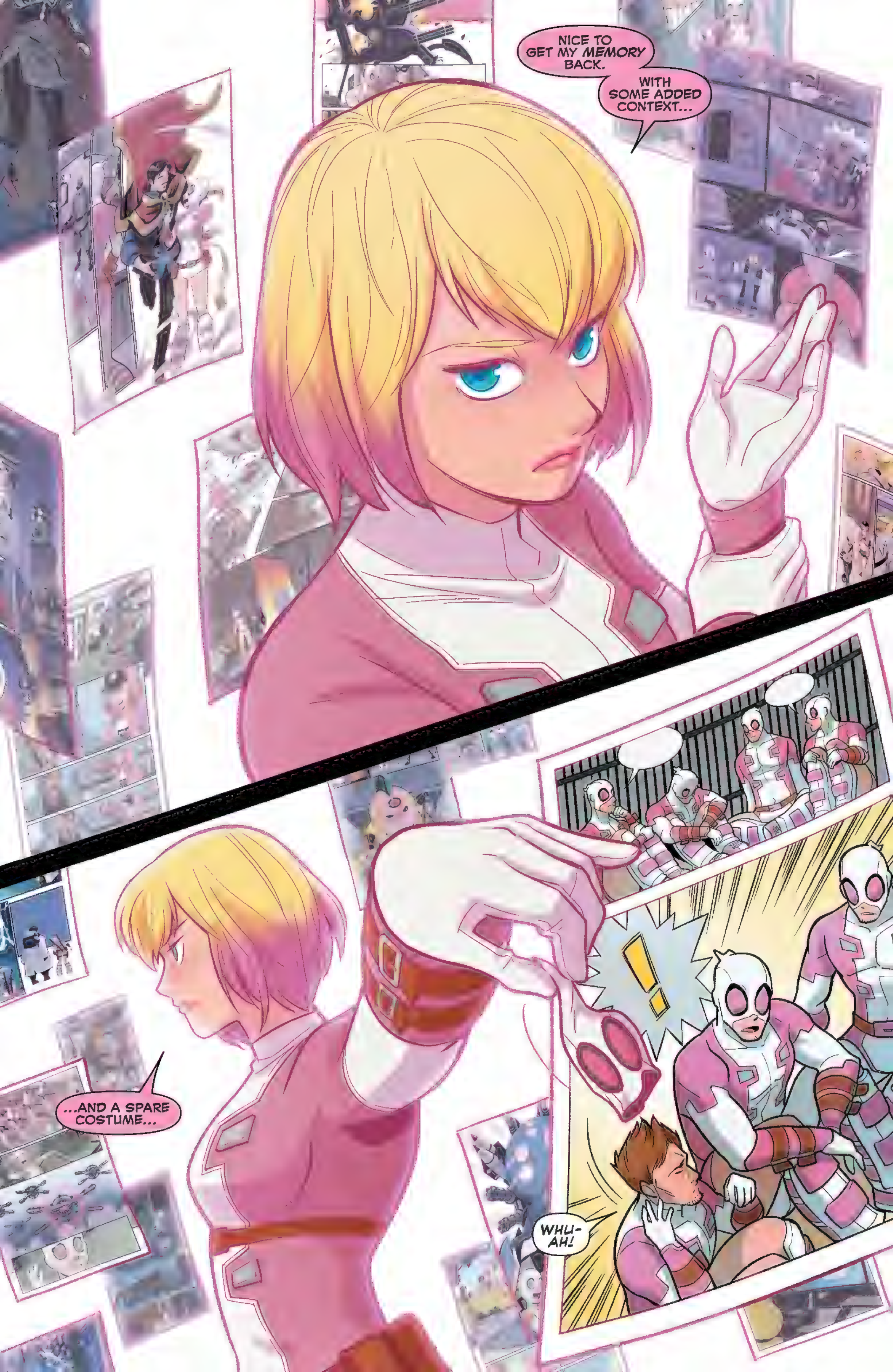

LEAVE ME TO MY MOPING, FOUL DORKS!
BHUDDA
BHUDDA
BHUDDA
BHUDDA
BHUDDA
GWEN?

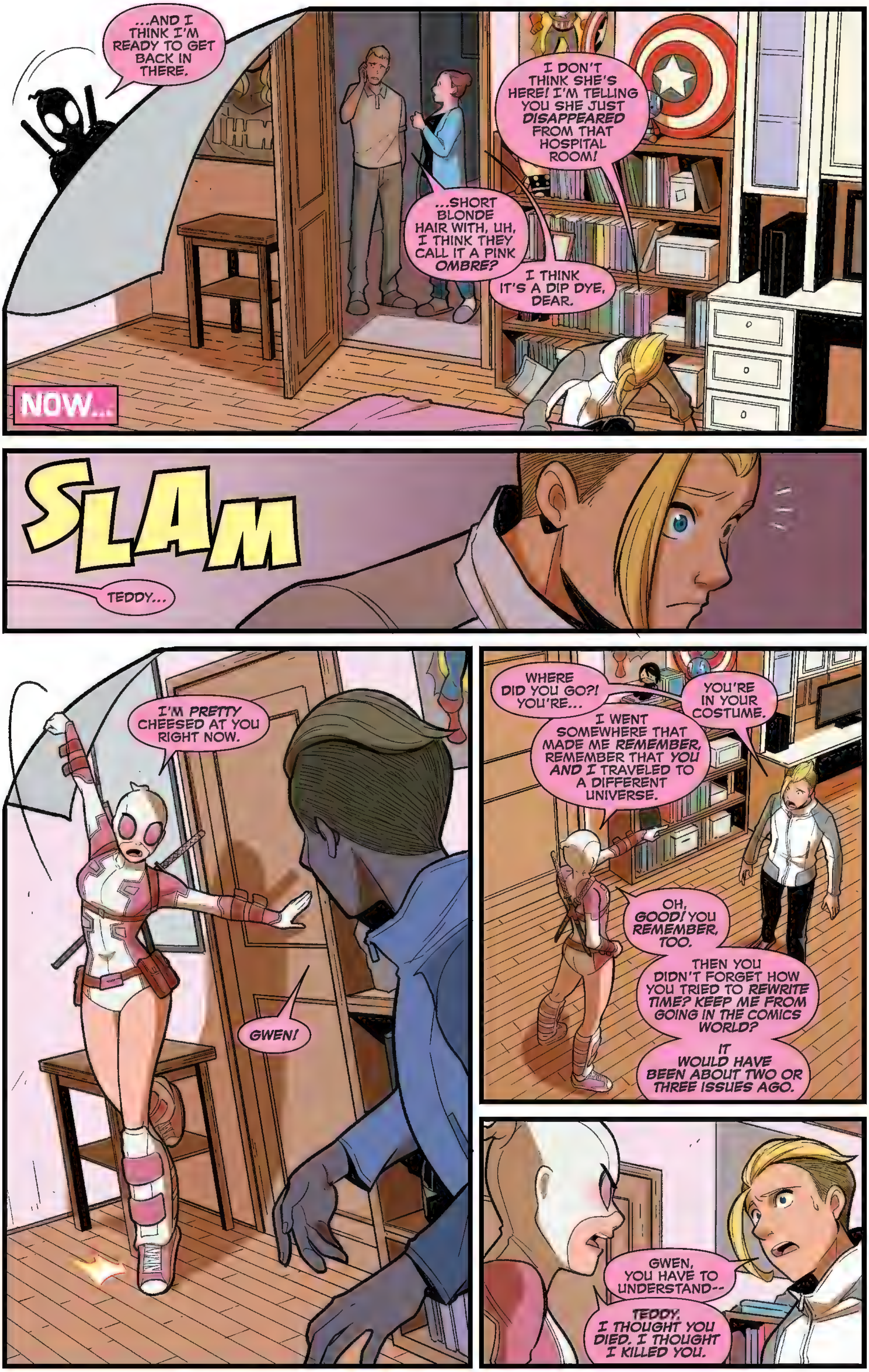

OOH! A TEXT FROM HOWARD THE DUCK.
BE-DOOP
SHE JUST...
...SLAUGHTERED THEM...
CHRISTMAS PARTY AT SHE-HUUUUUUULLK'S!!!
OH, GOD...OH, GOD...
GWEN'S ALIVE AND...AND... HERE, AND...
...PSYCHOTIC.
YEAH, GWEN POOLE'S A REAL MONSTER, ALL RIGHT.

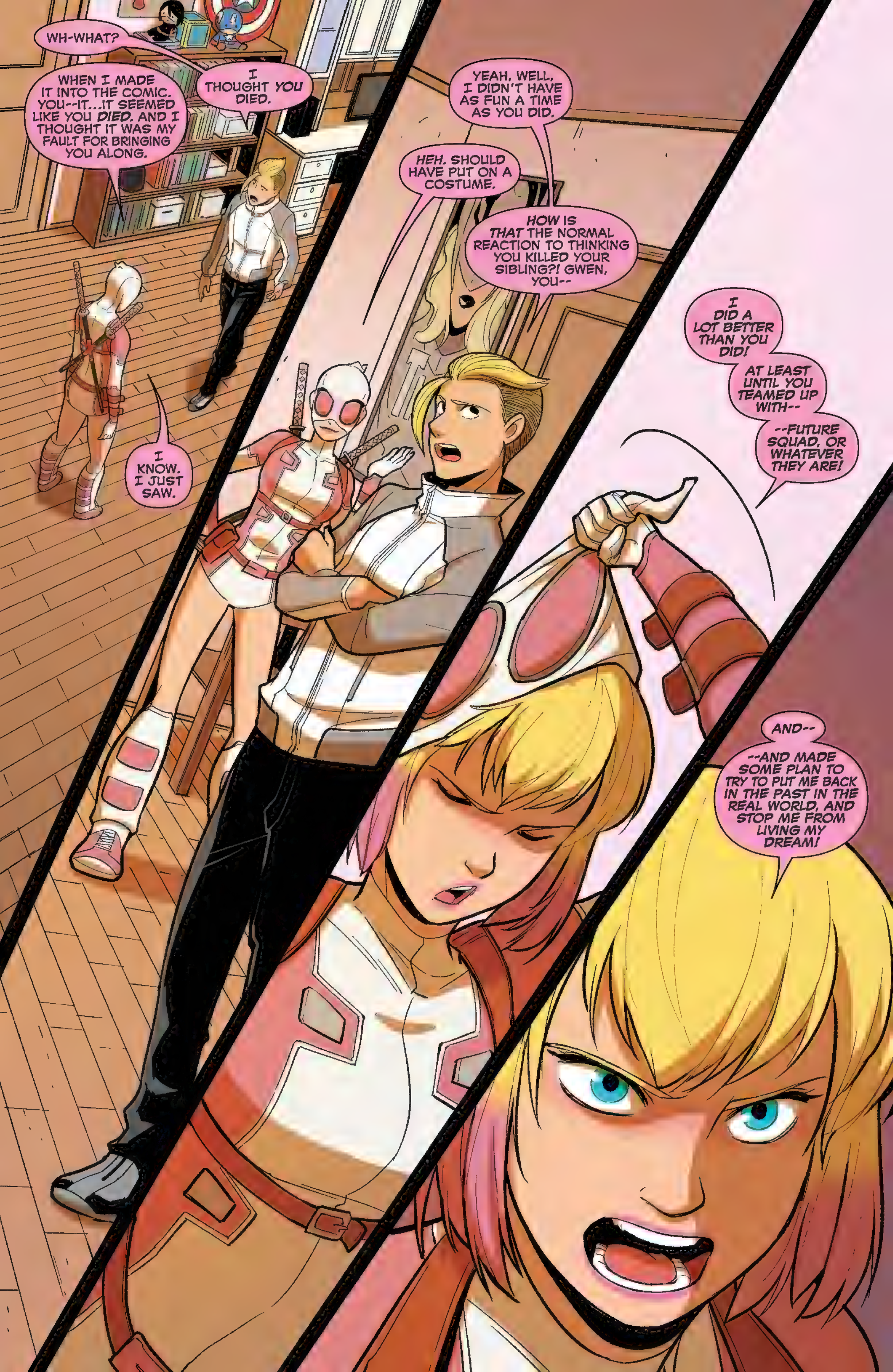

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE SHE GETS A LOT WORSE?
WH-- SPIDER-MAN?
AND...
I'M SORRY, I DON'T RECOGNIZE THE OTHER TWO. ARE YOU A TERMINATOR, SIR? I DIDN'T THINK THAT WAS A MARVEL PROPERTY.
HER BROTHER TALKS JUST LIKE SHE DOES. CHARMING.
I AM VINCENT DOONAN, A DOOMBOT. AND THIS IS SARAH, THE TERRIBLE EYE AND SORCERER SUPREME.
THEY HAVE BOTH SEEN THE SAME SPACE BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION!

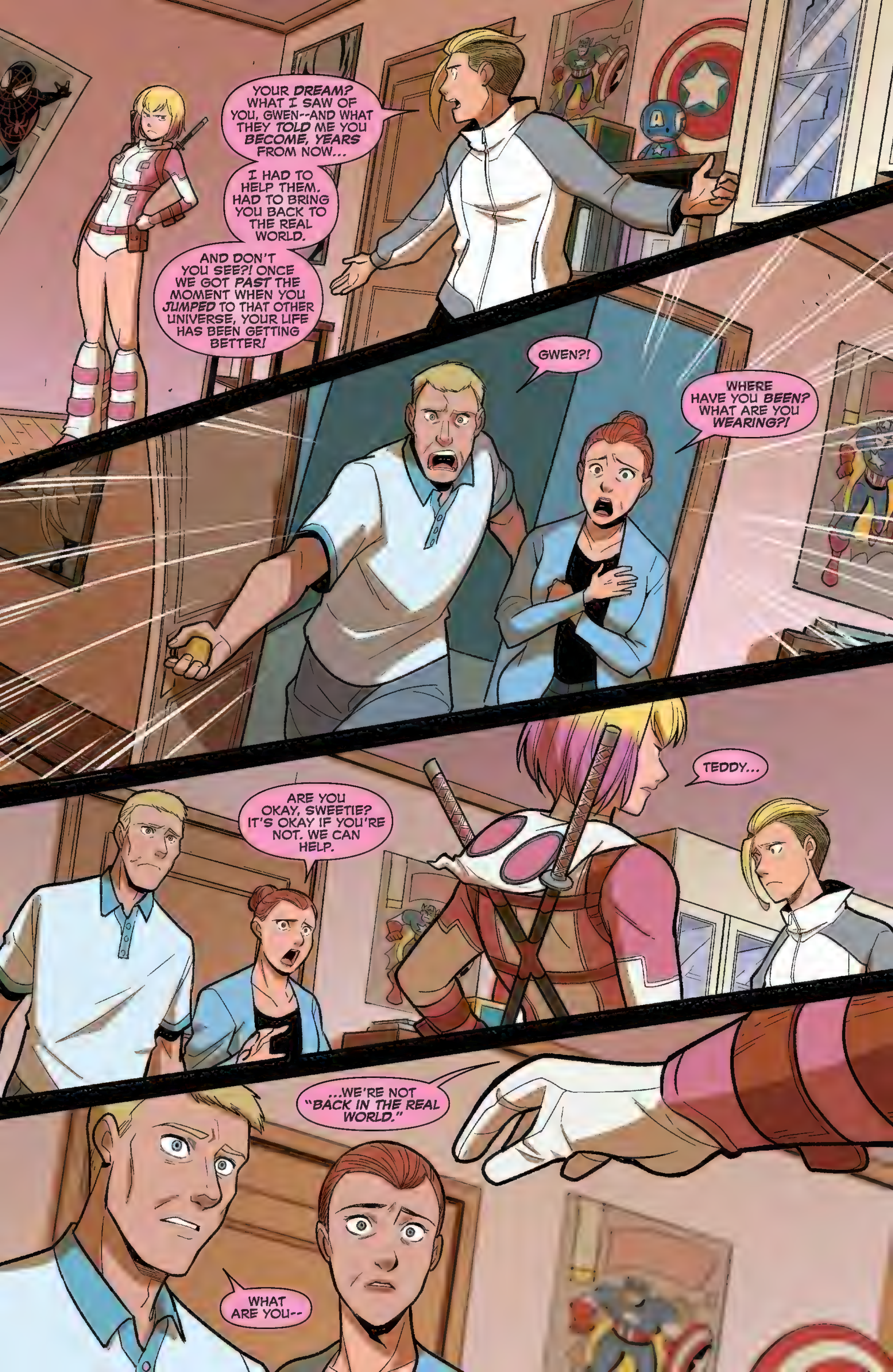

SPACE BEYOND...
AND YOU SAID *FUTURE?*
WE HAVE COME FROM THE FUTURE, YES.
DANGEROUS TRAVEL! TERRIBLE POTENTIAL. CHANGES IN THE TIMESTREAM MAKE... **EVERYTHING** ANGRY.
BUT IF WE ARE CAREFUL...AND FOCUSED...
PLEASE JUST TALK TO ME IN SEQUENTIAL SENTENCES THAT MAKE SENSE.
YOU AND YOUR SISTER ARE SUPPOSEDLY FROM A WORLD WHERE OUR LIVES ARE COMIC BOOKS.
YES.
GWEN SAID SHE READ ALL ABOUT ME. KNEW MY LIFE. SHE KNEW MY SECRET IDENTITY!
SHE USES THAT TO *DESTROY MY LIFE.*
AND THAT'S NOT ALL. SHE'S GAINED **TERRIBLE** POWER OVER WHAT SEEMS TO BE REALITY ITSELF. SHE WALKS THROUGH TIME AND SPACE EFFORTLESSLY. CRUMPLES IT LIKE PAPER.
WE HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO ESCAPE HER, TO STOP HER.
WHEN WE FOUND OUT ABOUT *YOU*, WE FIGURED SOMETHING OUT...
...BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP.

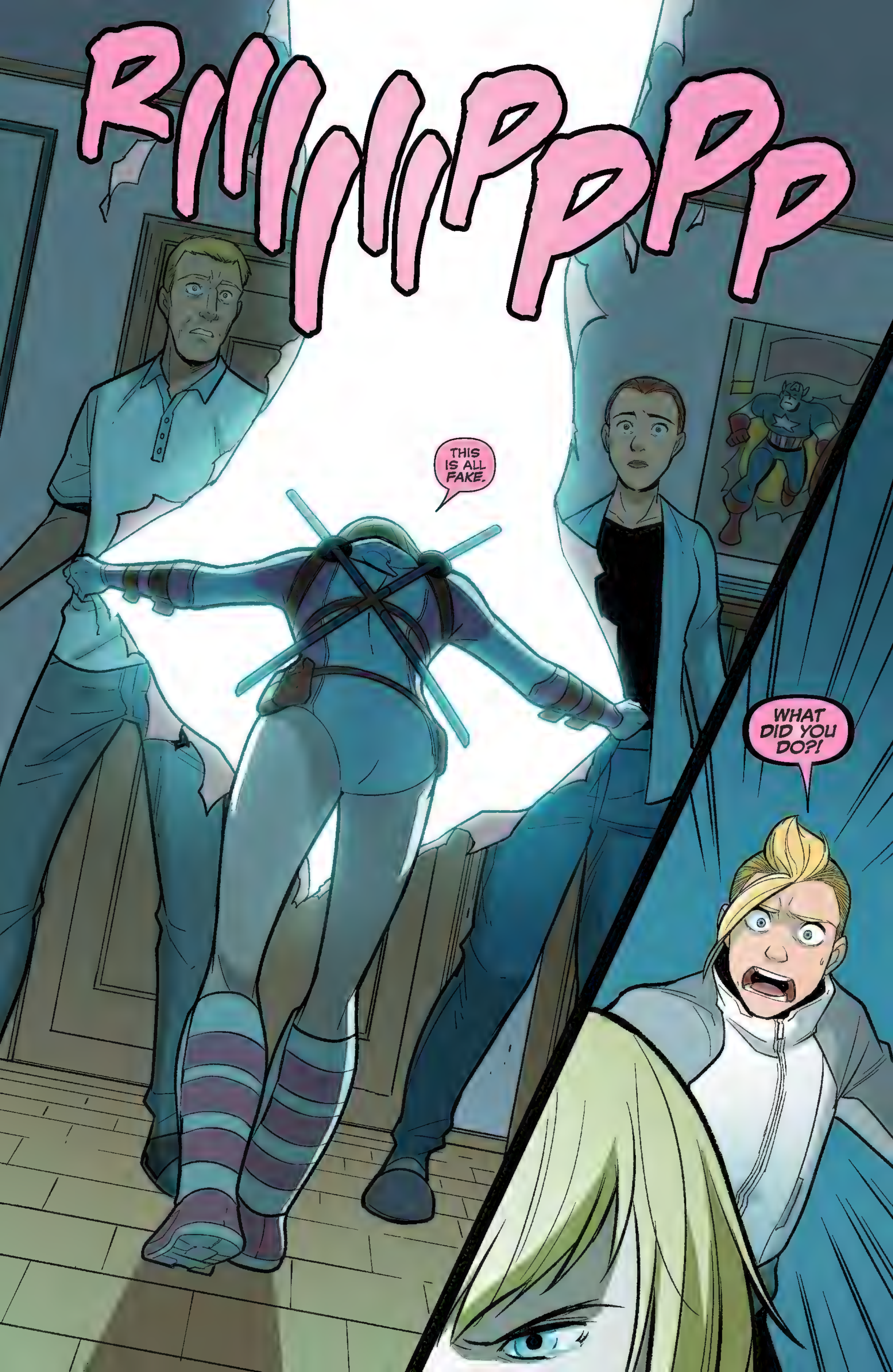

HMF.
SO *THAT'S* WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO.

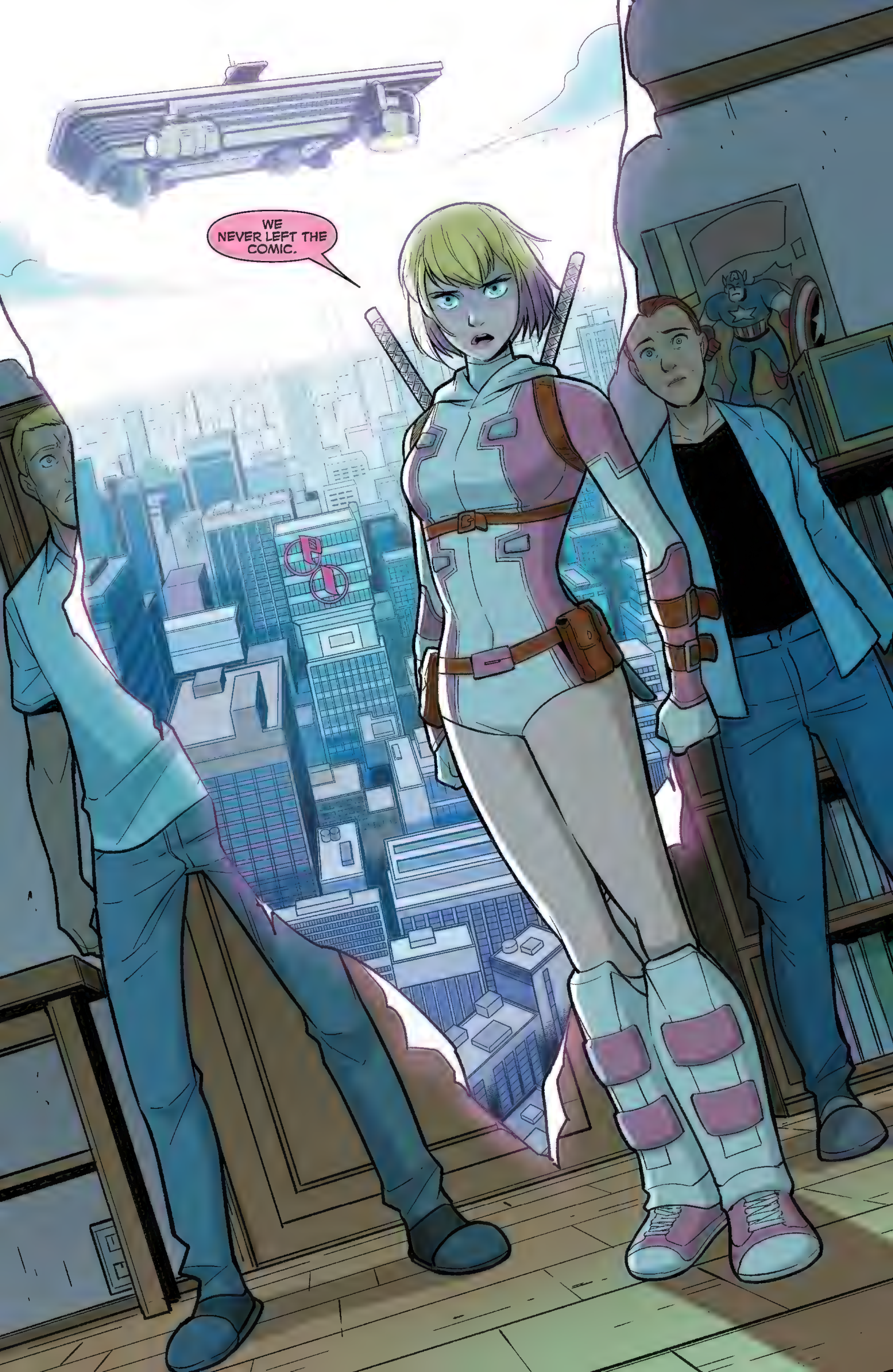

NICE TO GET MY *MEMORY* BACK.
WITH SOME ADDED CONTEXT...
...AND A SPARE COSTUME...
!
WHU-AH!

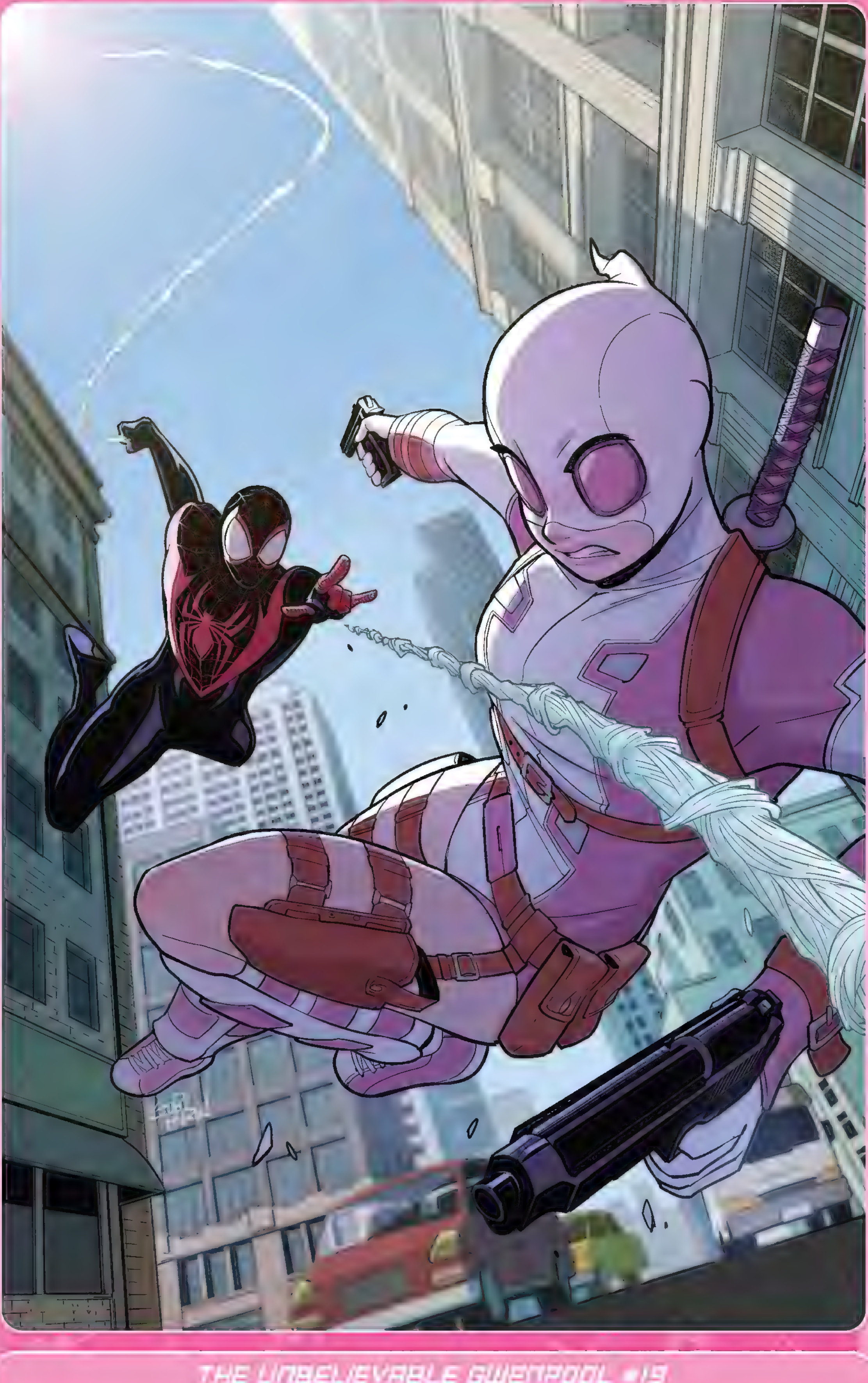

NOW...
...AND I THINK I'M READY TO GET BACK IN THERE.
I DON'T THINK SHE'S HERE! I'M TELLING YOU SHE JUST *DISAPPEARED* FROM THAT HOSPITAL ROOM!
...SHORT BLONDE HAIR WITH, UH, I THINK THEY CALL IT A PINK *OMBRE?*
I THINK IT'S A DIP DYE, DEAR.
SLAM
TEDDY...
I'M *PRETTY* CHEESED AT YOU RIGHT NOW.
GWEN!
WHERE DID YOU GO?! YOU'RE...
YOU'RE IN YOUR COSTUME.
I WENT SOMEWHERE THAT MADE ME *REMEMBER*, REMEMBER THAT *YOU AND I* TRAVELED TO A DIFFERENT UNIVERSE.
OH, *GOOD!* YOU REMEMBER, TOO.
THEN YOU DIDN'T FORGET HOW YOU TRIED TO *REWRITE TIME? KEEP ME FROM GOING IN THE COMICS WORLD?*
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ABOUT TWO OR THREE ISSUES AGO.
GWEN, YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND--
TEDDY. I THOUGHT YOU DIED. I THOUGHT I KILLED YOU.


WH-WHAT?
WHEN I MADE IT INTO THE COMIC. YOU--IT...IT SEEMED LIKE YOU *DIED*, AND I THOUGHT IT WAS MY FAULT FOR BRINGING YOU ALONG.
I THOUGHT *YOU* DIED.
I KNOW. I JUST SAW.
YEAH, WELL, I DIDN'T HAVE AS FUN A TIME AS YOU DID.
HEH. SHOULD HAVE PUT ON A COSTUME.
HOW IS *THAT* THE NORMAL REACTION TO THINKING YOU KILLED YOUR SIBLING?! GWEN, YOU--
I DID A LOT BETTER THAN YOU DID!
AT LEAST UNTIL YOU TEAMED UP WITH--
--FUTURE SQUAD, OR WHATEVER THEY ARE!
AND--
--AND MADE SOME PLAN TO TRY TO PUT ME BACK IN THE PAST IN THE REAL WORLD, AND STOP ME FROM LIVING MY DREAM!


YOUR *DREAM?* WHAT I SAW OF YOU, GWEN--AND WHAT THEY *TOLD* ME YOU *BECOME, YEARS* FROM NOW...
I HAD TO HELP THEM. HAD TO BRING YOU BACK TO THE REAL WORLD.
AND DON'T YOU SEE?! ONCE WE GOT *PAST* THE MOMENT WHEN YOU *JUMPED* TO THAT OTHER UNIVERSE, YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN GETTING BETTER!
GWEN?!
WHERE HAVE YOU *BEEN?* WHAT ARE YOU *WEARING?!*
TEDDY...
ARE YOU OKAY, SWEETIE? IT'S OKAY IF YOU'RE NOT. WE CAN HELP.
...WE'RE NOT *"BACK IN THE REAL WORLD."*
WHAT ARE YOU--


RIIIIIPPPP
THIS IS ALL FAKE.
WHAT DID YOU DO?!


WE NEVER LEFT THE COMIC.



THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #19

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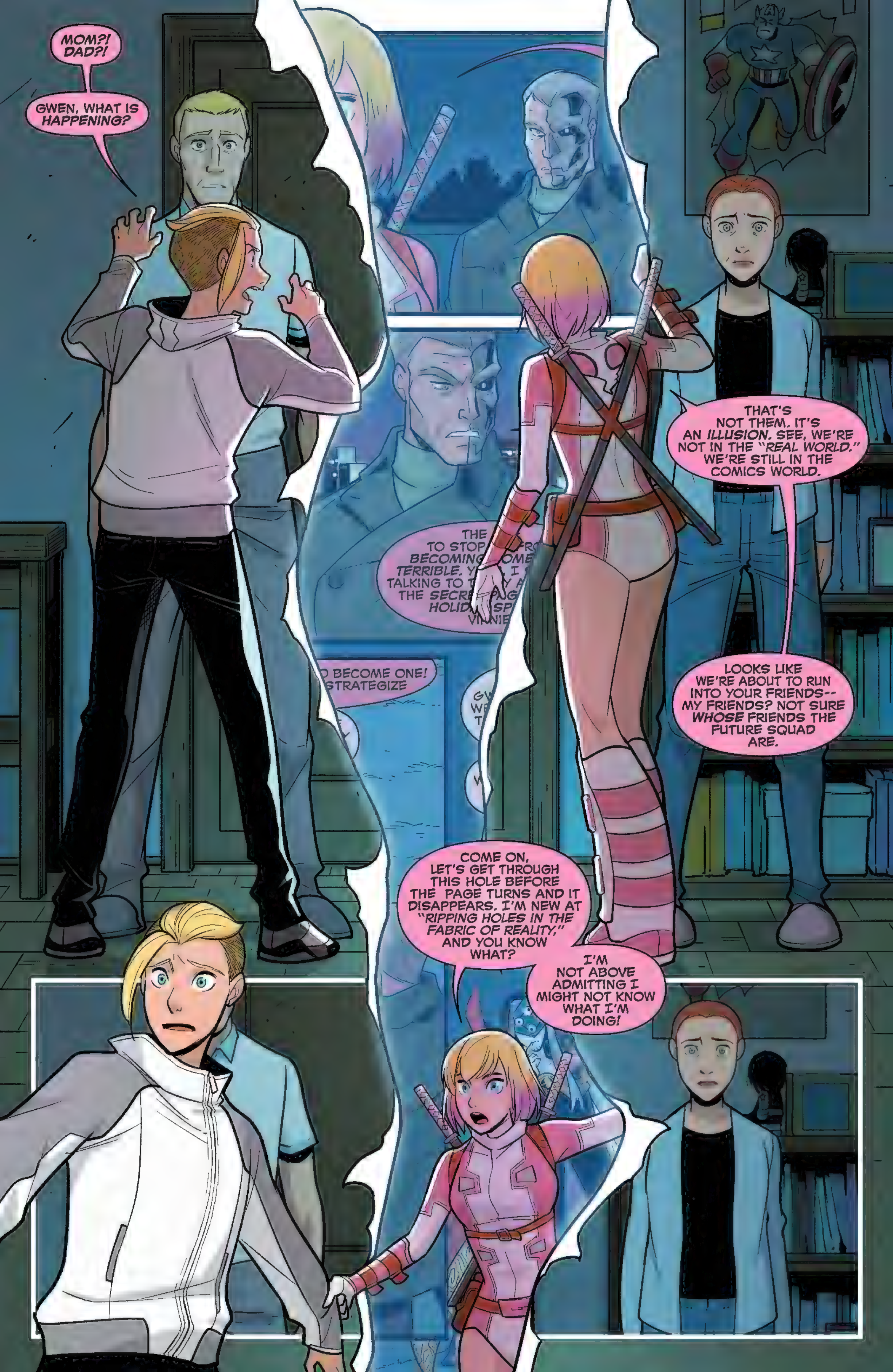
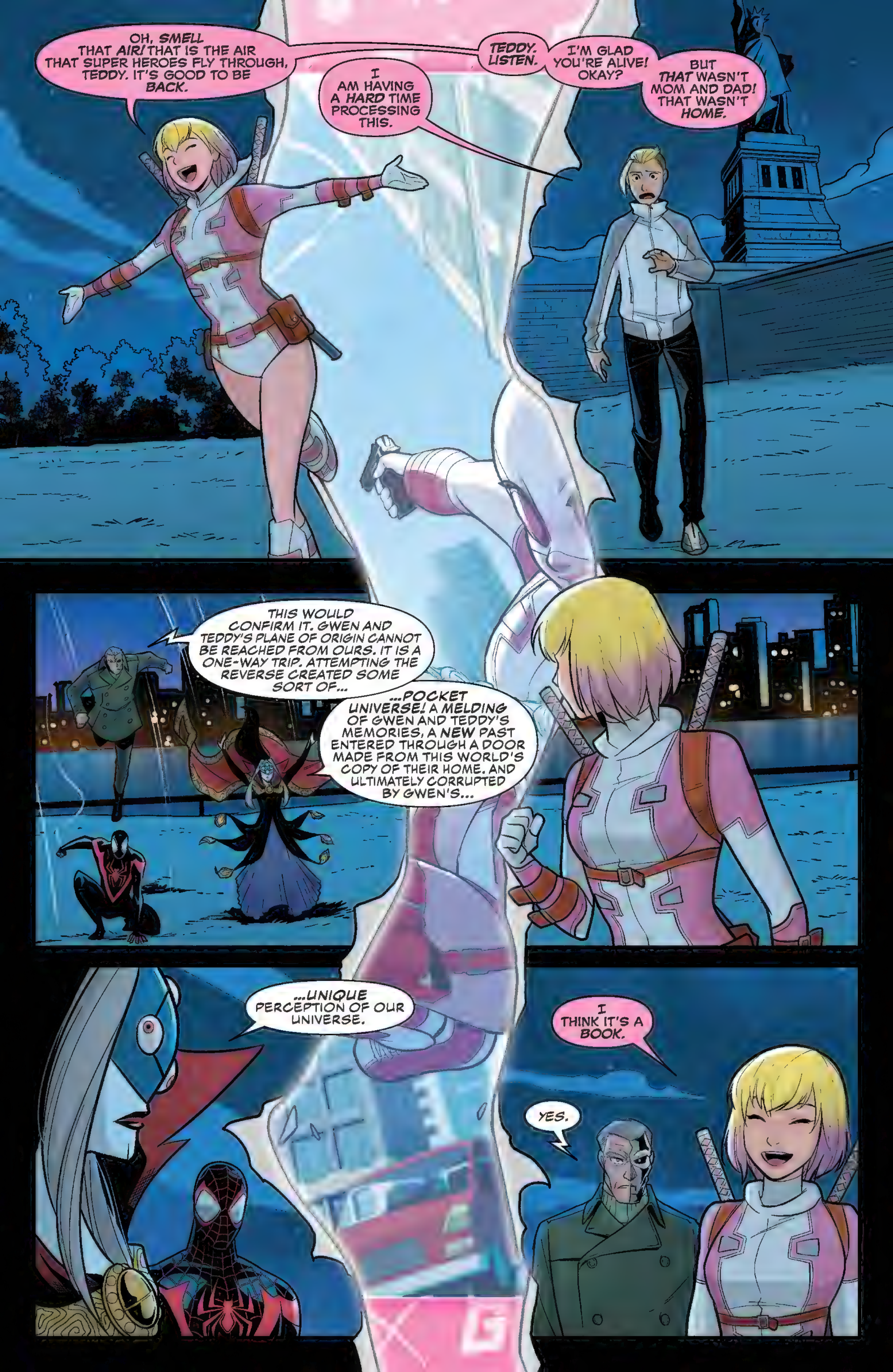
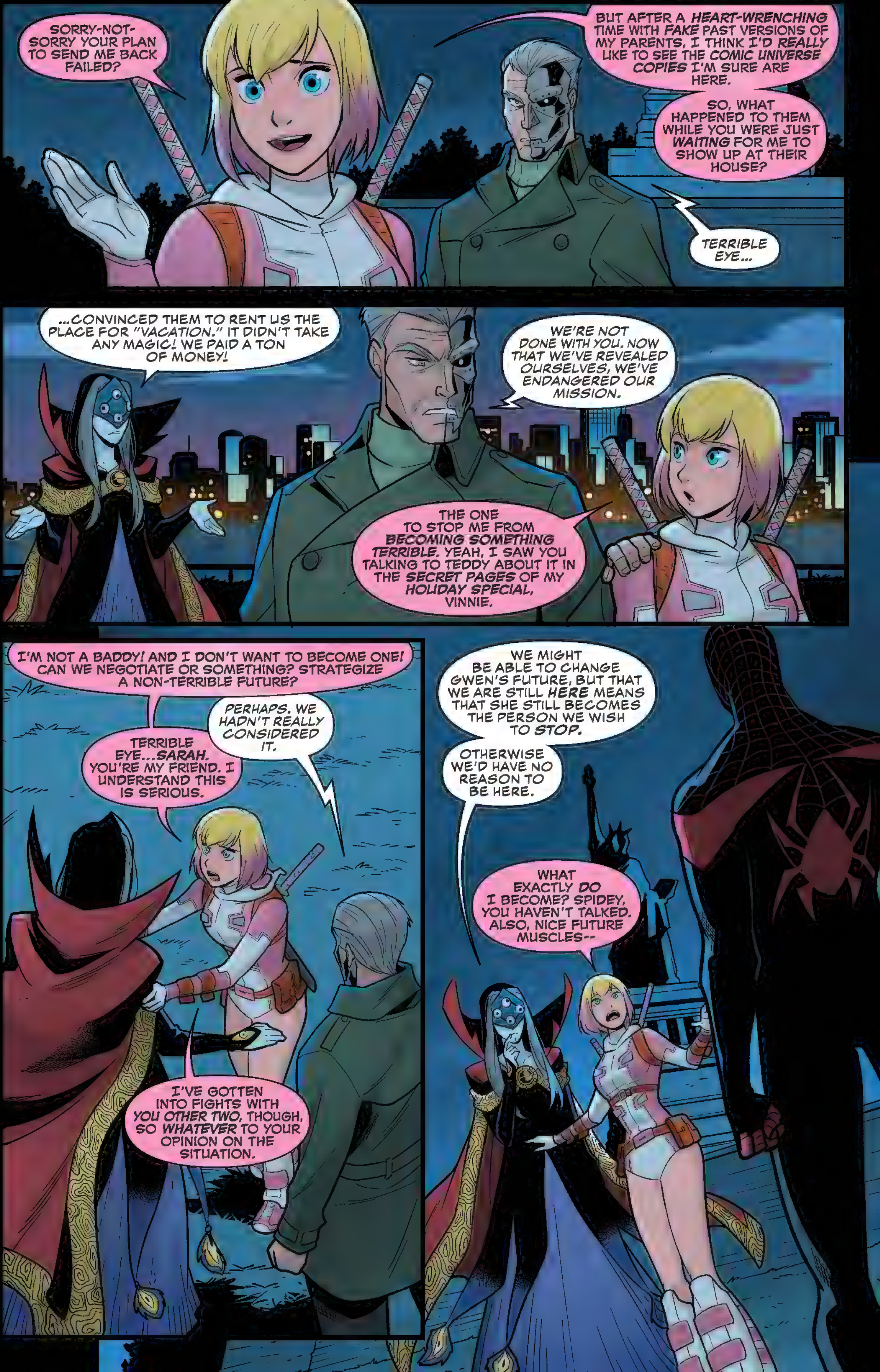
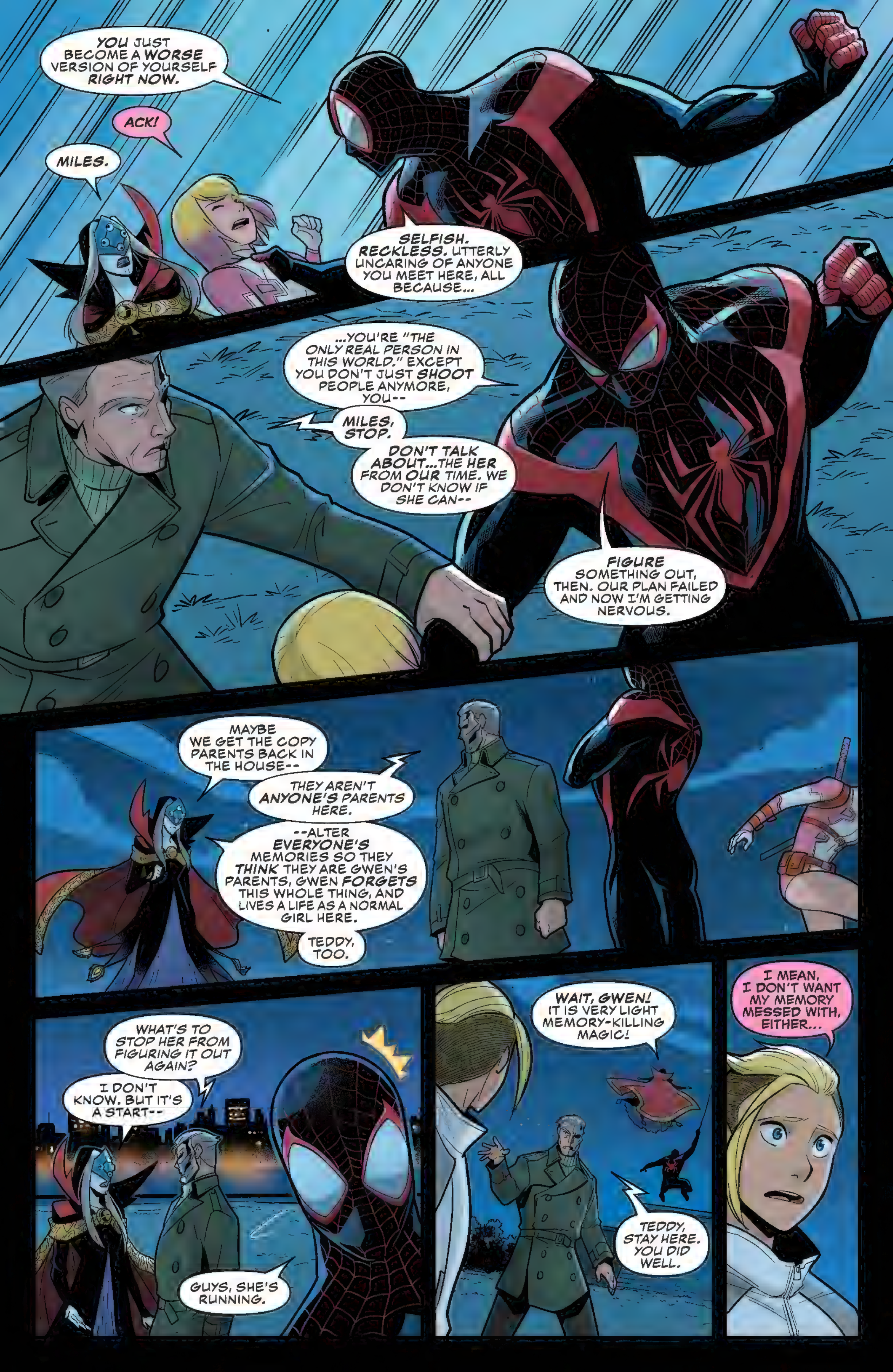
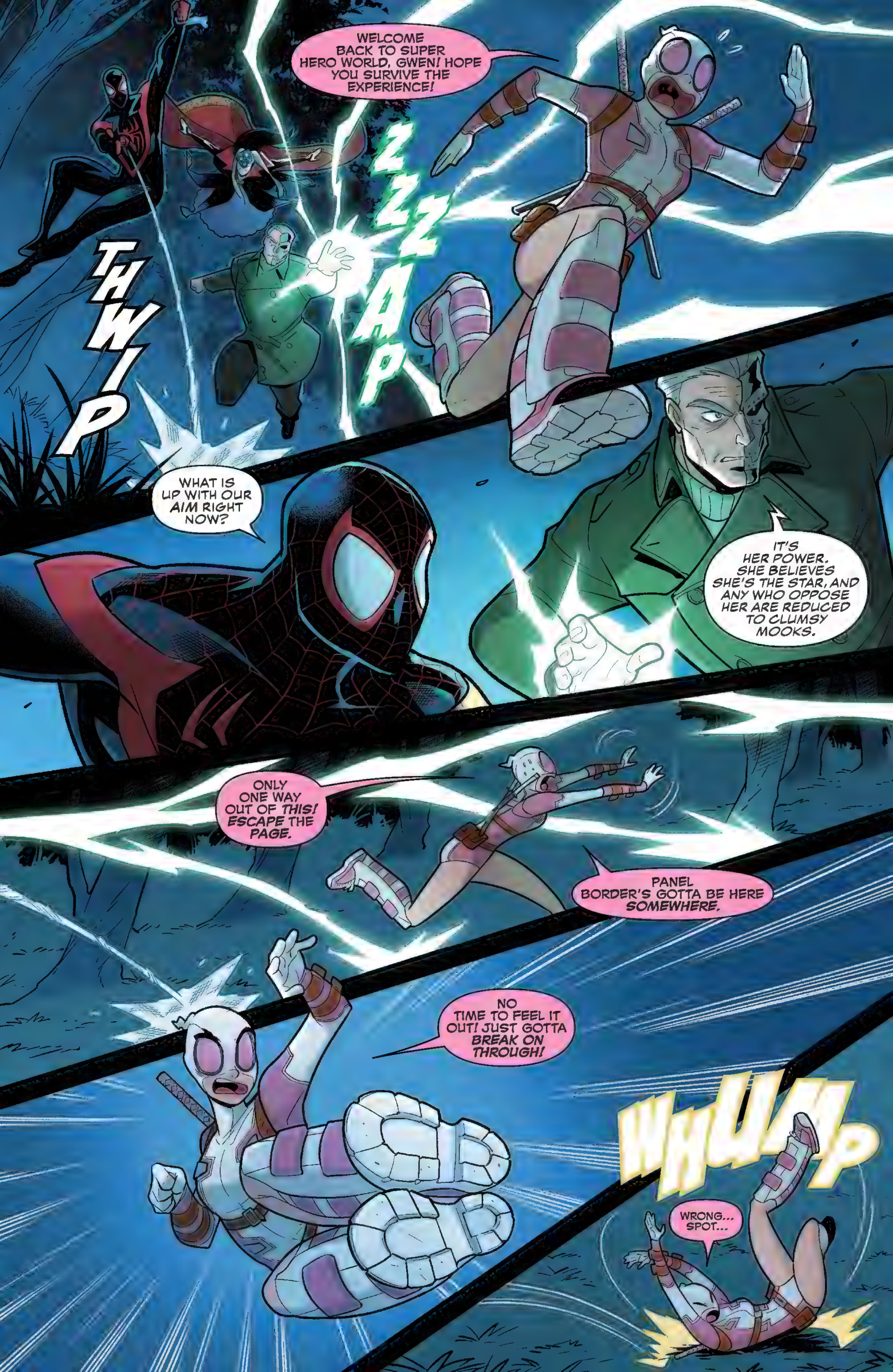
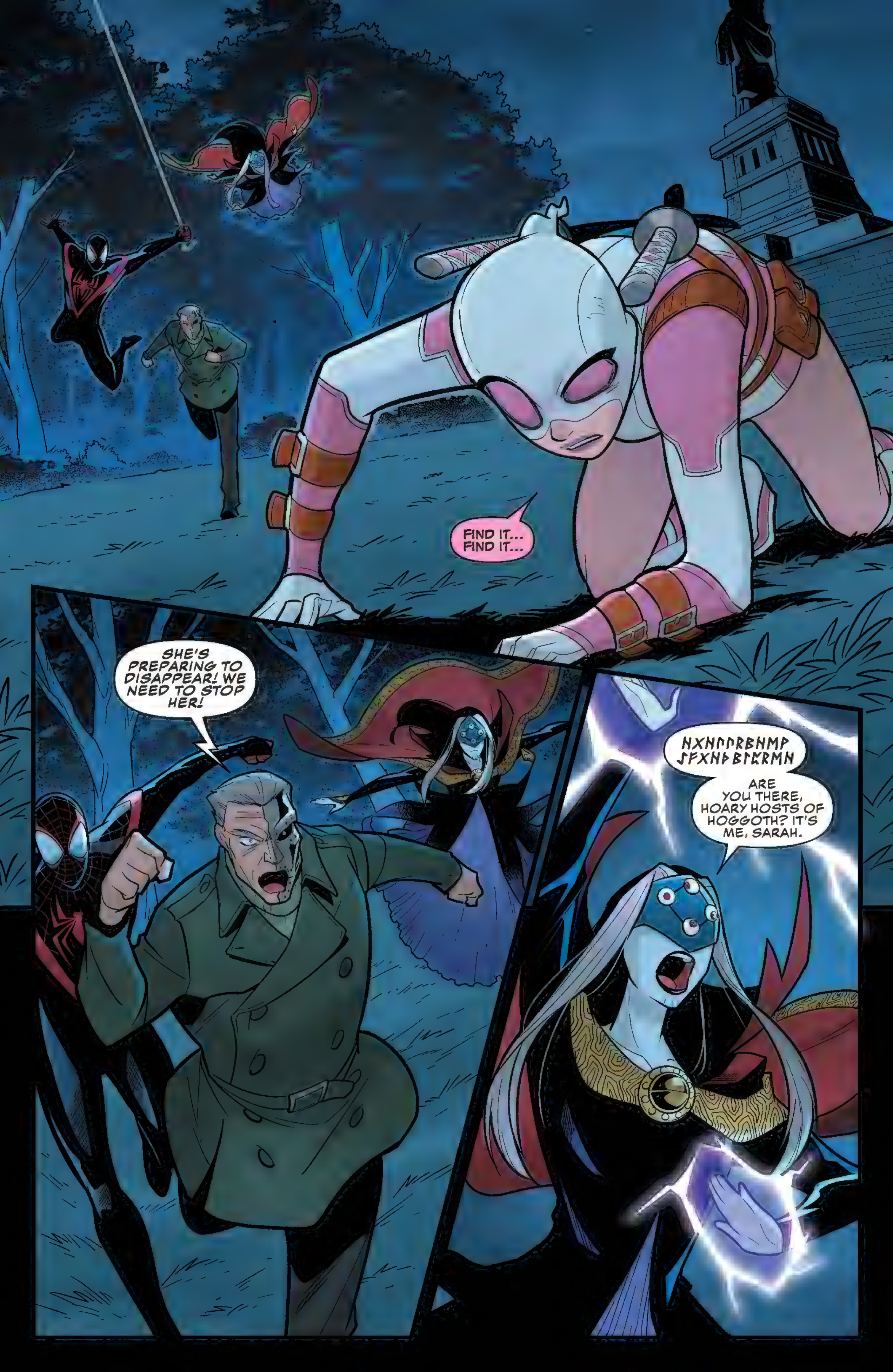

MOM?! DAD?!
GWEN, WHAT IS HAPPENING?
THAT'S NOT THEM. IT'S AN *ILLUSION*. SEE, WE'RE NOT IN THE *"REAL WORLD."* WE'RE STILL IN THE COMICS WORLD.
THE TO STOP FRO BECOMING SOME TERRIBLE. Y I TALKING TO T Y A THE SECR G HOLID SP VINNIE
D BECOME ONE! STRATEGIZE
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ABOUT TO RUN INTO YOUR FRIENDS-- MY FRIENDS? NOT SURE *WHOSE* FRIENDS THE FUTURE SQUAD ARE.
COME ON, LET'S GET THROUGH THIS HOLE BEFORE THE PAGE TURNS AND IT DISAPPEARS. I'M NEW AT *"RIPPING HOLES IN THE FABRIC OF REALITY,"* AND YOU KNOW WHAT?
I'M NOT ABOVE ADMITTING I MIGHT NOT KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!

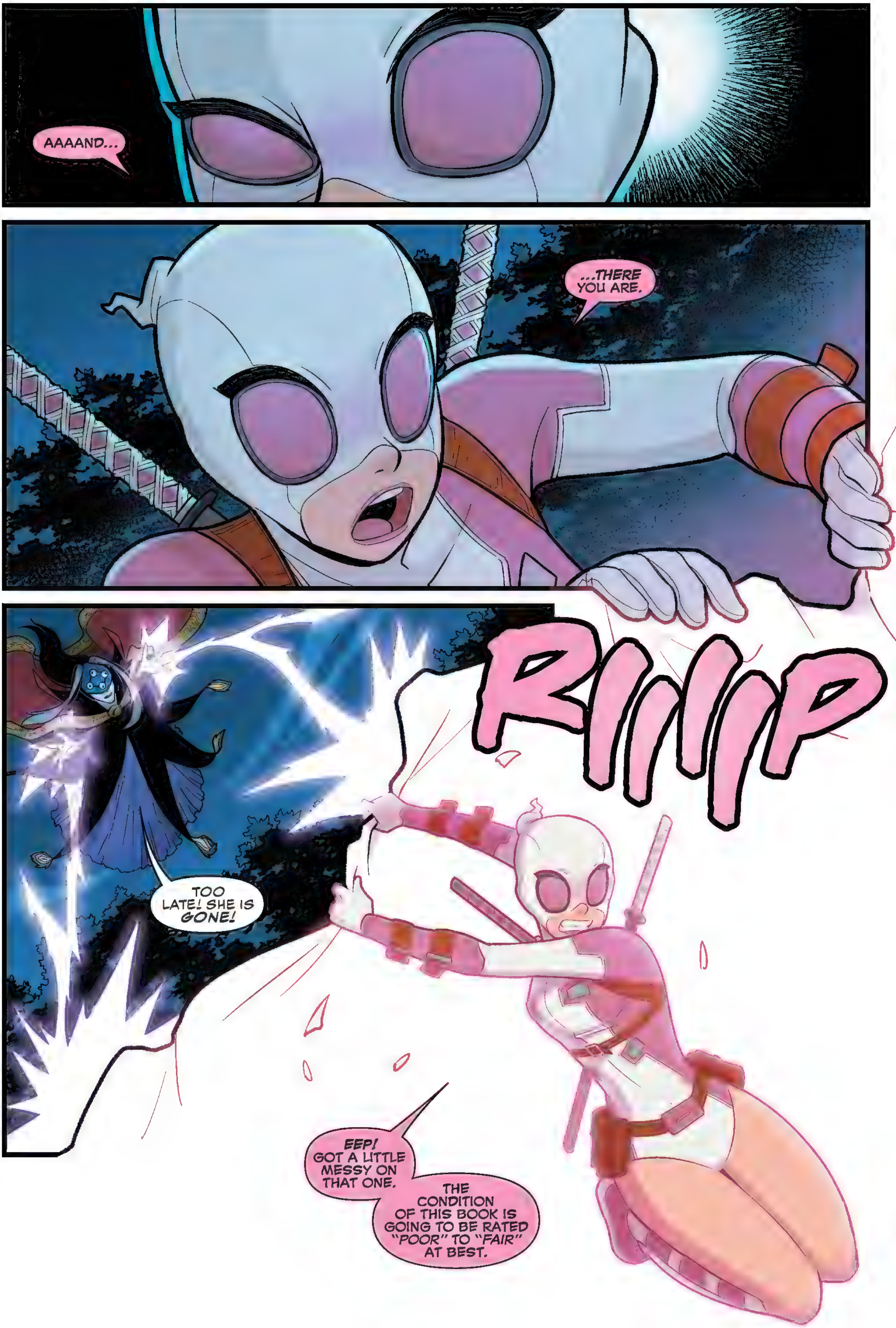

OH, SMELL THAT AIR! THAT IS THE AIR THAT SUPER HEROES FLY THROUGH, TEDDY. IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK.
I AM HAVING A HARD TIME PROCESSING THIS.
TEDDY. LISTEN.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE ALIVE! OKAY?
BUT THAT WASN'T MOM AND DAD! THAT WASN'T HOME.
THIS WOULD CONFIRM IT. GWEN AND TEDDY'S PLANE OF ORIGIN CANNOT BE REACHED FROM OURS. IT IS A ONE-WAY TRIP. ATTEMPTING THE REVERSE CREATED SOME SORT OF...
...POCKET UNIVERSE! A MELDING OF GWEN AND TEDDY'S MEMORIES, A NEW PAST ENTERED THROUGH A DOOR MADE FROM THIS WORLD'S COPY OF THEIR HOME. AND ULTIMATELY CORRUPTED BY GWEN'S...
...UNIQUE PERCEPTION OF OUR UNIVERSE.
I THINK IT'S A BOOK.
YES.

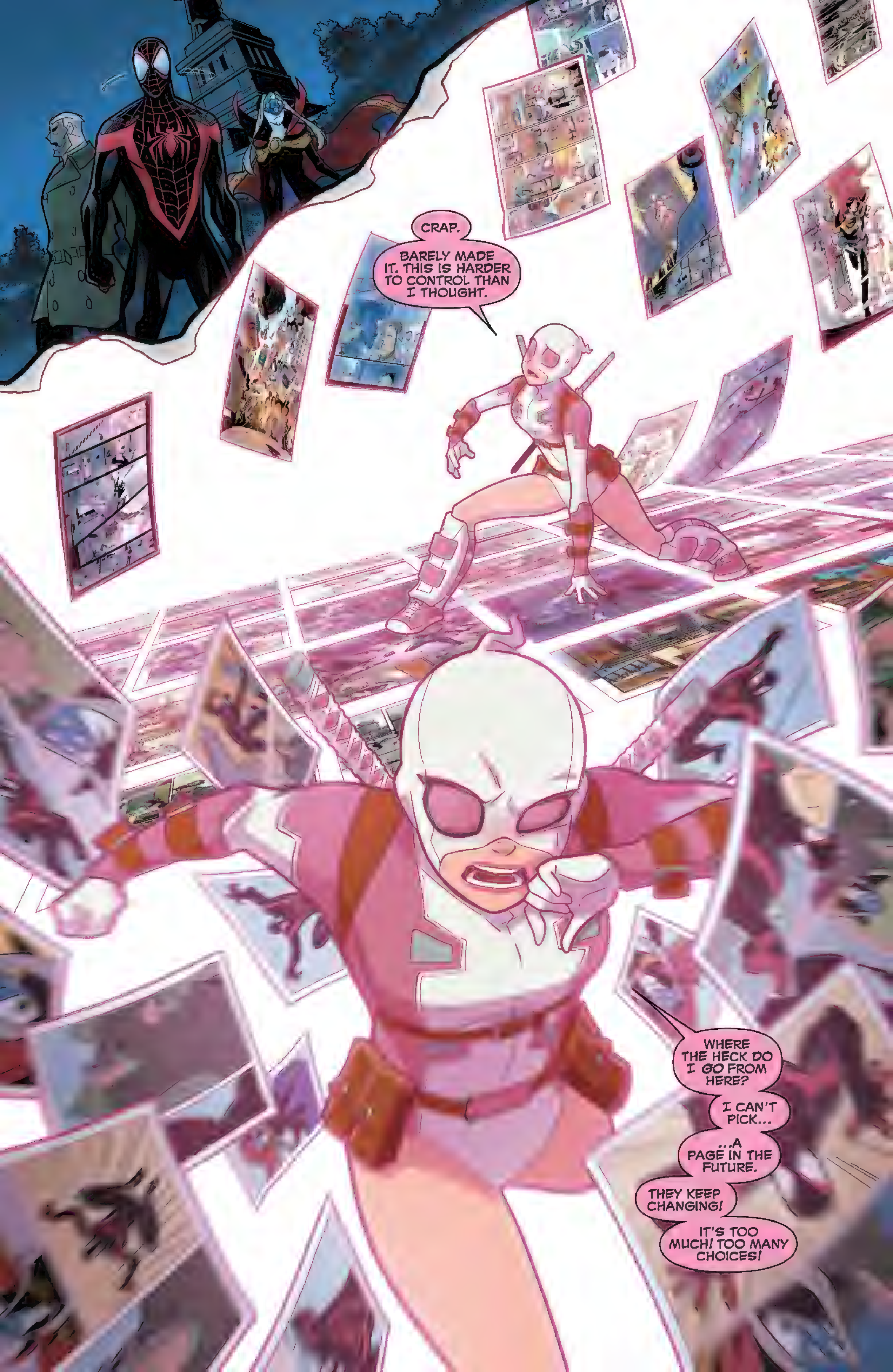

SORRY-NOT-SORRY YOUR PLAN TO SEND ME BACK FAILED?
BUT AFTER A *HEART-WRENCHING* TIME WITH *FAKE* PAST VERSIONS OF MY PARENTS, I THINK I'D *REALLY* LIKE TO SEE THE *COMIC UNIVERSE COPIES* I'M SURE ARE HERE.
SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM WHILE YOU WERE JUST *WAITING* FOR ME TO SHOW UP AT THEIR HOUSE?
TERRIBLE EYE...
...CONVINCED THEM TO RENT US THE PLACE FOR "VACATION." IT DIDN'T TAKE ANY MAGIC! WE PAID A TON OF MONEY!
WE'RE NOT DONE WITH YOU. NOW THAT WE'VE REVEALED OURSELVES, WE'VE ENDANGERED OUR MISSION.
THE ONE TO STOP ME FROM *BECOMING SOMETHING TERRIBLE*. YEAH, I SAW YOU TALKING TO TEDDY ABOUT IT IN THE *SECRET PAGES* OF MY *HOLIDAY SPECIAL*, VINNIE.
I'M NOT A BADDY! AND I DON'T WANT TO BECOME ONE! CAN WE NEGOTIATE OR SOMETHING? STRATEGIZE A NON-TERRIBLE FUTURE?
TERRIBLE EYE...*SARAH*. YOU'RE MY FRIEND. I UNDERSTAND THIS IS SERIOUS.
PERHAPS. WE HADN'T REALLY CONSIDERED IT.
I'VE GOTTEN INTO FIGHTS WITH *YOU OTHER TWO*, THOUGH, SO *WHATEVER* TO YOUR OPINION ON THE SITUATION.
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO CHANGE GWEN'S FUTURE, BUT THAT WE ARE STILL *HERE* MEANS THAT SHE STILL BECOMES THE PERSON WE WISH TO *STOP*.
OTHERWISE WE'D HAVE NO REASON TO BE HERE.
WHAT EXACTLY *DO* I BECOME? SPIDEY, YOU HAVEN'T TALKED. ALSO, NICE FUTURE MUSCLES--

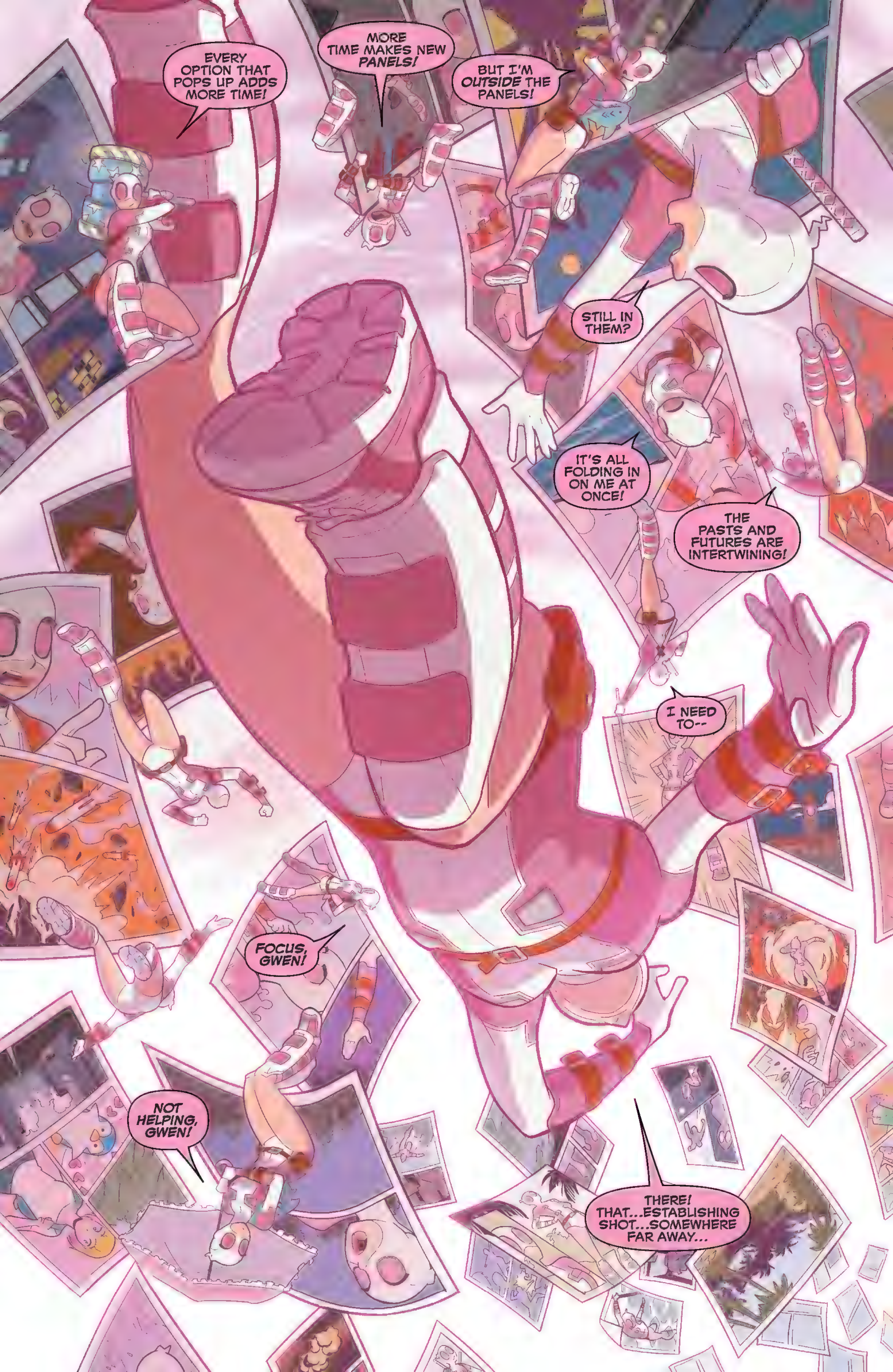

YOU JUST BECOME A WORSE VERSION OF YOURSELF RIGHT NOW.
ACK!
MILES.
SELFISH. RECKLESS. UTTERLY UNCARING OF ANYONE YOU MEET HERE, ALL BECAUSE...
...YOU'RE "THE ONLY REAL PERSON IN THIS WORLD." EXCEPT YOU DON'T JUST SHOOT PEOPLE ANYMORE, YOU--
MILES, STOP.
DON'T TALK ABOUT...THE HER FROM OUR TIME. WE DON'T KNOW IF SHE CAN--
FIGURE SOMETHING OUT, THEN. OUR PLAN FAILED AND NOW I'M GETTING NERVOUS.
MAYBE WE GET THE COPY PARENTS BACK IN THE HOUSE--
THEY AREN'T ANYONE'S PARENTS HERE.
--ALTER EVERYONE'S MEMORIES SO THEY THINK THEY ARE GWEN'S PARENTS, GWEN FORGETS THIS WHOLE THING, AND LIVES A LIFE AS A NORMAL GIRL HERE.
TEDDY, TOO.
WHAT'S TO STOP HER FROM FIGURING IT OUT AGAIN?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT IT'S A START--
GUYS, SHE'S RUNNING.
WAIT, GWEN! IT IS VERY LIGHT MEMORY-KILLING MAGIC!
TEDDY, STAY HERE. YOU DID WELL.
I MEAN, I DON'T WANT MY MEMORY MESSED WITH, EITHER...

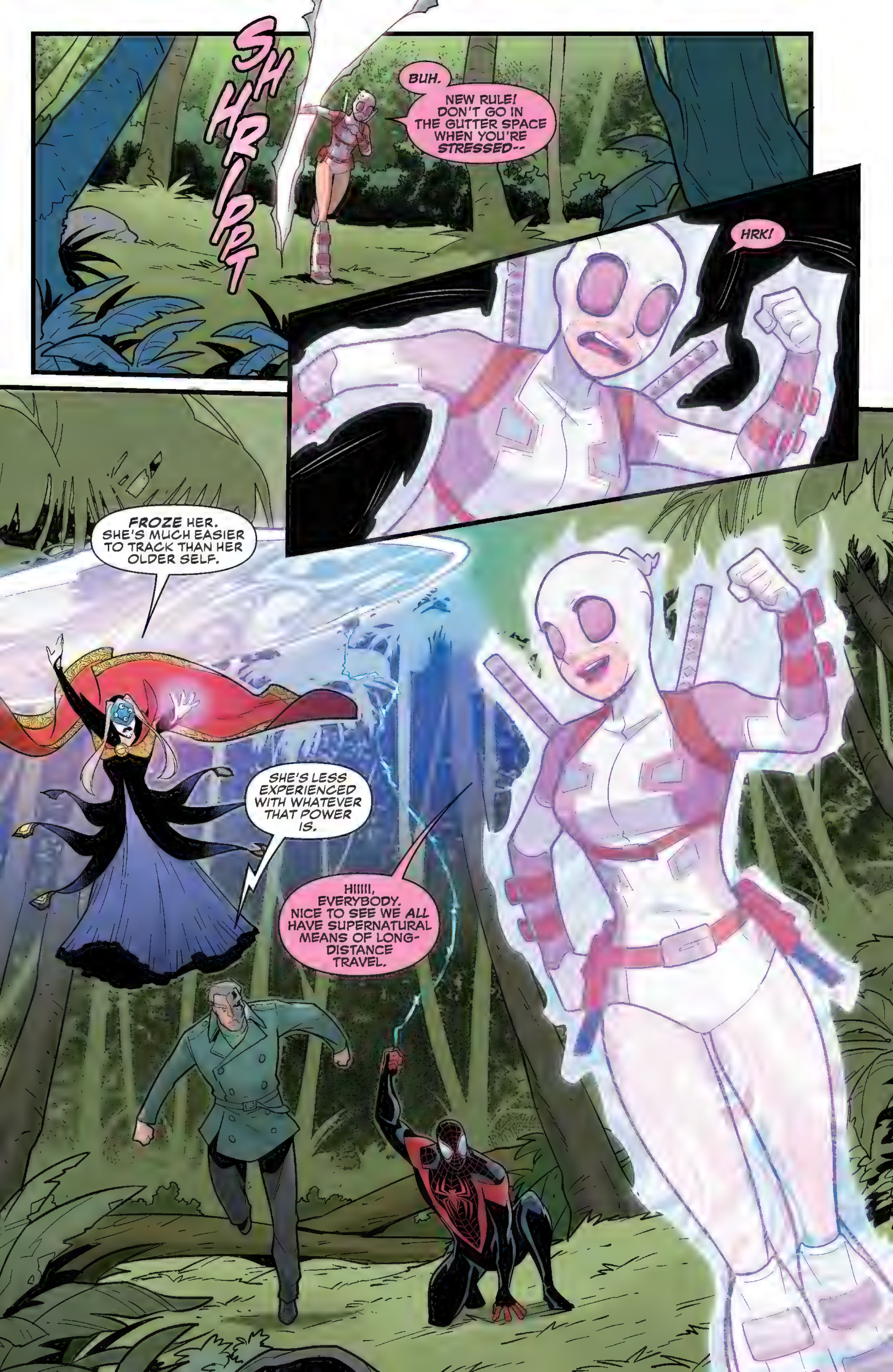

WELCOME BACK TO SUPER HERO WORLD, GWEN! HOPE YOU SURVIVE THE EXPERIENCE!
ZZZAP
THWIP
WHAT IS UP WITH OUR *AIM* RIGHT NOW?
IT'S HER POWER. SHE BELIEVES SHE'S THE STAR, AND ANY WHO OPPOSE HER ARE REDUCED TO CLUMSY MOOKS.
ONLY ONE WAY OUT OF *THIS! ESCAPE* THE *PAGE.*
PANEL BORDER'S GOTTA BE HERE *SOMEWHERE.*
NO TIME TO FEEL IT OUT! JUST GOTTA *BREAK ON THROUGH!*
WHUMP
WRONG... SPOT...

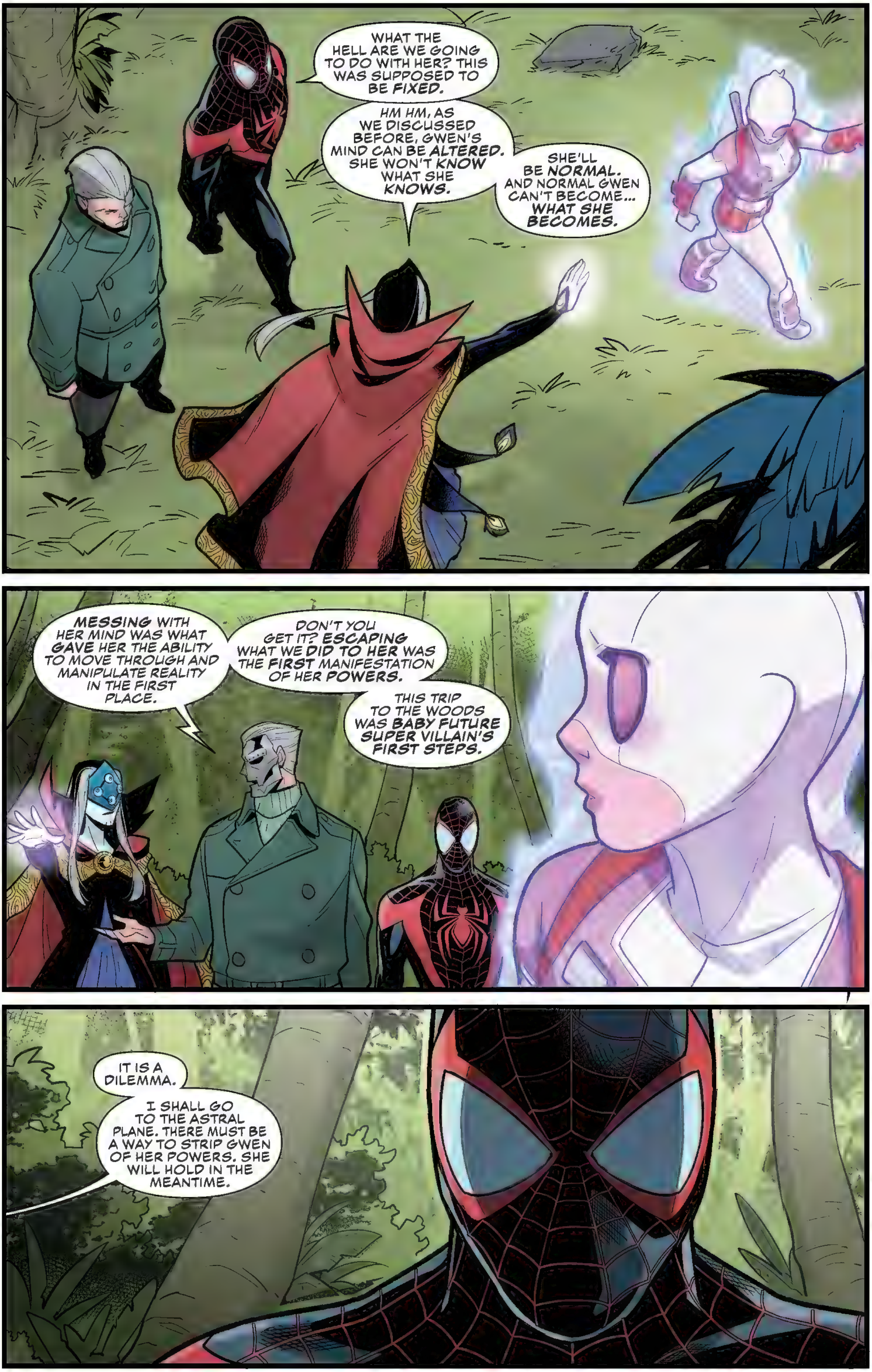

FIND IT... FIND IT...
SHE'S PREPARING TO DISAPPEAR! WE NEED TO STOP HER!
ᚺᚷᚺᛚᛚᚱᛒᚺᛗᚹ ᛇᚠᚷᚺᚦ ᛒᛚᛕᚱᛗᚺ
ARE YOU THERE, HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH? IT'S ME, SARAH.

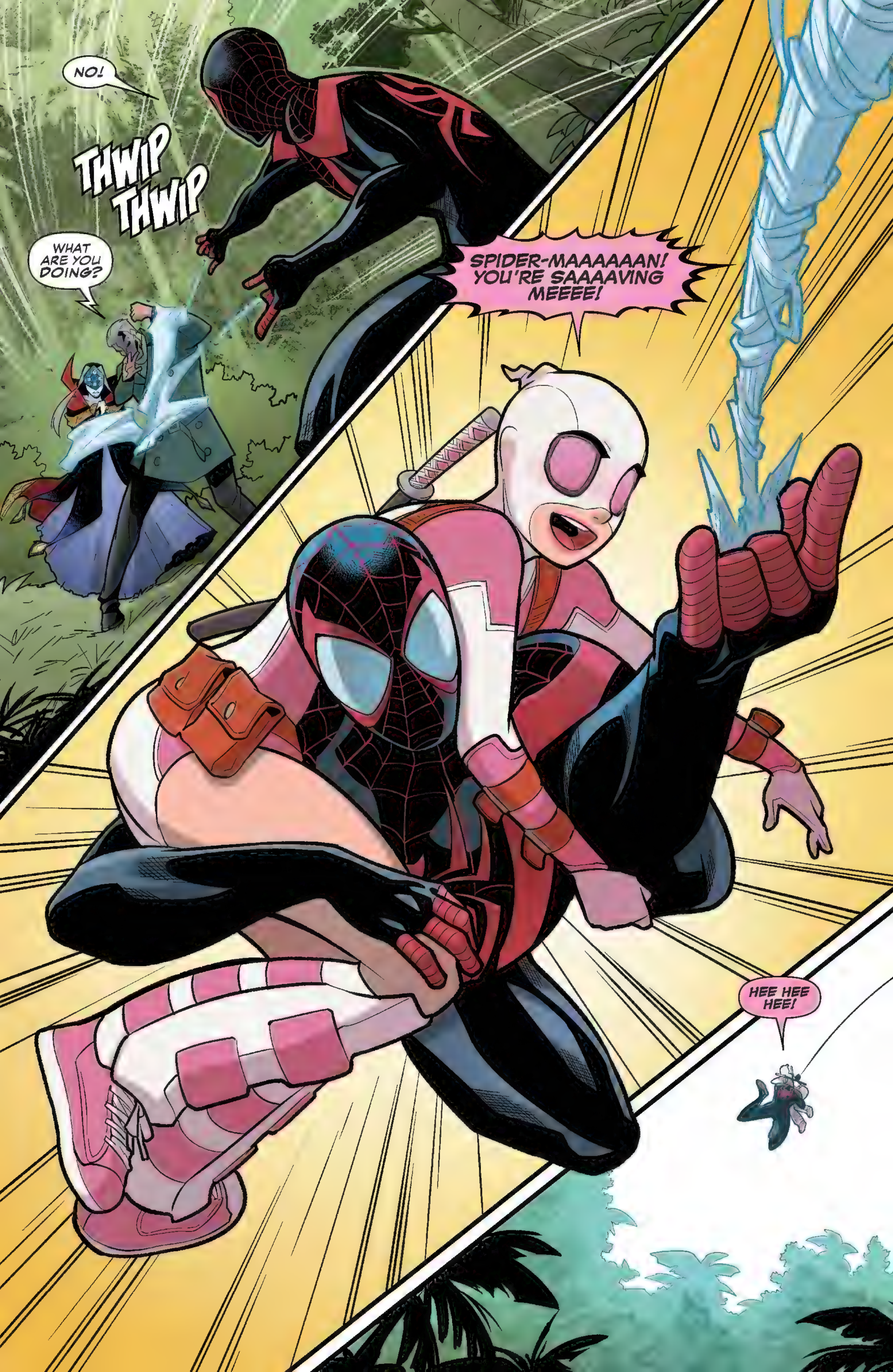

AAAAND...
...THERE YOU ARE.
RIIIIP
TOO LATE! SHE IS GONE!
EEP! GOT A LITTLE MESSY ON THAT ONE.
THE CONDITION OF THIS BOOK IS GOING TO BE RATED "POOR" TO "FAIR" AT BEST.

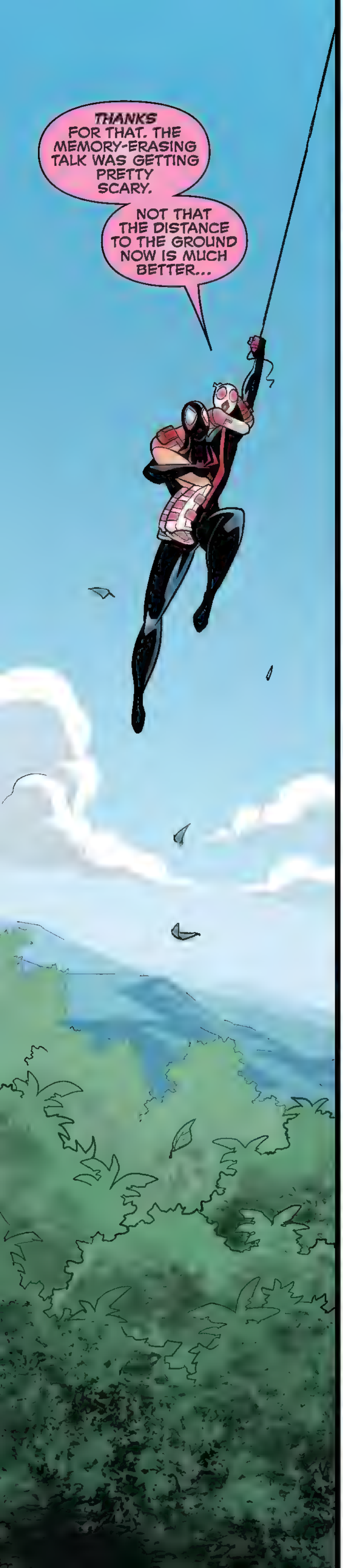

CRAP.
BARELY MADE IT. THIS IS HARDER TO CONTROL THAN I THOUGHT.
WHERE THE HECK DO I GO FROM HERE?
I CAN'T PICK...
...A PAGE IN THE FUTURE.
THEY KEEP CHANGING!
IT'S TOO MUCH! TOO MANY CHOICES!

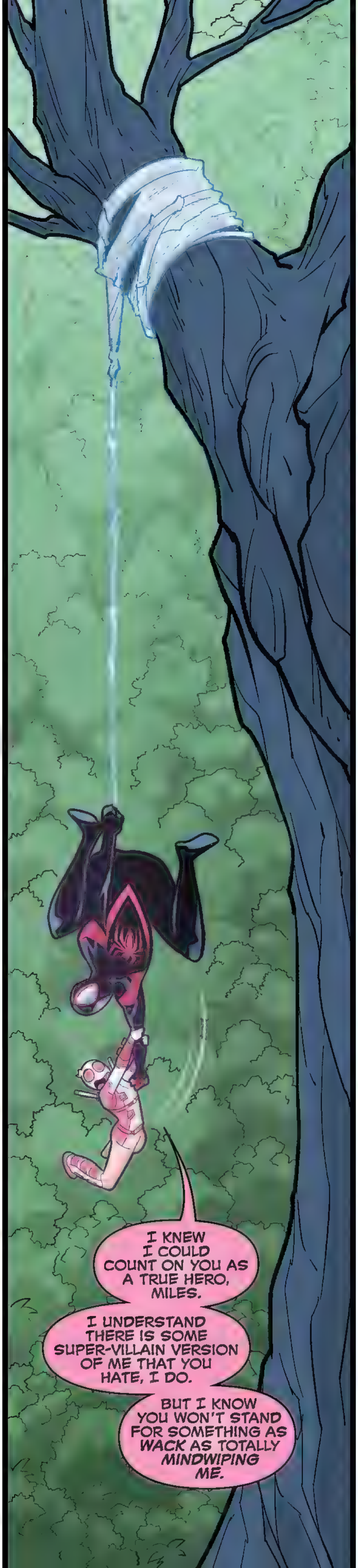

EVERY OPTION THAT POPS UP ADDS MORE TIME!
MORE TIME MAKES NEW *PANELS!*
BUT I'M *OUTSIDE* THE PANELS!
STILL IN THEM?
IT'S ALL FOLDING IN ON ME AT ONCE!
THE PASTS AND FUTURES ARE INTERTWINING!
I NEED TO--
FOCUS, GWEN!
NOT HELPING, GWEN!
THERE! THAT...ESTABLISHING SHOT...SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY...

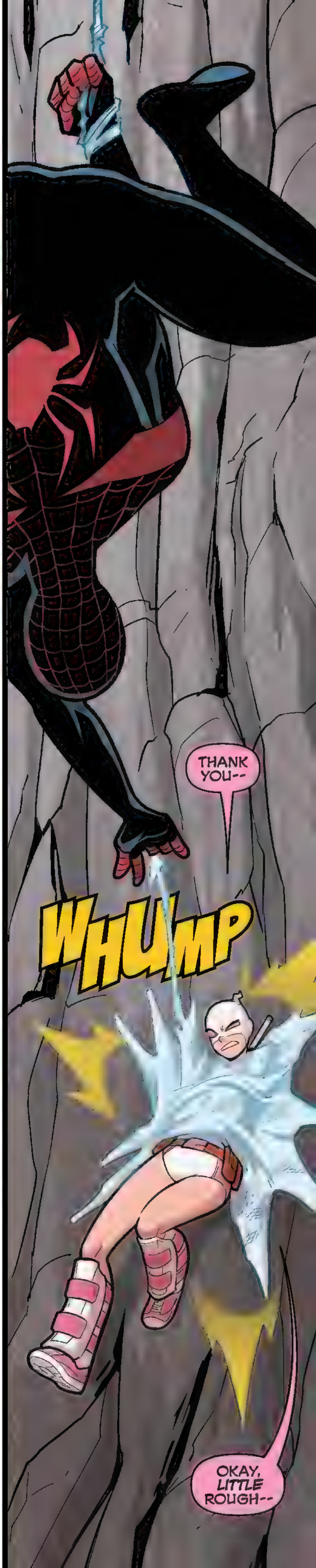

SHHRIPPT
BUH.
NEW RULE! DON'T GO IN THE GUTTER SPACE WHEN YOU'RE STRESSED--
HRK!
FROZE HER. SHE'S MUCH EASIER TO TRACK THAN HER OLDER SELF.
SHE'S LESS EXPERIENCED WITH WHATEVER THAT POWER IS.
HIIIII, EVERYBODY. NICE TO SEE WE ALL HAVE SUPERNATURAL MEANS OF LONG-DISTANCE TRAVEL.

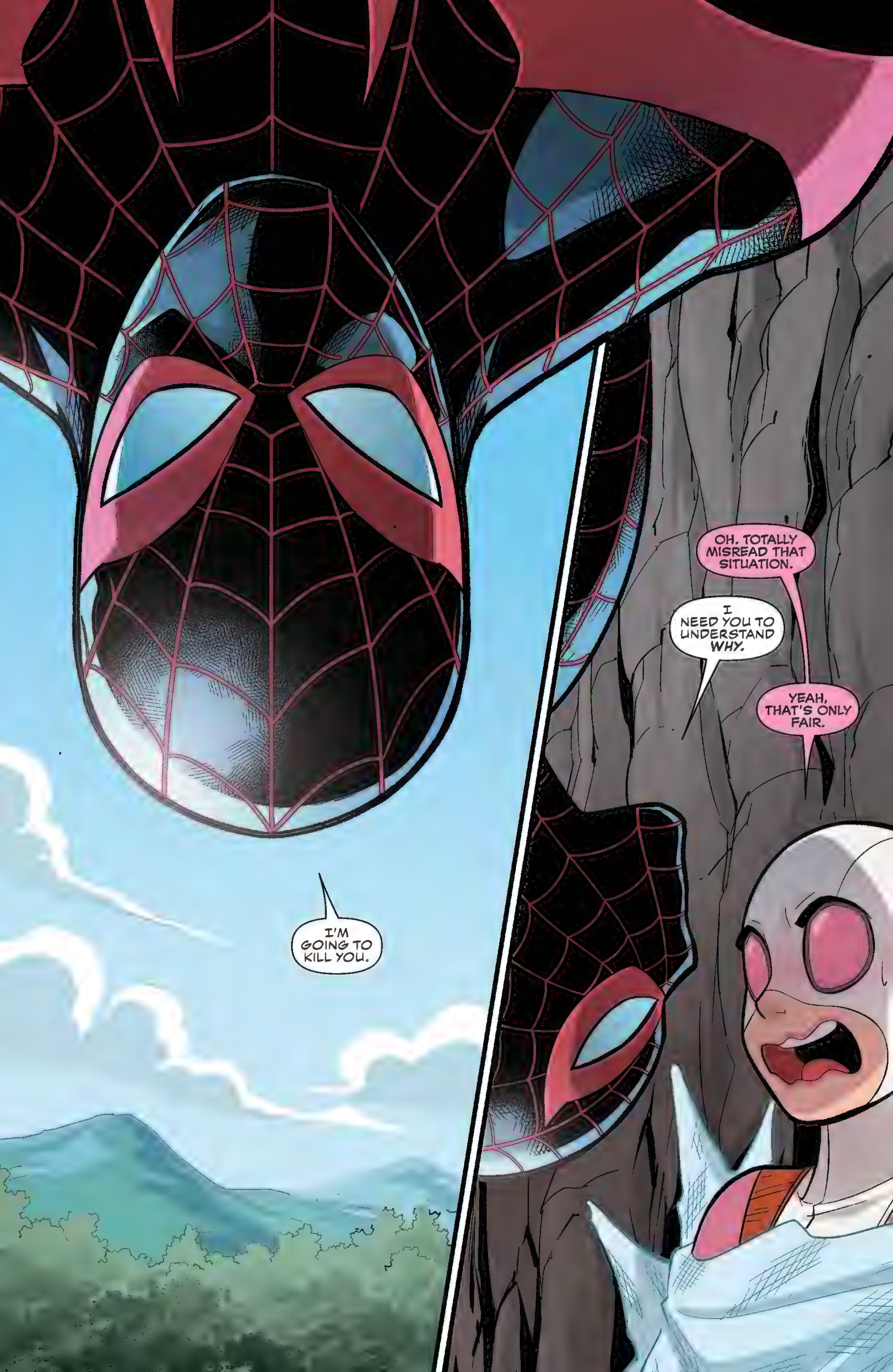

WHAT THE HELL ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH HER? THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE *FIXED*.
HM HM, AS WE DISCUSSED BEFORE, GWEN'S MIND CAN BE *ALTERED*. SHE WON'T *KNOW* WHAT SHE *KNOWS*.
SHE'LL BE *NORMAL*. AND NORMAL GWEN CAN'T BECOME... *WHAT SHE BECOMES*.
MESSING WITH HER MIND WAS WHAT *GAVE* HER THE ABILITY TO MOVE THROUGH AND MANIPULATE REALITY IN THE FIRST PLACE.
DON'T YOU GET IT? *ESCAPING* WHAT WE *DID TO HER* WAS THE *FIRST* MANIFESTATION OF HER *POWERS*.
THIS TRIP TO THE WOODS WAS *BABY FUTURE SUPER VILLAIN'S FIRST STEPS*.
IT IS A DILEMMA.
I SHALL GO TO THE ASTRAL PLANE. THERE MUST BE A WAY TO STRIP GWEN OF HER POWERS. SHE WILL HOLD IN THE MEANTIME.

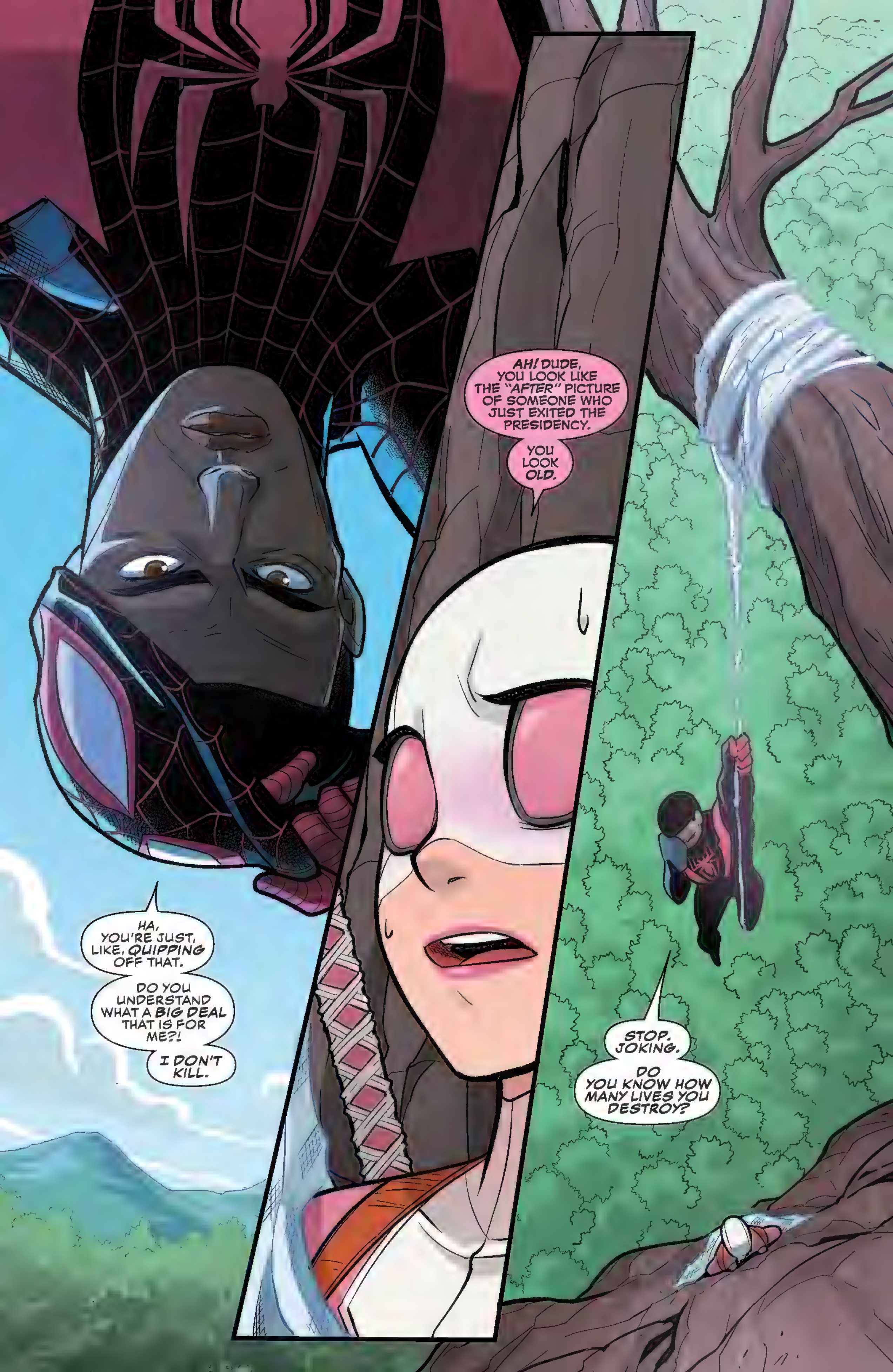

NO!
THWIP THWIP
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SPIDER-MAAAAAAN! YOU'RE SAAAAVING MEEEE!
HEE HEE HEE!

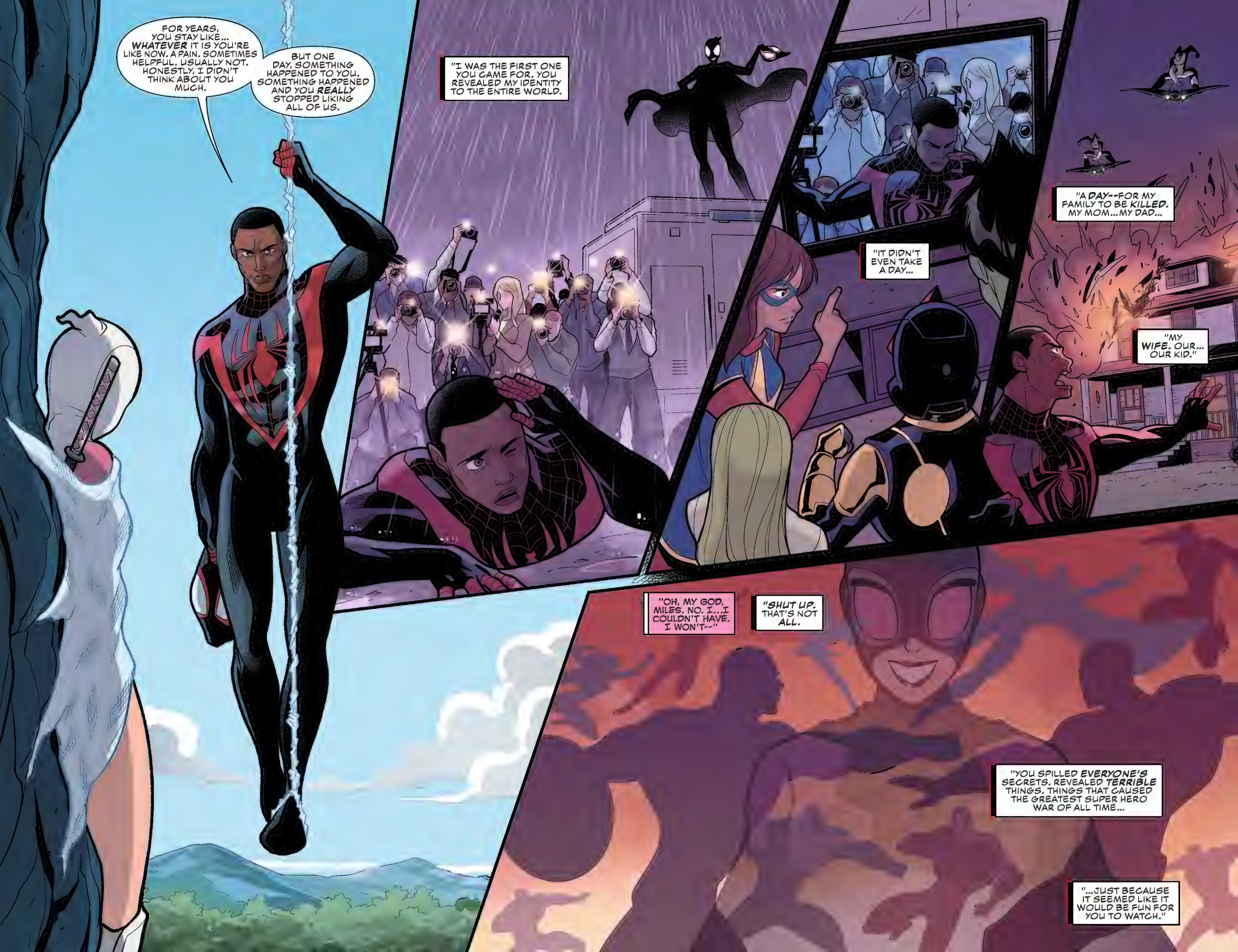

THANKS FOR THAT. THE MEMORY-ERASING TALK WAS GETTING PRETTY SCARY.
NOT THAT THE DISTANCE TO THE GROUND NOW IS MUCH BETTER...

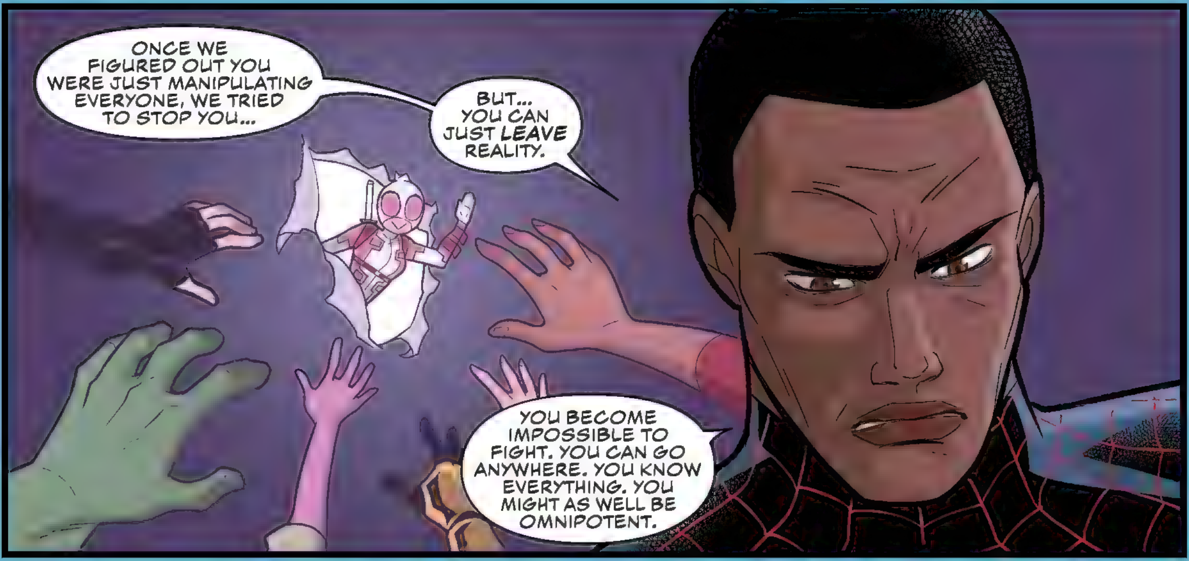

I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU AS A TRUE HERO, MILES.
I UNDERSTAND THERE IS SOME SUPER-VILLAIN VERSION OF ME THAT YOU HATE, I DO.
BUT I KNOW YOU WON'T STAND FOR SOMETHING AS *WACK* AS TOTALLY *MINDWIPING* ME.

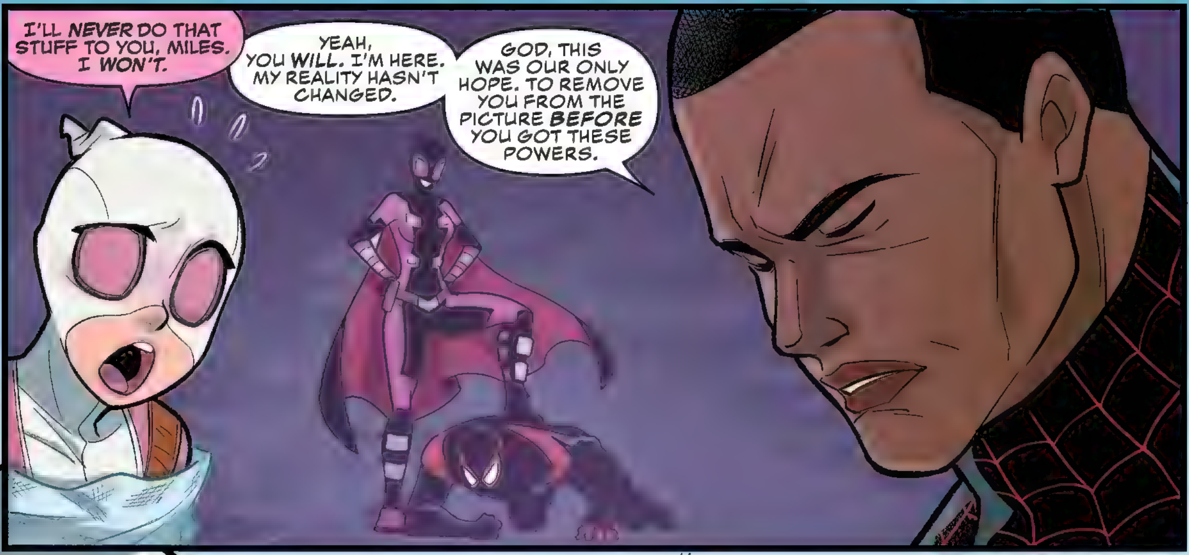

THANK YOU--
WHUMP
OKAY, *LITTLE* ROUGH--

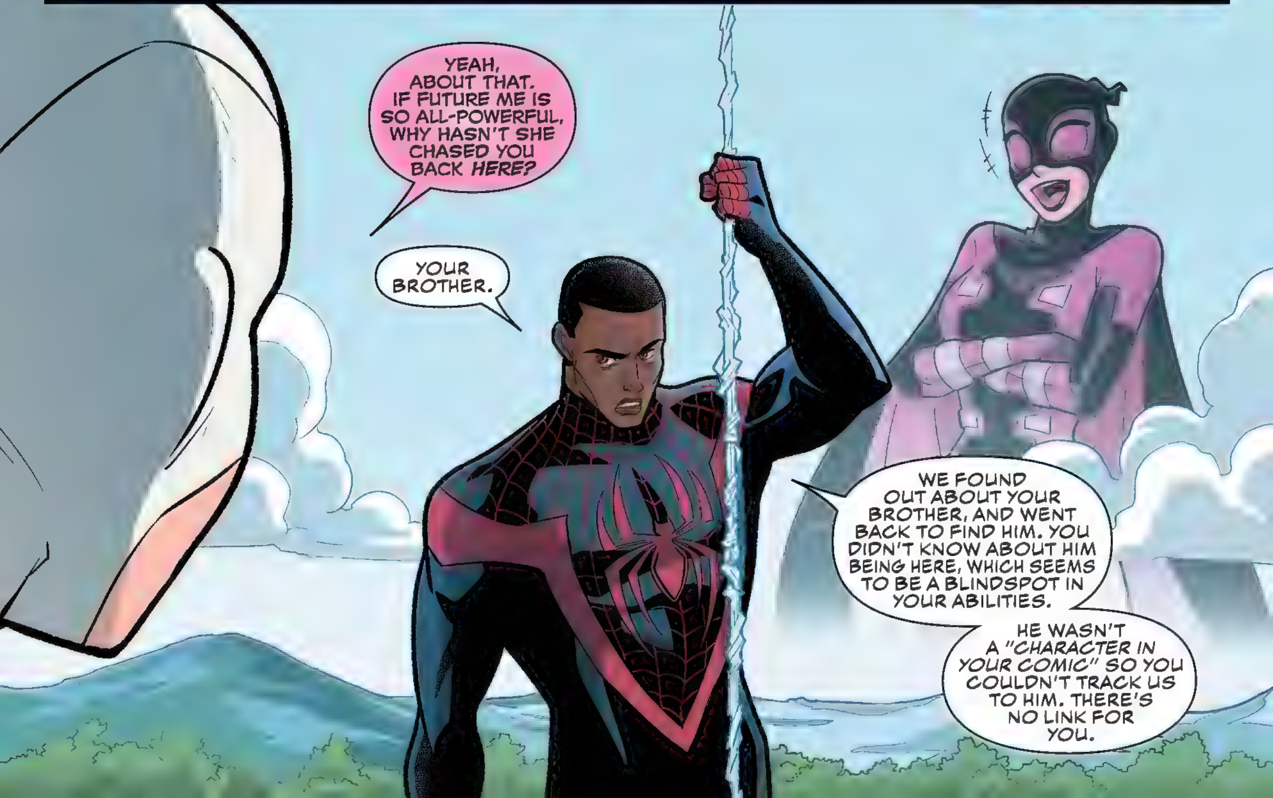

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.
OH. TOTALLY MISREAD THAT SITUATION.
I NEED YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHY.
YEAH, THAT'S ONLY FAIR.

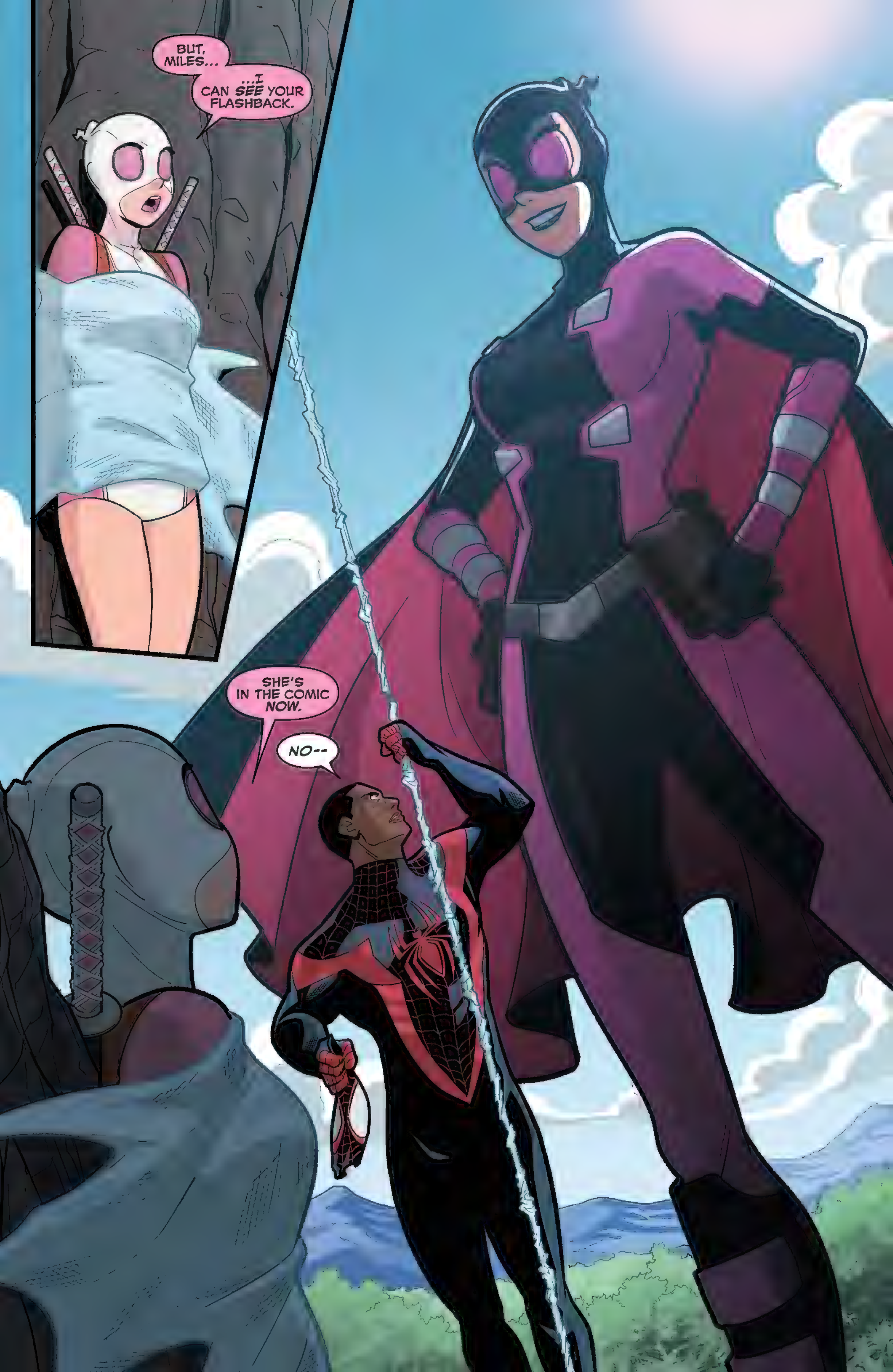

AH! DUDE, YOU LOOK LIKE THE "AFTER" PICTURE OF SOMEONE WHO JUST EXITED THE PRESIDENCY.
YOU LOOK OLD.
HA, YOU'RE JUST, LIKE, QUIPPING OFF THAT.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT A BIG DEAL THAT IS FOR ME?!
I DON'T KILL.
STOP. JOKING.
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY LIVES YOU DESTROY?

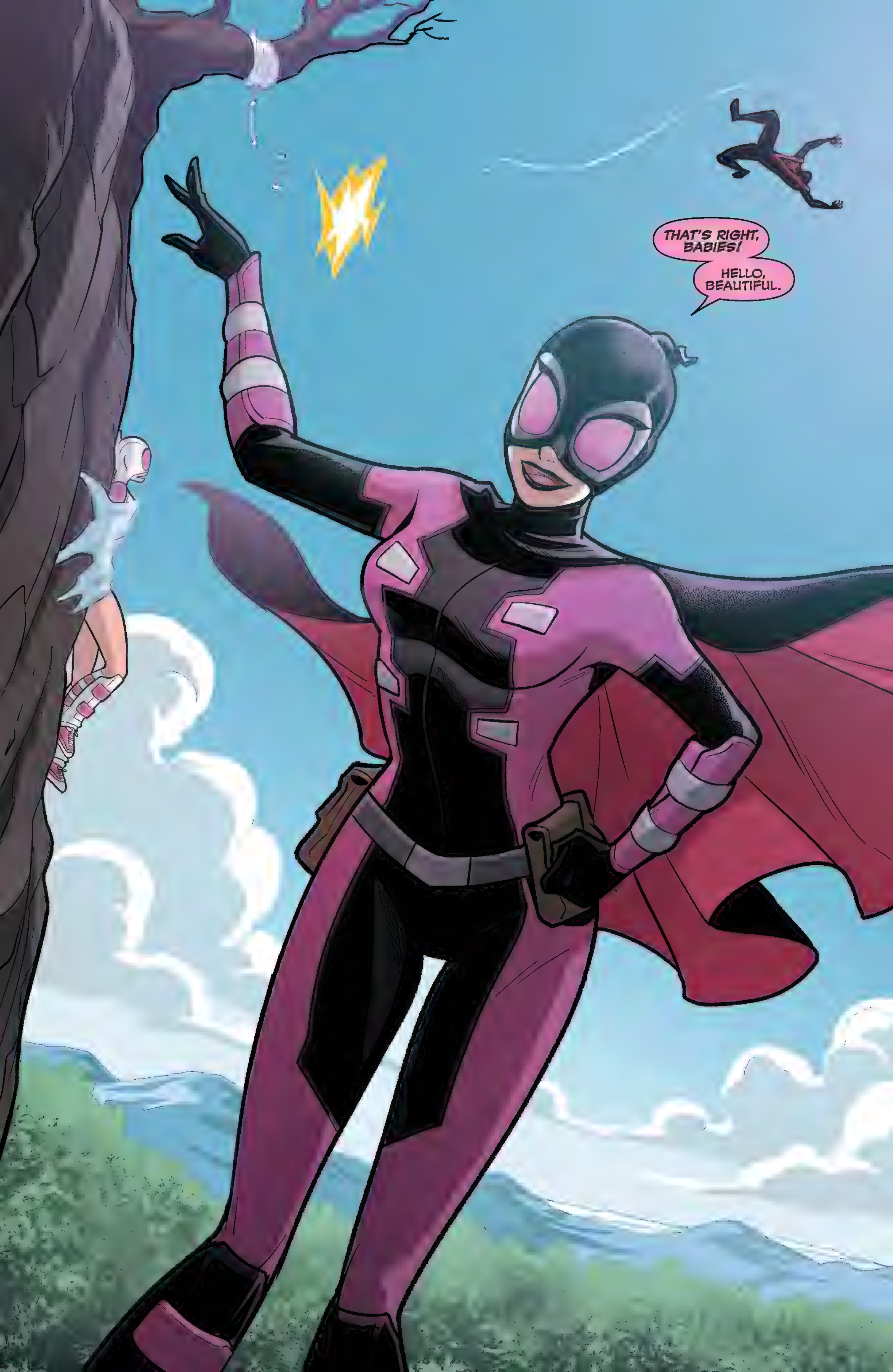

FOR YEARS, YOU STAY LIKE... **WHATEVER** IT IS YOU'RE LIKE NOW. A PAIN. SOMETIMES HELPFUL. USUALLY NOT. HONESTLY, I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT YOU MUCH.
BUT ONE DAY, SOMETHING HAPPENED TO YOU. SOMETHING HAPPENED AND YOU **REALLY** STOPPED LIKING ALL OF US.
"I WAS THE FIRST ONE YOU CAME FOR. YOU REVEALED MY IDENTITY TO THE ENTIRE WORLD.
"IT DIDN'T EVEN TAKE A DAY...
"A **DAY**--FOR MY FAMILY TO BE **KILLED**. MY MOM... MY DAD...
"MY **WIFE**. OUR... OUR KID."
"OH, MY GOD, MILES. NO. I... I COULDN'T HAVE. I WON'T--"
"**SHUT UP**. THAT'S NOT **ALL**.
"YOU SPILLED **EVERYONE'S** SECRETS. REVEALED **TERRIBLE** THINGS. THINGS THAT CAUSED THE GREATEST SUPER HERO WAR OF ALL TIME...
"...JUST BECAUSE IT SEEMED LIKE IT WOULD BE FUN FOR YOU TO WATCH."

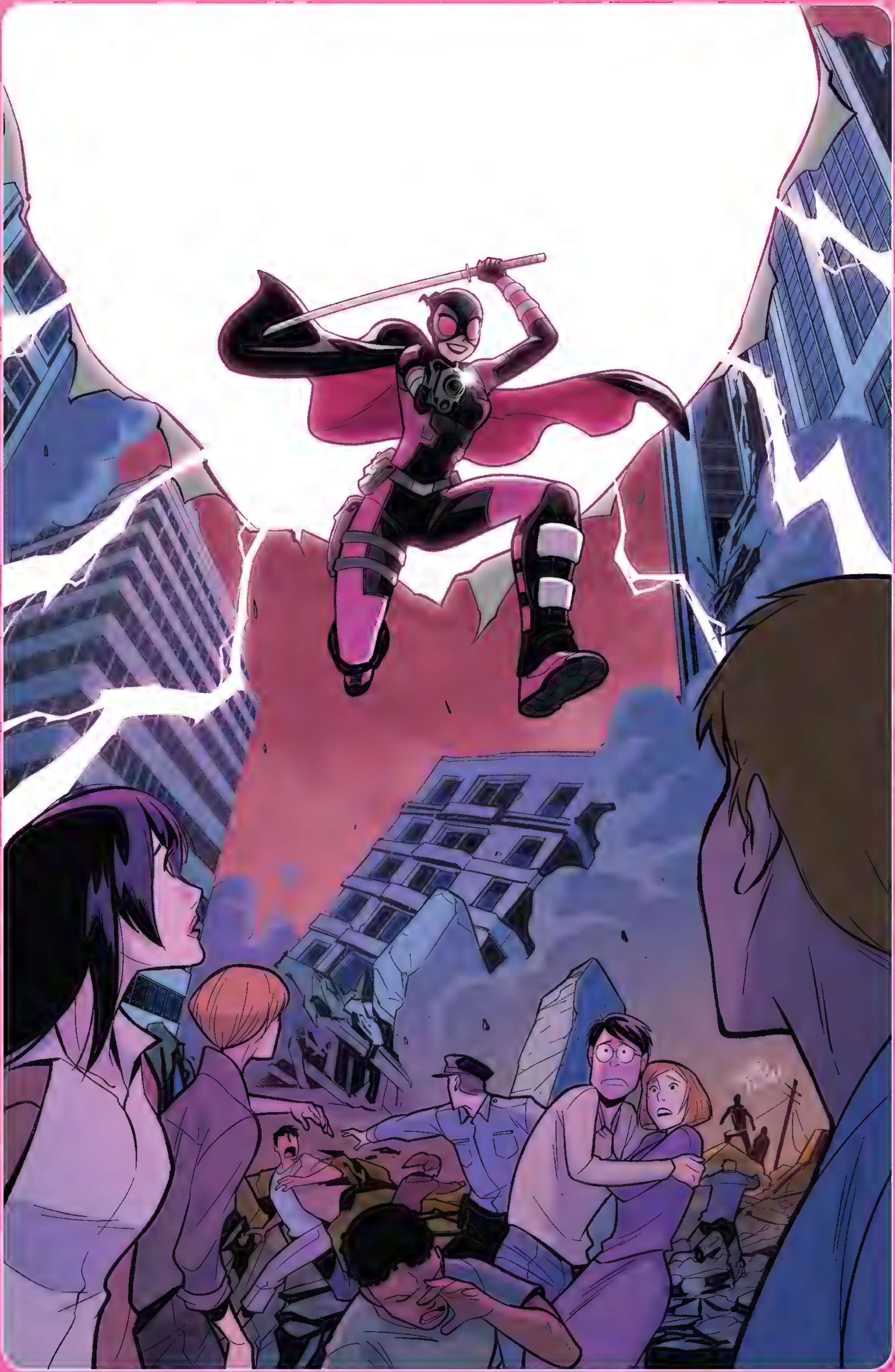

ONCE WE FIGURED OUT YOU WERE JUST MANIPULATING EVERYONE, WE TRIED TO STOP YOU...
BUT... YOU CAN JUST *LEAVE* REALITY.
YOU BECOME IMPOSSIBLE TO FIGHT. YOU CAN GO ANYWHERE. YOU KNOW EVERYTHING. YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE OMNIPOTENT.


I'LL *NEVER* DO THAT STUFF TO YOU, MILES. I *WON'T*.
YEAH, YOU *WILL*. I'M HERE. MY REALITY HASN'T CHANGED.
GOD, THIS WAS OUR ONLY HOPE. TO REMOVE YOU FROM THE PICTURE *BEFORE* YOU GOT THESE POWERS.


YEAH, ABOUT THAT. IF FUTURE ME IS SO ALL-POWERFUL, WHY HASN'T SHE CHASED YOU BACK *HERE?*
YOUR BROTHER.
WE FOUND OUT ABOUT YOUR BROTHER, AND WENT BACK TO FIND HIM. YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT HIM BEING HERE, WHICH SEEMS TO BE A BLINDSPOT IN YOUR ABILITIES.
HE WASN'T A *"CHARACTER IN YOUR COMIC"* SO YOU COULDN'T TRACK US TO HIM. THERE'S NO LINK FOR YOU.

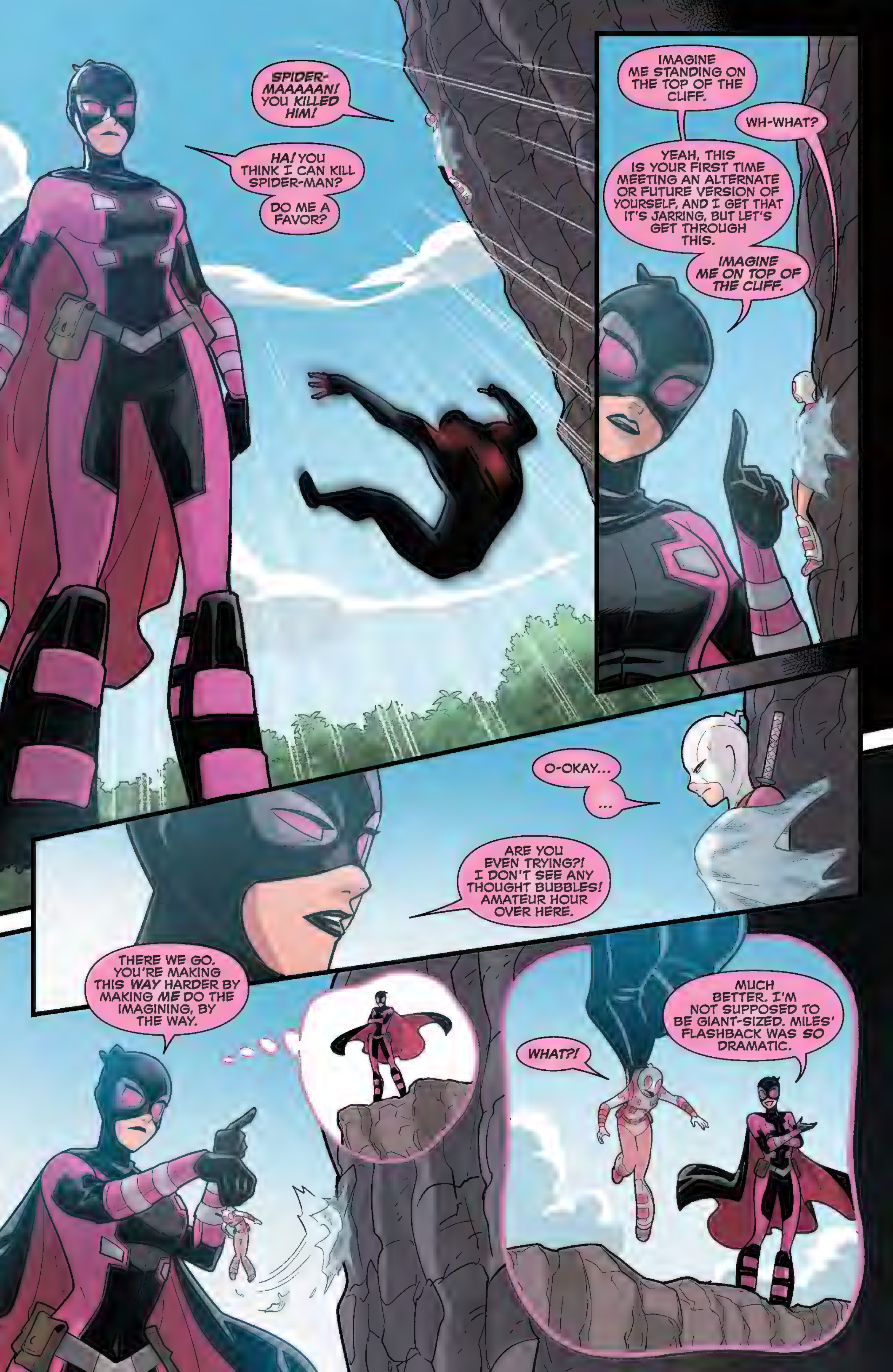

BUT, MILES...
...I CAN SEE YOUR FLASHBACK.
SHE'S IN THE COMIC NOW.
NO--

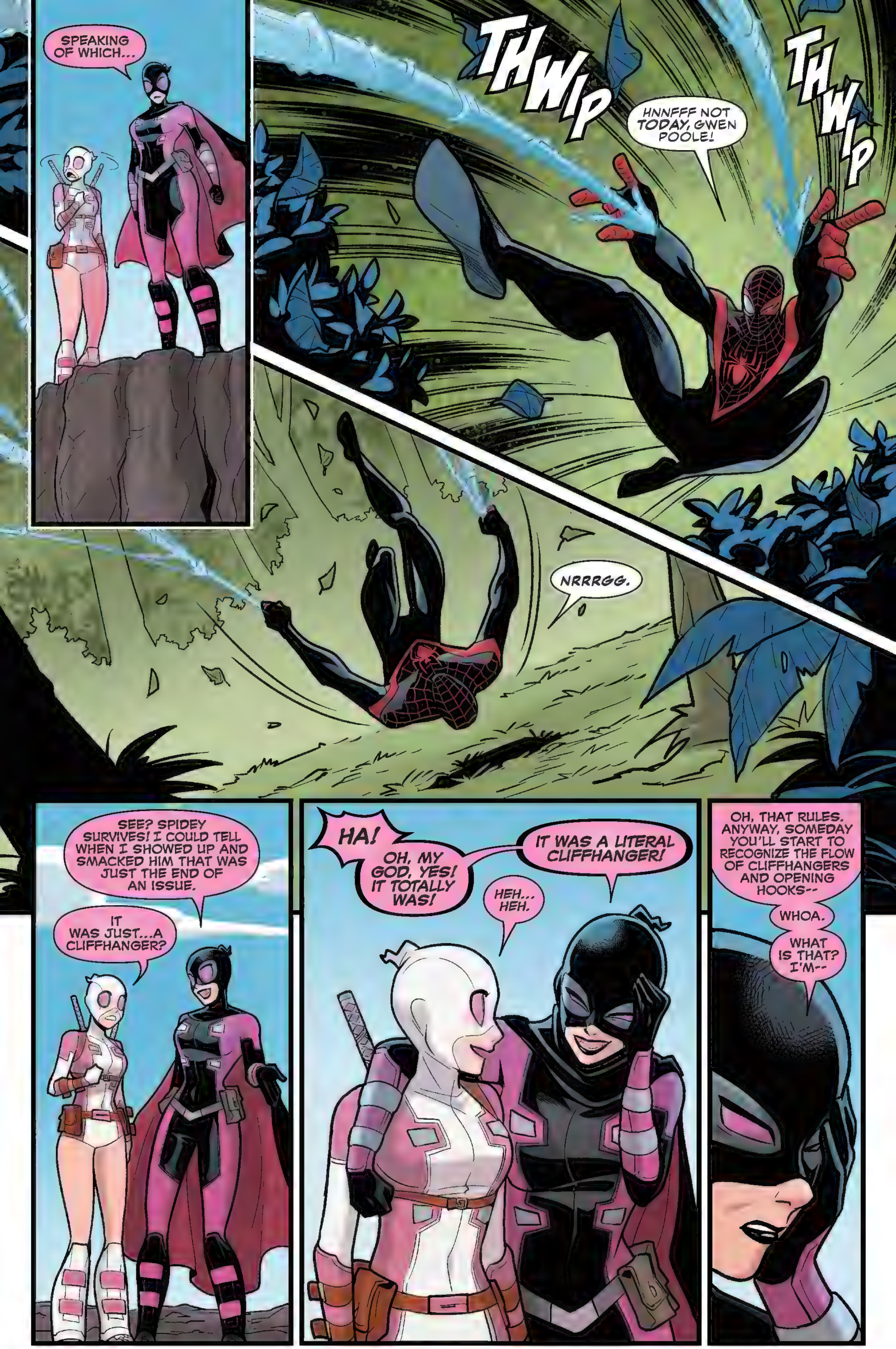

THAT'S RIGHT, BABIES!
HELLO, BEAUTIFUL.

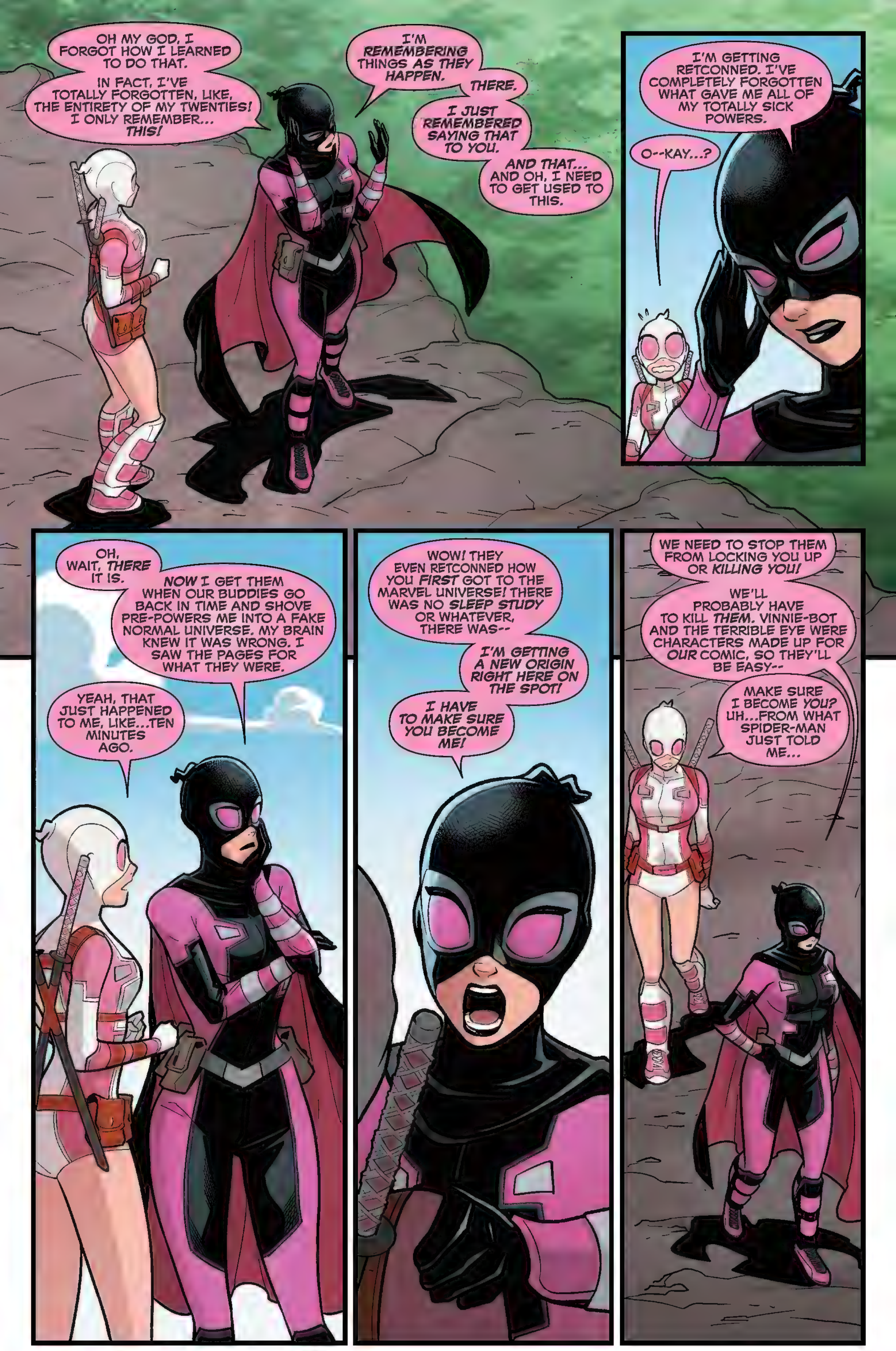


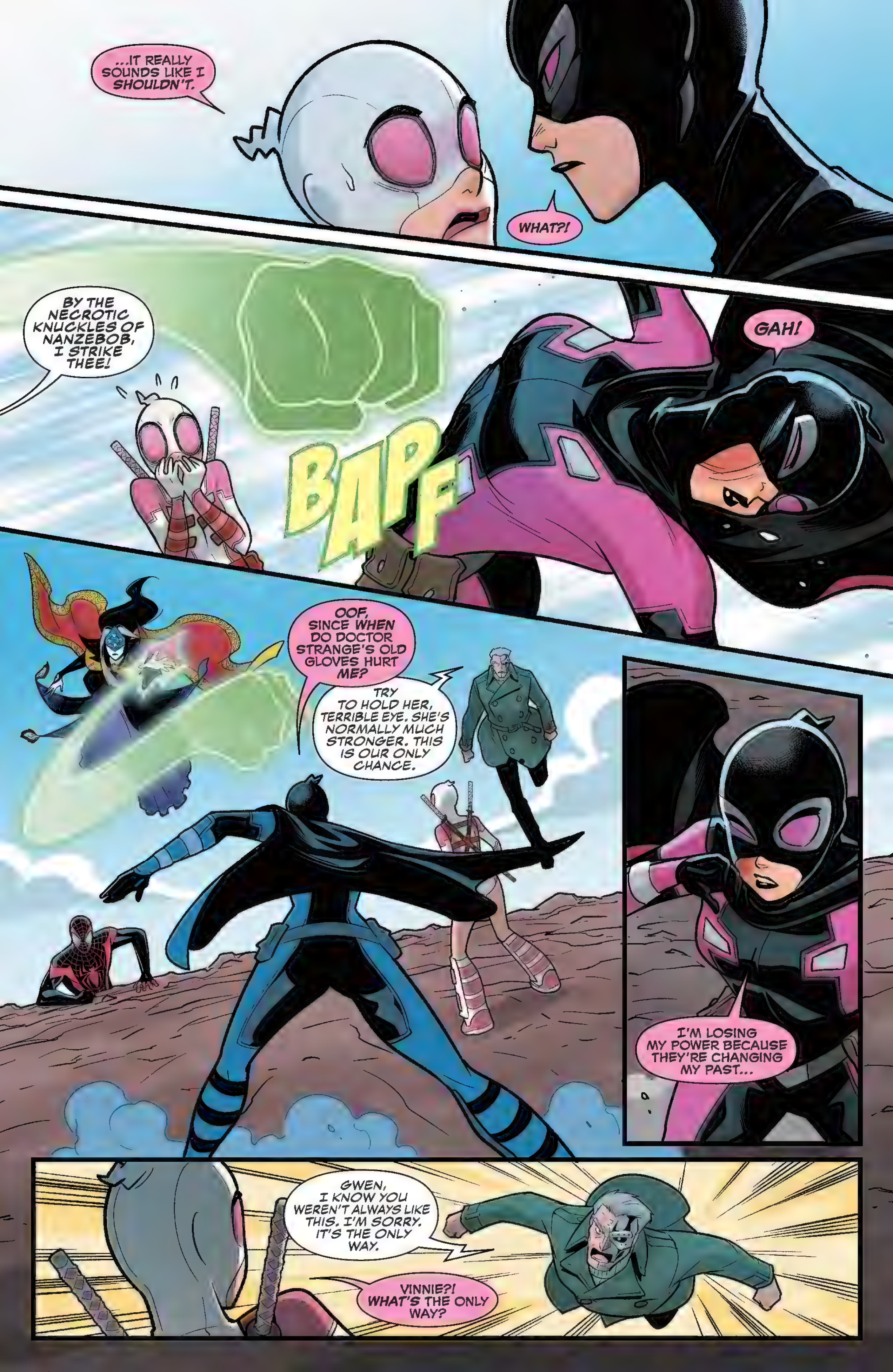
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #20

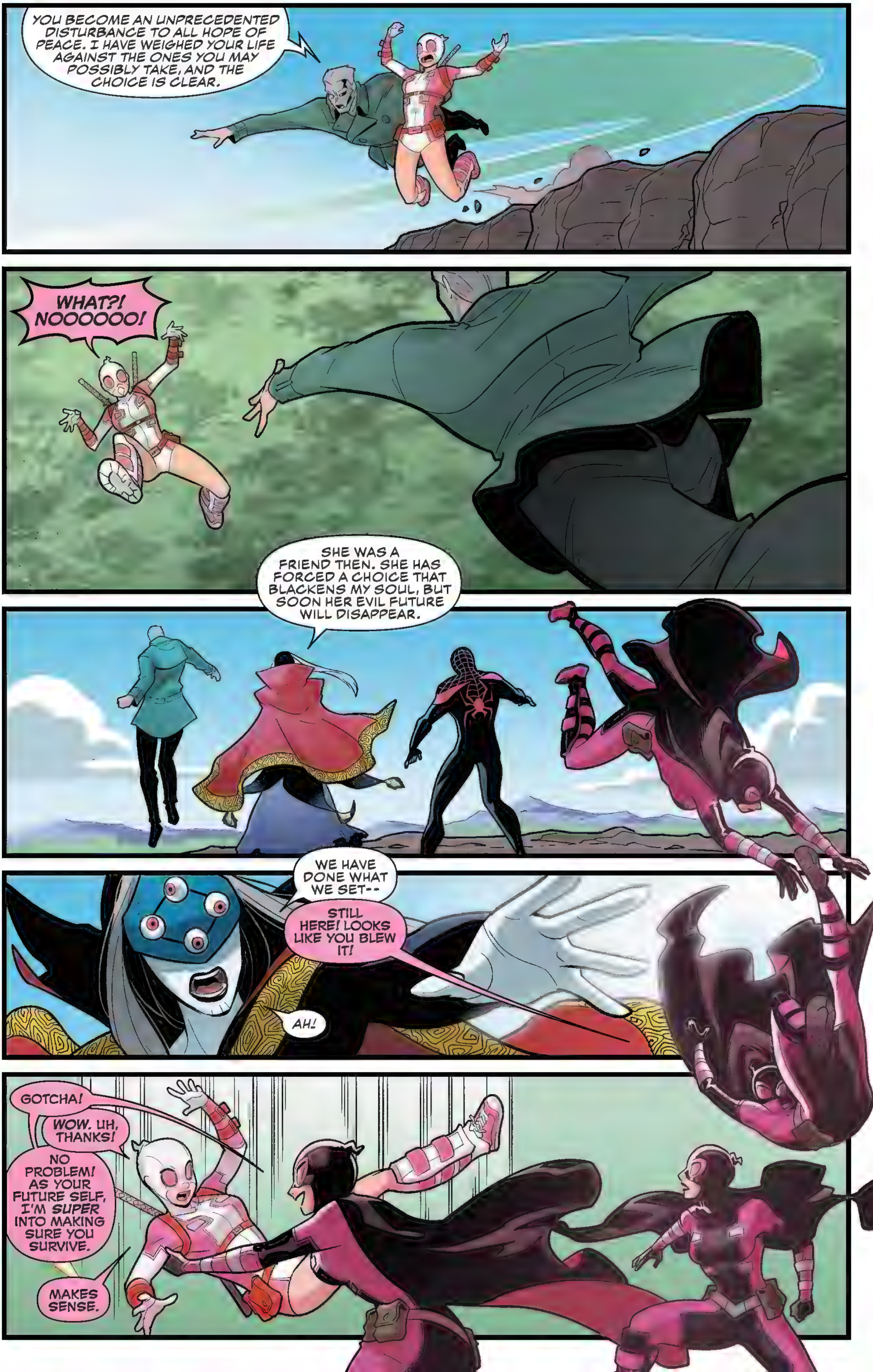
"BEYOND THE FOURTH WALL PART FIVE"

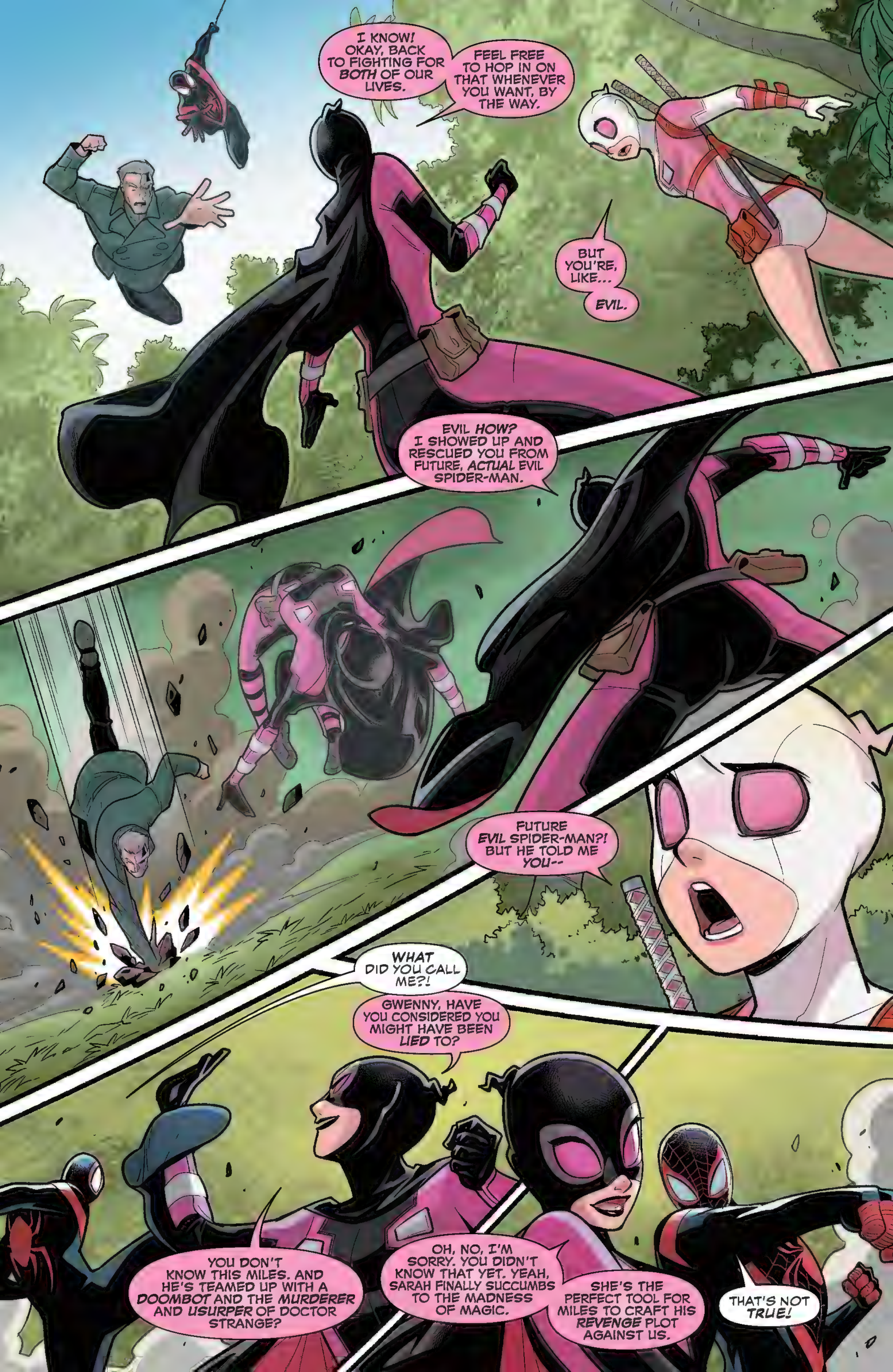

SPIDER-MAAAAAAN! YOU KILLED HIM!
HA! YOU THINK I CAN KILL SPIDER-MAN?
DO ME A FAVOR?
IMAGINE ME STANDING ON THE TOP OF THE CLIFF.
WH-WHAT?
YEAH, THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME MEETING AN ALTERNATE OR FUTURE VERSION OF YOURSELF, AND I GET THAT IT'S JARRING, BUT LET'S GET THROUGH THIS.
IMAGINE ME ON TOP OF THE CLIFF.
O-OKAY...
...
ARE YOU EVEN TRYING?! I DON'T SEE ANY THOUGHT BUBBLES! AMATEUR HOUR OVER HERE.
THERE WE GO. YOU'RE MAKING THIS *WAY* HARDER BY MAKING *ME* DO THE IMAGINING, BY THE WAY.
WHAT?!
MUCH BETTER. I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE GIANT-SIZED. MILES' FLASHBACK WAS *SO* DRAMATIC.

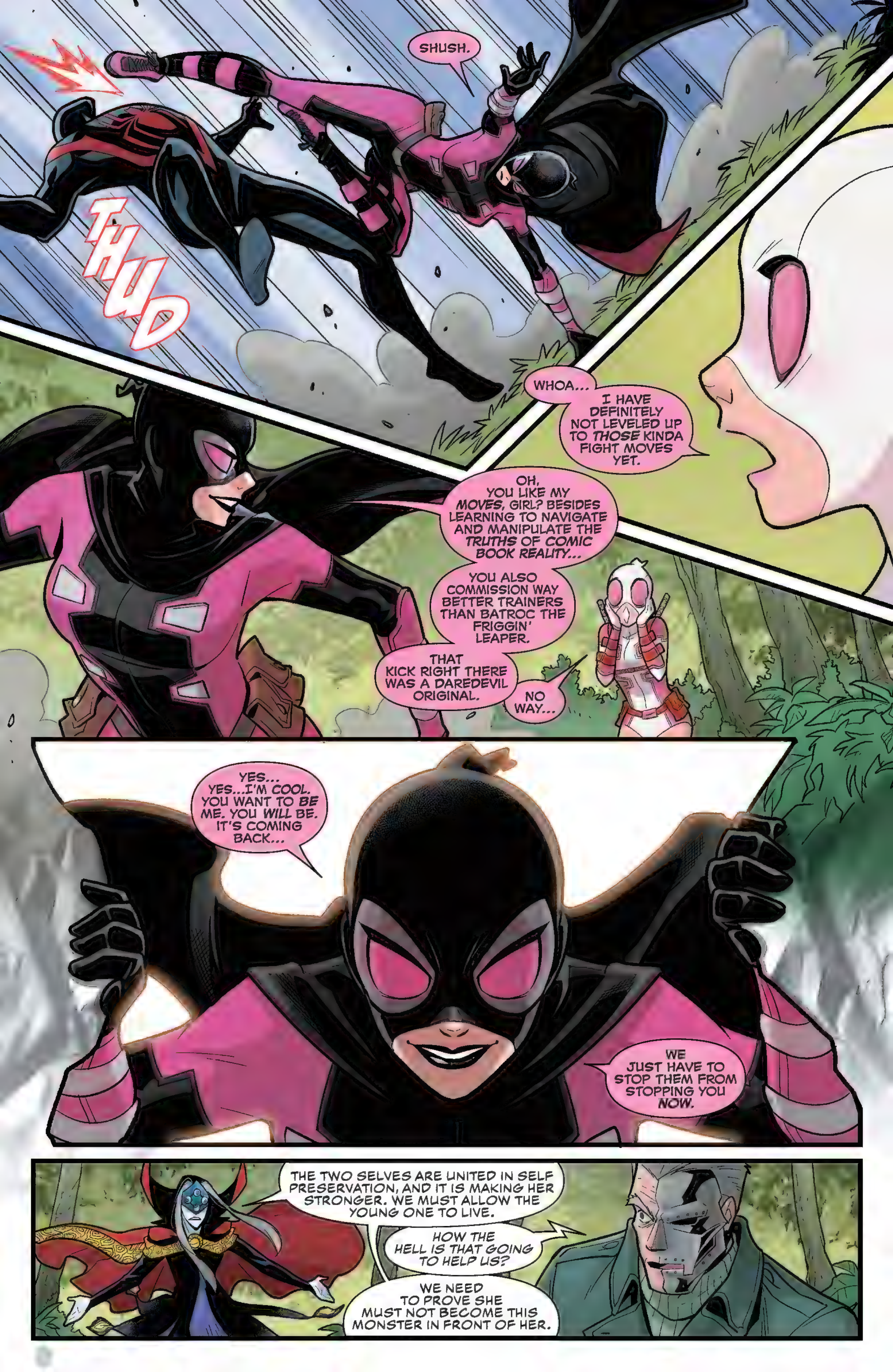

SPEAKING OF WHICH...
THWIP
HNNFFF NOT TODAY, GWEN POOLE!
THWIP
NRRRGG.
SEE? SPIDEY SURVIVES! I COULD TELL WHEN I SHOWED UP AND SMACKED HIM THAT WAS JUST THE END OF AN ISSUE.
IT WAS JUST...A CLIFFHANGER?
HA!
OH, MY GOD, YES! IT TOTALLY WAS!
IT WAS A LITERAL CLIFFHANGER!
HEH... HEH.
OH, THAT RULES. ANYWAY, SOMEDAY YOU'LL START TO RECOGNIZE THE FLOW OF CLIFFHANGERS AND OPENING HOOKS--
WHOA.
WHAT IS THAT? I'M--

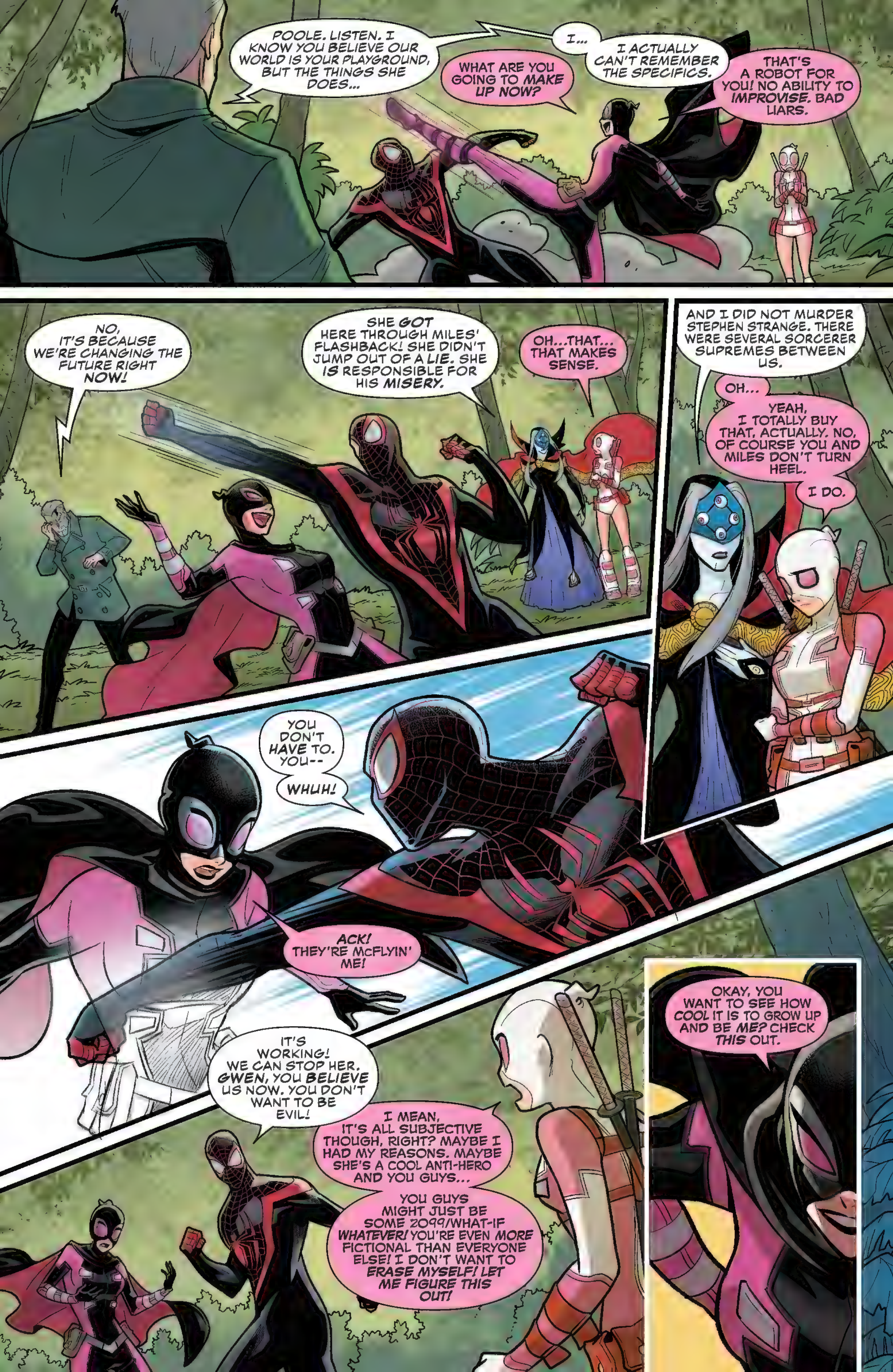

OH MY GOD, I FORGOT HOW I LEARNED TO DO THAT.
IN FACT, I'VE TOTALLY FORGOTTEN, LIKE, THE ENTIRETY OF MY TWENTIES! I ONLY REMEMBER... THIS!
I'M REMEMBERING THINGS AS THEY HAPPEN.
THERE.
I JUST REMEMBERED SAYING THAT TO YOU.
AND THAT... AND OH, I NEED TO GET USED TO THIS.
I'M GETTING RETCONNED. I'VE COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN WHAT GAVE ME ALL OF MY TOTALLY SICK POWERS.
O--KAY...?
OH, WAIT, THERE IT IS.
NOW I GET THEM WHEN OUR BUDDIES GO BACK IN TIME AND SHOVE PRE-POWERS ME INTO A FAKE NORMAL UNIVERSE. MY BRAIN KNEW IT WAS WRONG. I SAW THE PAGES FOR WHAT THEY WERE.
YEAH, THAT JUST HAPPENED TO ME, LIKE...TEN MINUTES AGO.
WOW! THEY EVEN RETCONNED HOW YOU FIRST GOT TO THE MARVEL UNIVERSE! THERE WAS NO SLEEP STUDY OR WHATEVER, THERE WAS--
I'M GETTING A NEW ORIGIN RIGHT HERE ON THE SPOT!
I HAVE TO MAKE SURE YOU BECOME ME!
WE NEED TO STOP THEM FROM LOCKING YOU UP OR KILLING YOU!
WE'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO KILL THEM. VINNIE-BOT AND THE TERRIBLE EYE WERE CHARACTERS MADE UP FOR OUR COMIC, SO THEY'LL BE EASY--
MAKE SURE I BECOME YOU? UH...FROM WHAT SPIDER-MAN JUST TOLD ME...

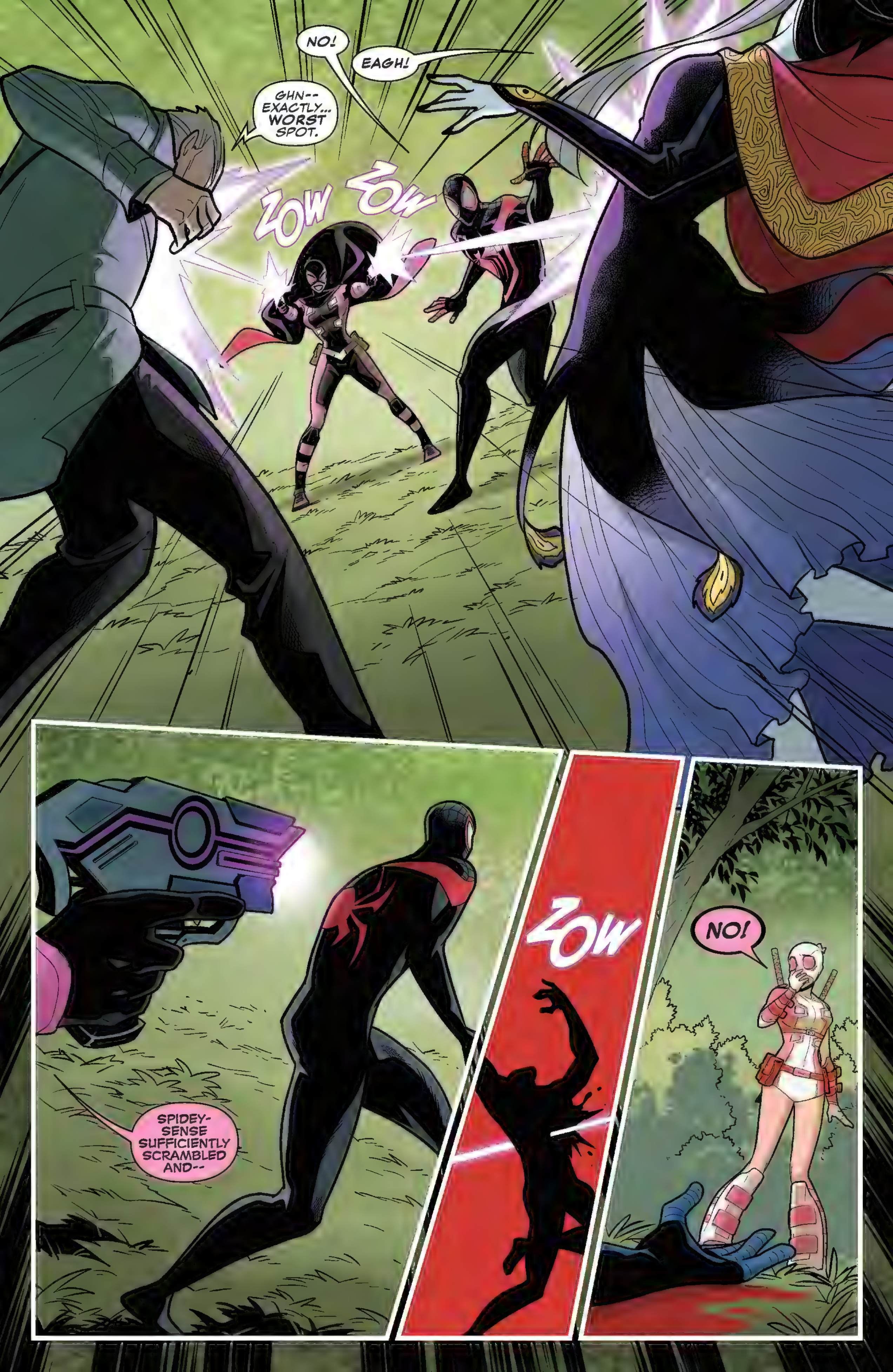

...IT REALLY SOUNDS LIKE I SHOULDN'T.
WHAT?!
BY THE NECROTIC KNUCKLES OF NANZEBOB, I STRIKE THEE!
GAH!
BAPF
OOF, SINCE *WHEN* DO DOCTOR STRANGE'S OLD GLOVES HURT ME?
TRY TO HOLD HER, TERRIBLE EYE. SHE'S NORMALLY MUCH STRONGER. THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE.
I'M LOSING MY POWER BECAUSE THEY'RE CHANGING MY PAST...
GWEN, I KNOW YOU WEREN'T ALWAYS LIKE THIS. I'M SORRY. IT'S THE ONLY WAY.
VINNIE?! WHAT'S THE ONLY WAY?

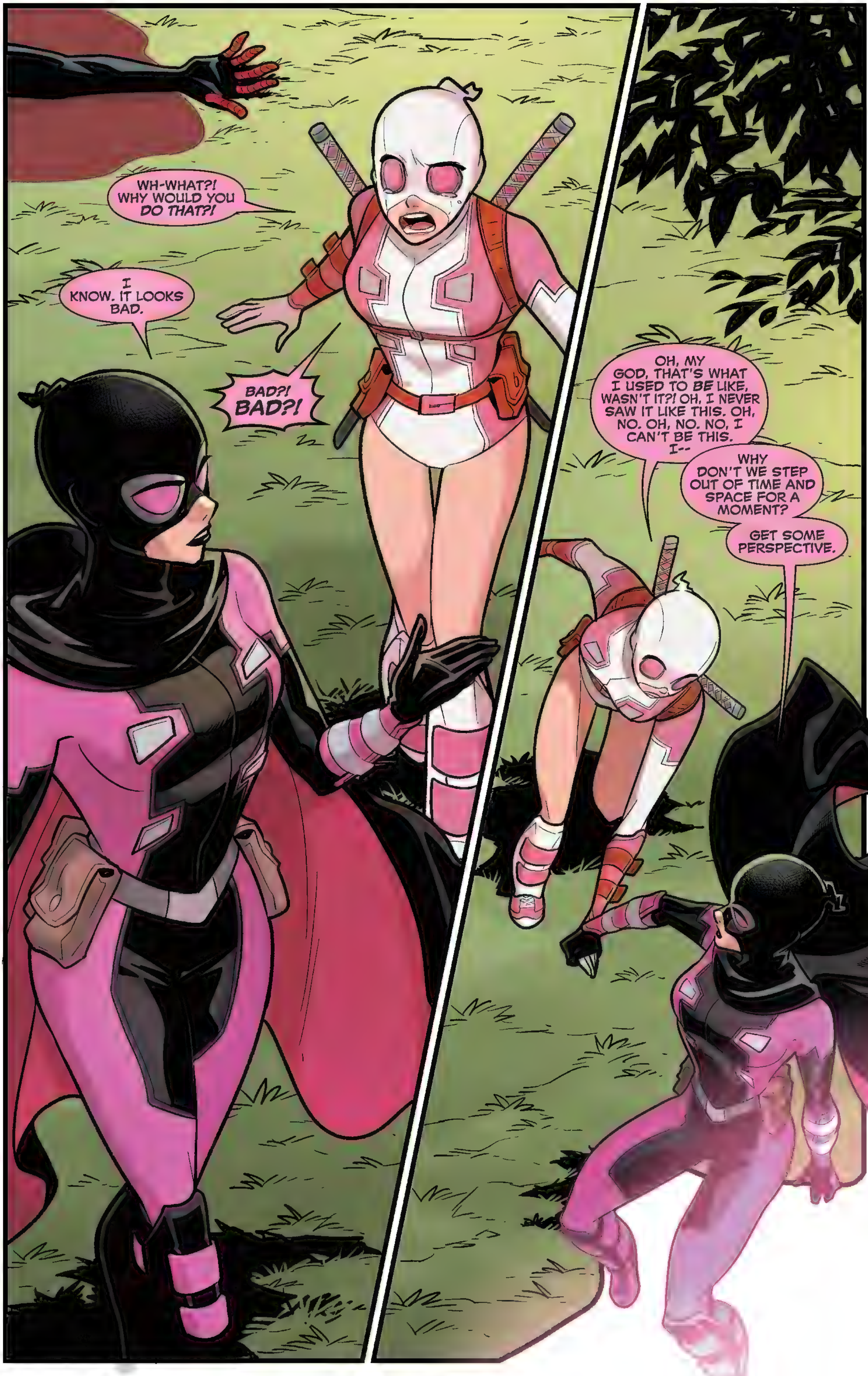

YOU BECOME AN UNPRECEDENTED DISTURBANCE TO ALL HOPE OF PEACE. I HAVE WEIGHED YOUR LIFE AGAINST THE ONES YOU MAY POSSIBLY TAKE, AND THE CHOICE IS CLEAR.
WHAT?! NOOOOOO!
SHE WAS A FRIEND THEN. SHE HAS FORCED A CHOICE THAT BLACKENS MY SOUL, BUT SOON HER EVIL FUTURE WILL DISAPPEAR.
WE HAVE DONE WHAT WE SET--
STILL HERE! LOOKS LIKE YOU BLEW IT!
AH!
GOTCHA!
WOW. UH, THANKS!
NO PROBLEM! AS YOUR FUTURE SELF, I'M *SUPER* INTO MAKING SURE YOU SURVIVE.
MAKES SENSE.

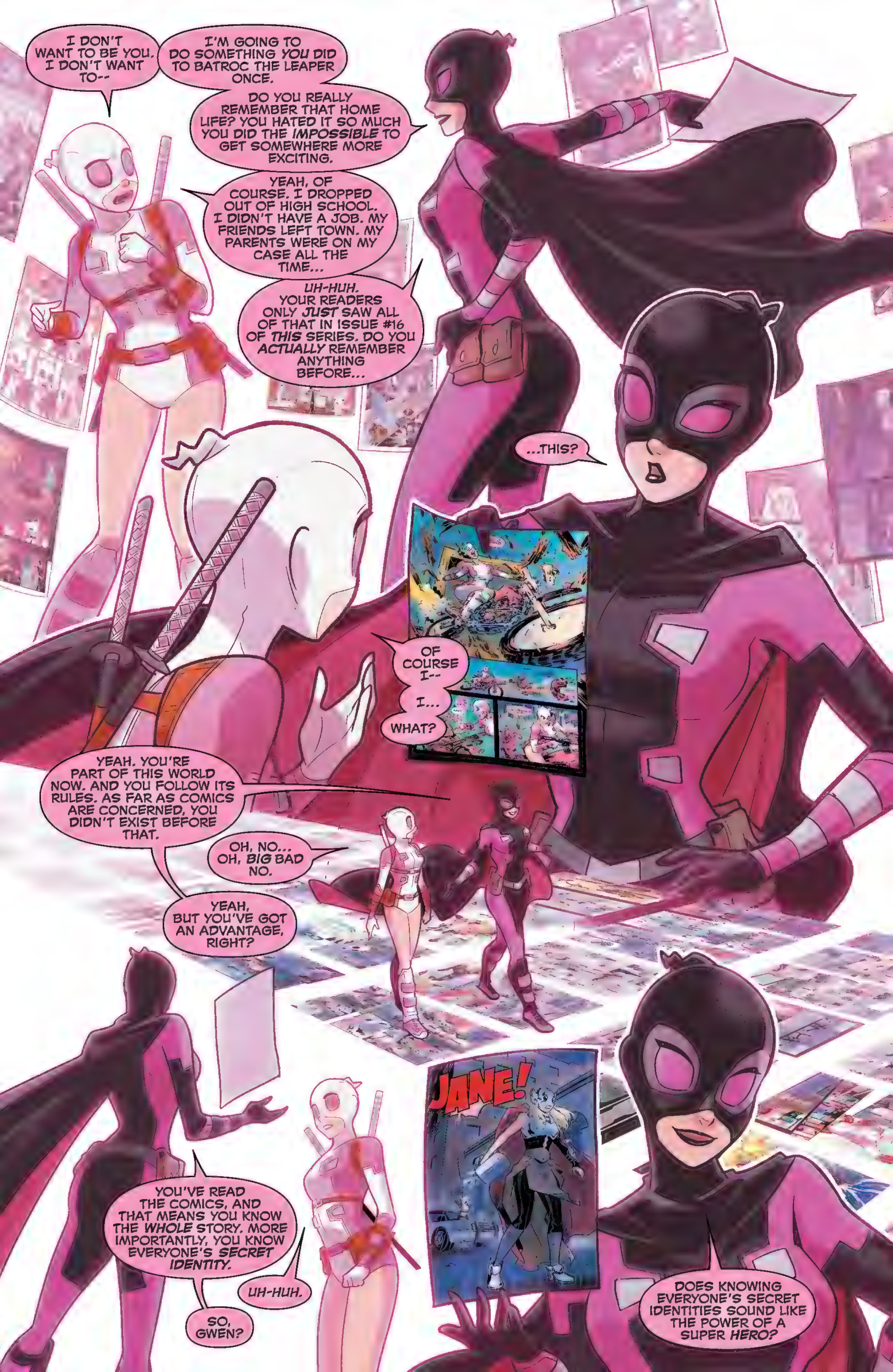

I KNOW! OKAY, BACK TO FIGHTING FOR *BOTH* OF OUR LIVES.
FEEL FREE TO HOP IN ON THAT WHENEVER YOU WANT, BY THE WAY.
BUT YOU'RE, LIKE... *EVIL.*
EVIL *HOW?* I SHOWED UP AND RESCUED YOU FROM FUTURE, *ACTUAL* EVIL SPIDER-MAN.
FUTURE *EVIL* SPIDER-MAN?! BUT HE TOLD ME *YOU--*
WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?!
GWENNY, HAVE YOU CONSIDERED YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN *LIED* TO?
YOU DON'T KNOW THIS MILES. AND HE'S TEAMED UP WITH A *DOOMBOT* AND THE *MURDERER* AND *USURPER* OF DOCTOR STRANGE?
OH, NO, I'M SORRY. YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT YET. YEAH, SARAH FINALLY SUCCUMBS TO THE MADNESS OF MAGIC.
SHE'S THE PERFECT TOOL FOR MILES TO CRAFT HIS *REVENGE* PLOT AGAINST US.
THAT'S NOT *TRUE!*

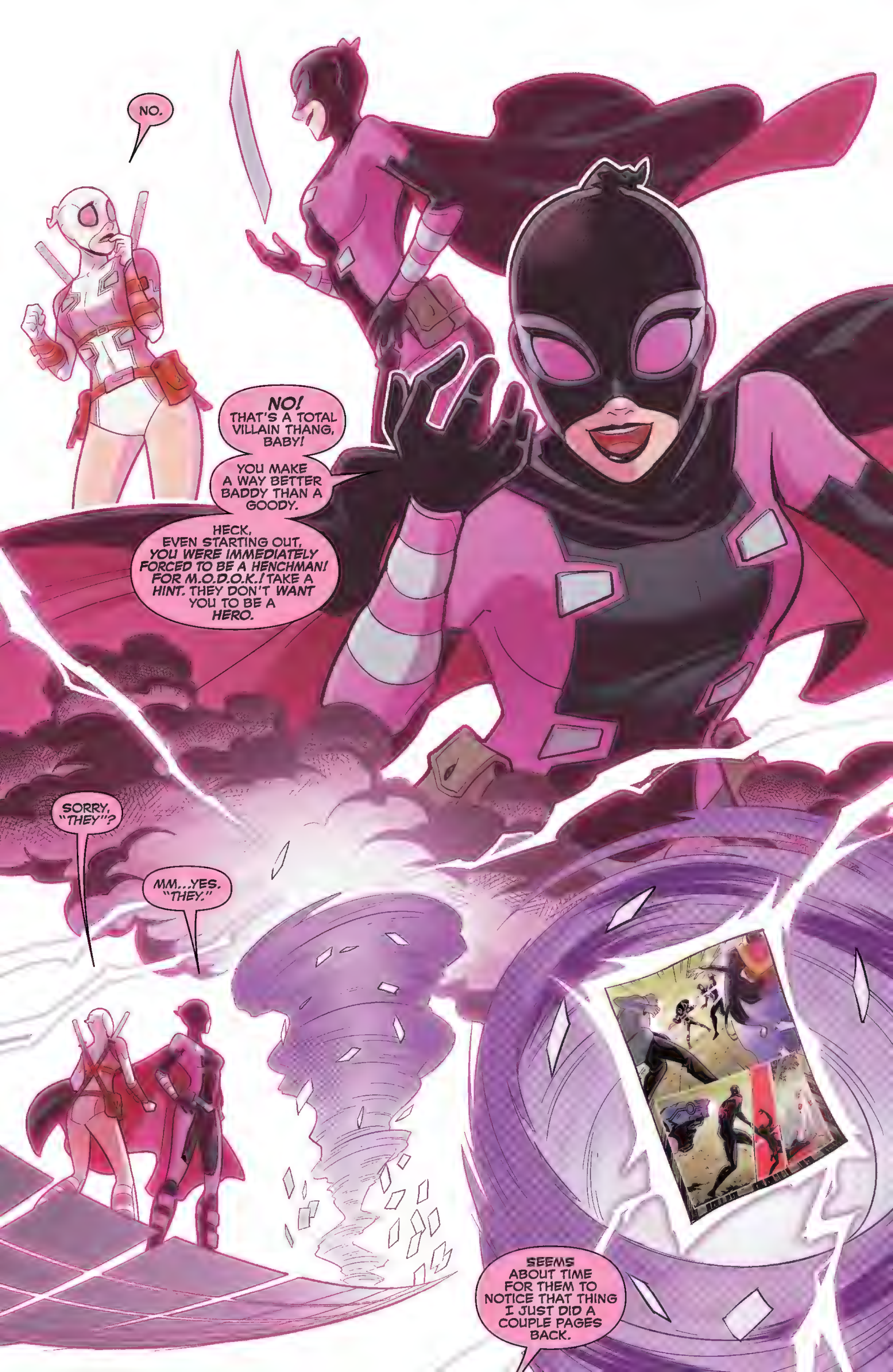

SHUSH.
THUD
WHOA...
I HAVE DEFINITELY NOT LEVELED UP TO *THOSE* KINDA FIGHT MOVES YET.
OH, YOU LIKE MY *MOVES*, GIRL? BESIDES LEARNING TO NAVIGATE AND MANIPULATE THE *TRUTHS* OF *COMIC BOOK REALITY...*
YOU ALSO COMMISSION WAY BETTER TRAINERS THAN BATROC THE FRIGGIN' LEAPER.
THAT KICK RIGHT THERE WAS A DAREDEVIL ORIGINAL.
NO WAY...
YES... YES...I'M *COOL*. YOU WANT TO *BE* ME. YOU *WILL* BE. IT'S COMING BACK...
WE JUST HAVE TO STOP THEM FROM STOPPING YOU *NOW*.
THE TWO SELVES ARE UNITED IN SELF PRESERVATION, AND IT IS MAKING HER STRONGER. WE MUST ALLOW THE YOUNG ONE TO LIVE.
HOW THE HELL IS THAT GOING TO HELP US?
WE NEED TO PROVE SHE MUST NOT BECOME THIS MONSTER IN FRONT OF HER.

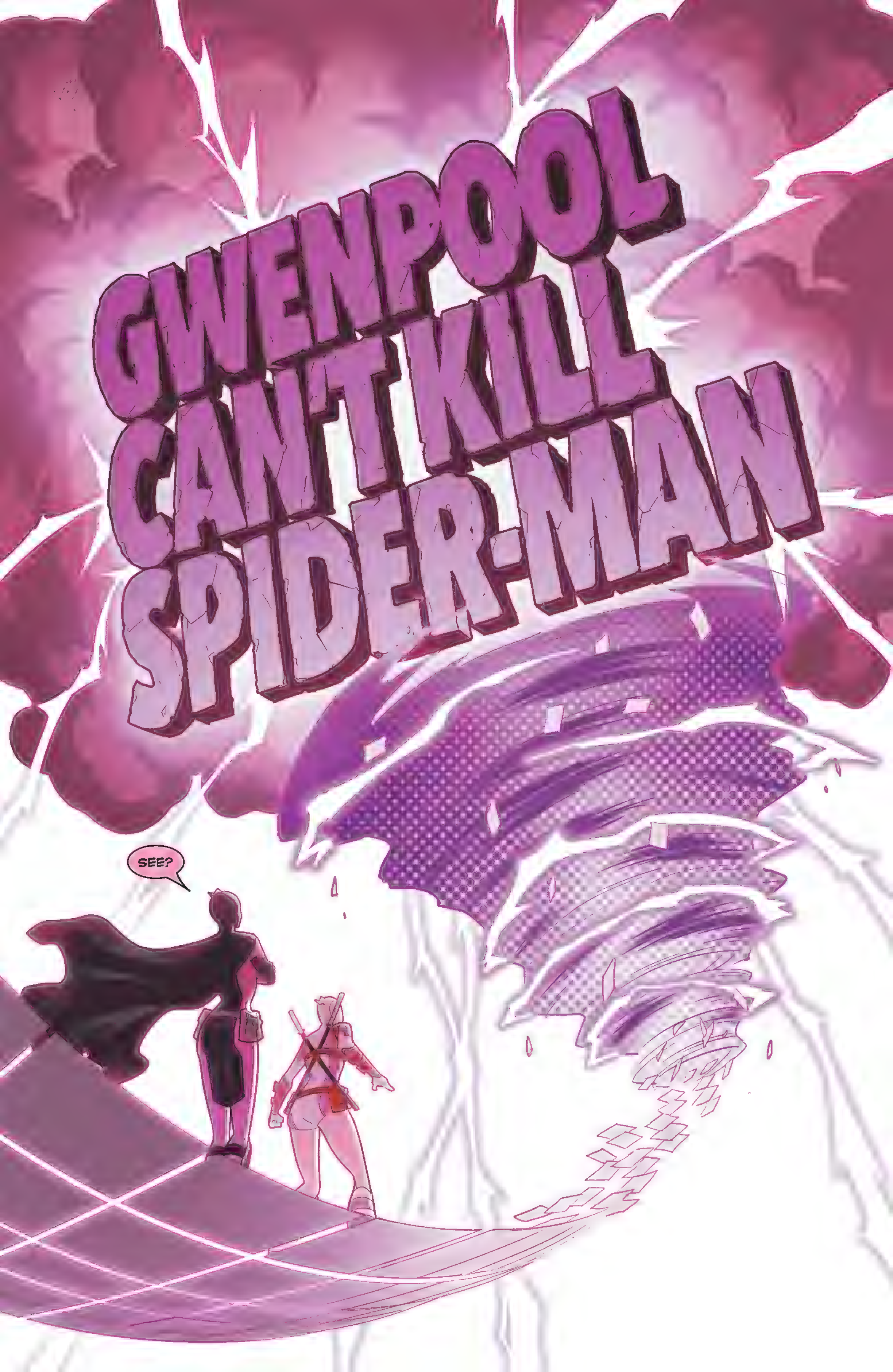

POOLE. LISTEN. I KNOW YOU BELIEVE OUR WORLD IS YOUR PLAYGROUND, BUT THE THINGS SHE DOES...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO *MAKE UP* NOW?
I...
I ACTUALLY CAN'T REMEMBER THE SPECIFICS.
THAT'S A ROBOT FOR YOU! NO ABILITY TO *IMPROVISE.* BAD LIARS.
NO, IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE CHANGING THE FUTURE RIGHT *NOW!*
SHE *GOT* HERE THROUGH MILES' FLASHBACK! SHE DIDN'T JUMP OUT OF A *LIE.* SHE *IS* RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS *MISERY.*
OH...THAT...THAT MAKES SENSE.
AND I DID NOT MURDER STEPHEN STRANGE. THERE WERE SEVERAL SORCERER SUPREMES BETWEEN US.
OH...
YEAH, I TOTALLY BUY THAT, ACTUALLY. NO, OF COURSE YOU AND MILES DON'T TURN HEEL.
I DO.
YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO. YOU--
WHUH!
ACK! THEY'RE McFLYIN' ME!
IT'S WORKING! WE CAN STOP HER. *GWEN,* YOU *BELIEVE* US NOW. YOU DON'T WANT TO BE EVIL!
I MEAN, IT'S ALL SUBJECTIVE THOUGH, RIGHT? MAYBE I HAD MY REASONS. MAYBE SHE'S A COOL ANTI-HERO AND YOU GUYS...
YOU GUYS MIGHT JUST BE SOME 2099/WHAT-IF *WHATEVER!* YOU'RE EVEN *MORE* FICTIONAL THAN EVERYONE ELSE! I DON'T WANT TO *ERASE MYSELF! LET ME FIGURE THIS OUT!*
OKAY, YOU WANT TO SEE HOW *COOL* IT IS TO GROW UP AND BE *ME?* CHECK *THIS* OUT.

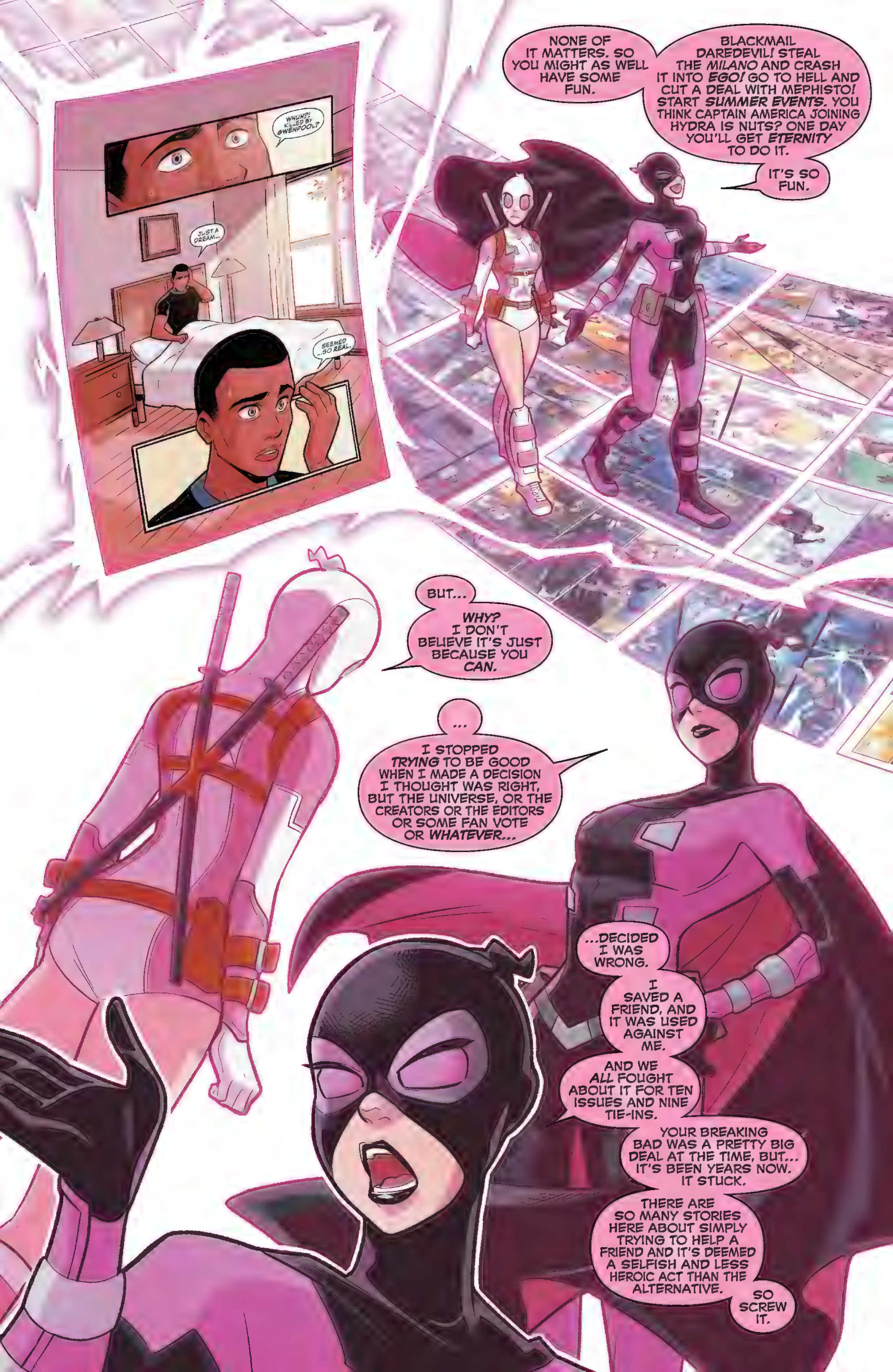

NO!
EAGH!
GHN-- EXACTLY... WORST SPOT.
ZOW ZOW
SPIDEY-SENSE SUFFICIENTLY SCRAMBLED AND--
ZOW
NO!

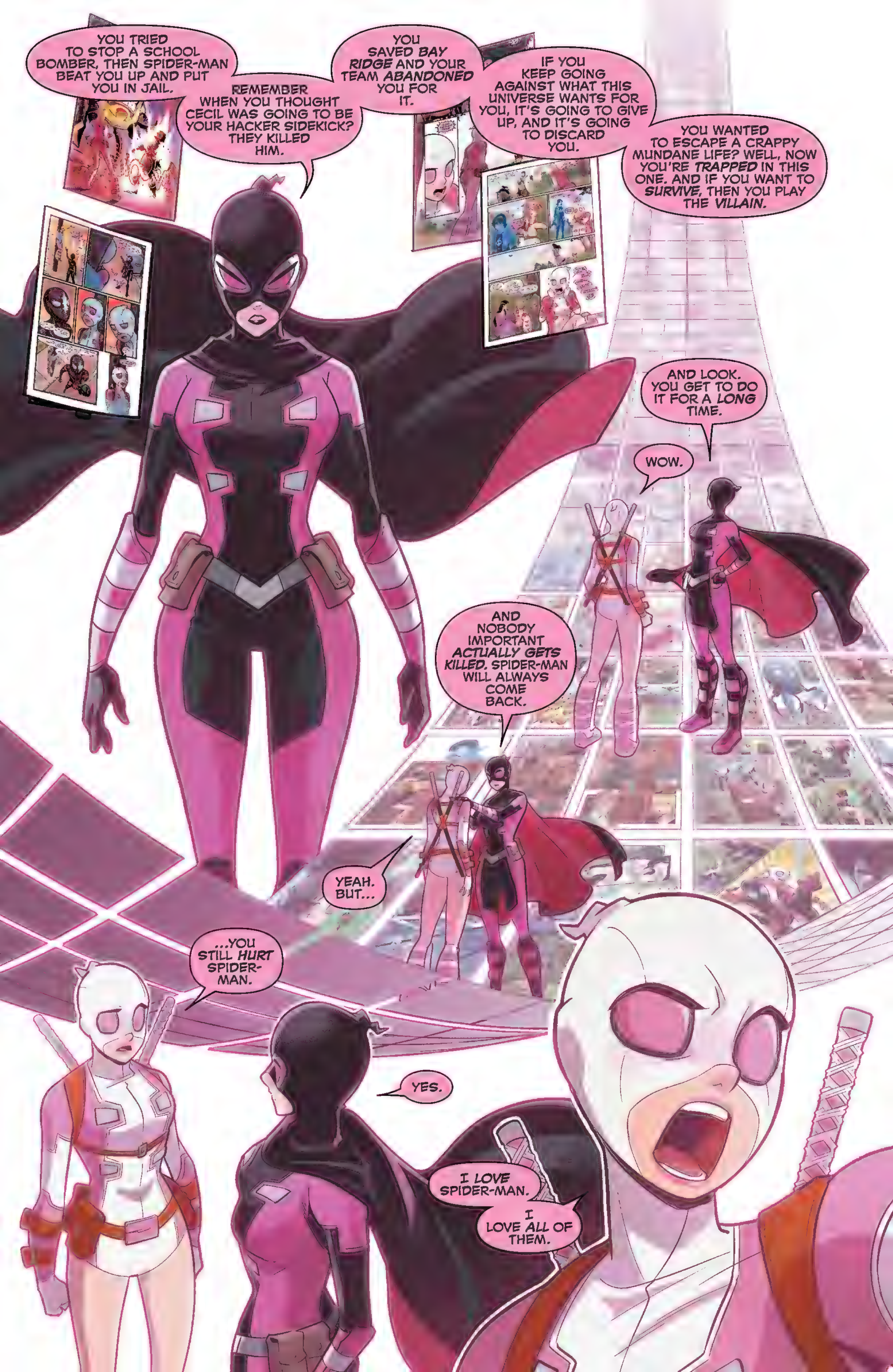

WH-WHAT?! WHY WOULD YOU *DO THAT?!*
I KNOW. IT LOOKS BAD.
BAD?! **BAD?!**
OH, MY GOD, THAT'S WHAT I USED TO *BE* LIKE, WASN'T IT?! OH, I NEVER SAW IT LIKE THIS. OH, NO. OH, NO. NO, I CAN'T BE THIS. I--
WHY DON'T WE STEP OUT OF TIME AND SPACE FOR A MOMENT?
GET SOME PERSPECTIVE.

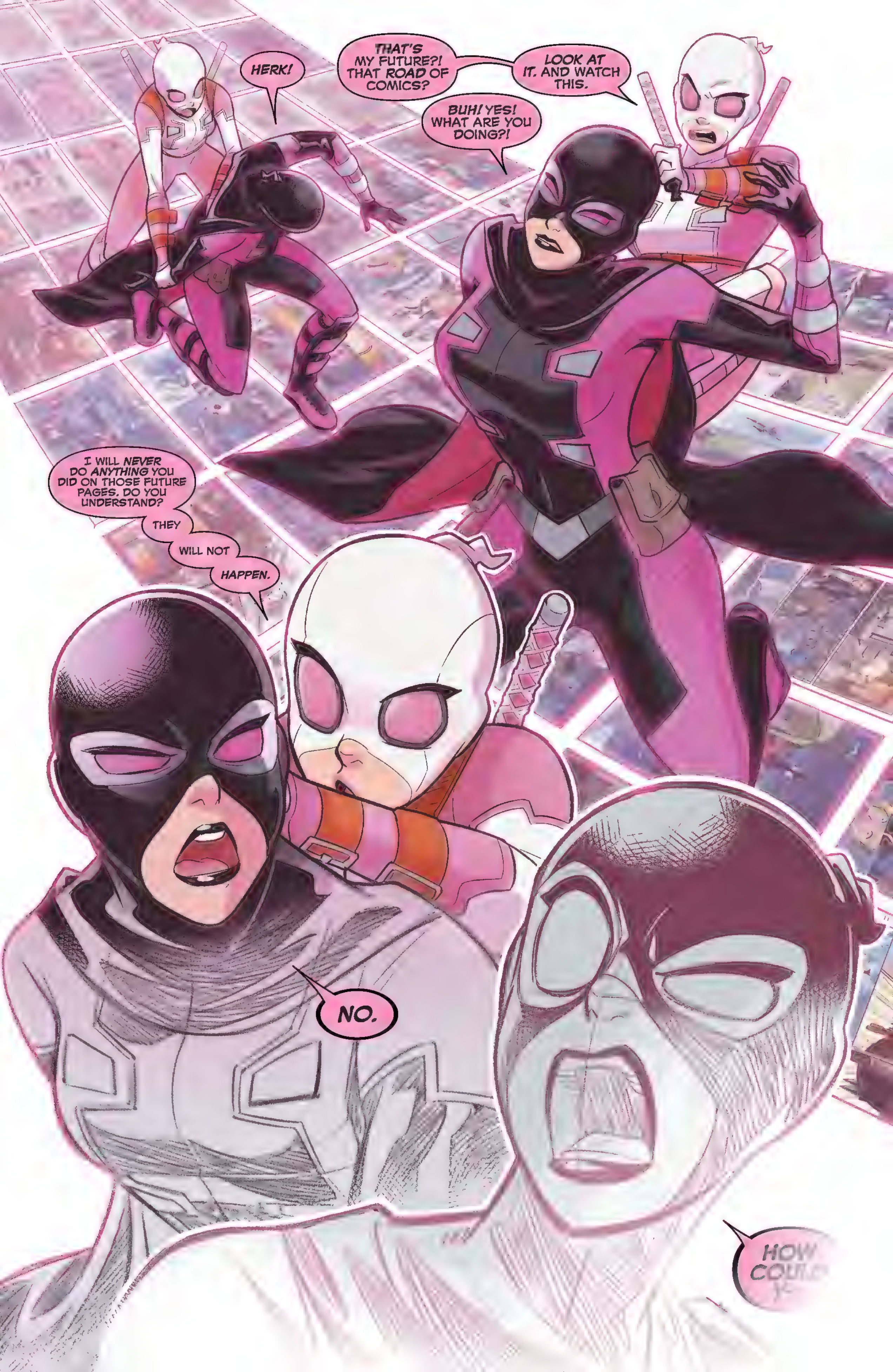

I DON'T WANT TO BE YOU. I DON'T WANT TO--
I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING *YOU* DID TO BATROC THE LEAPER ONCE.
DO YOU REALLY REMEMBER THAT HOME LIFE? YOU HATED IT SO MUCH YOU DID THE *IMPOSSIBLE* TO GET SOMEWHERE MORE EXCITING.
YEAH, OF COURSE. I DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. I DIDN'T HAVE A JOB. MY FRIENDS LEFT TOWN. MY PARENTS WERE ON MY CASE ALL THE TIME...
UH-HUH. YOUR READERS ONLY *JUST* SAW ALL OF THAT IN ISSUE #16 OF *THIS* SERIES. DO YOU *ACTUALLY* REMEMBER ANYTHING BEFORE...
...THIS?
OF COURSE I--
I...
WHAT?
YEAH. YOU'RE PART OF THIS WORLD NOW. AND YOU FOLLOW ITS RULES. AS FAR AS COMICS ARE CONCERNED, YOU DIDN'T EXIST BEFORE THAT.
OH, NO... OH, *BIG* BAD NO.
YEAH, BUT YOU'VE GOT AN ADVANTAGE, RIGHT?
JANE!
YOU'VE READ THE COMICS, AND THAT MEANS YOU KNOW THE *WHOLE* STORY. MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOU KNOW EVERYONE'S *SECRET IDENTITY.*
UH-HUH.
SO, GWEN?
DOES KNOWING EVERYONE'S SECRET IDENTITIES SOUND LIKE THE POWER OF A SUPER *HERO?*

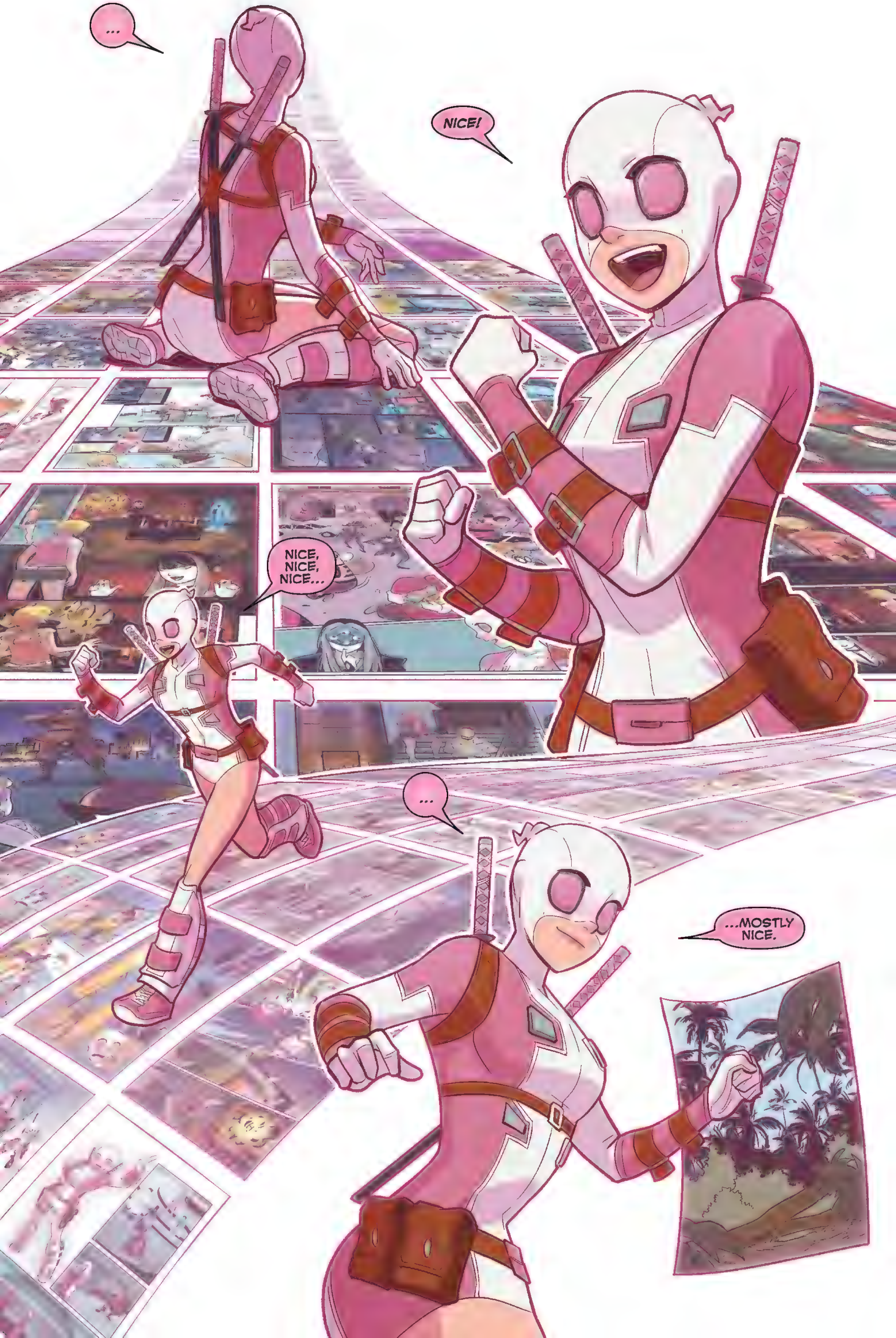

NO.
NO! THAT'S A TOTAL VILLAIN THANG, BABY!
YOU MAKE A WAY BETTER BADDY THAN A GOODY.
HECK, EVEN STARTING OUT, YOU WERE IMMEDIATELY FORCED TO BE A HENCHMAN! FOR M.O.D.O.K.! TAKE A HINT. THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO BE A HERO.
SORRY, "THEY"?
MM...YES. "THEY."
SEEMS ABOUT TIME FOR THEM TO NOTICE THAT THING I JUST DID A COUPLE PAGES BACK.

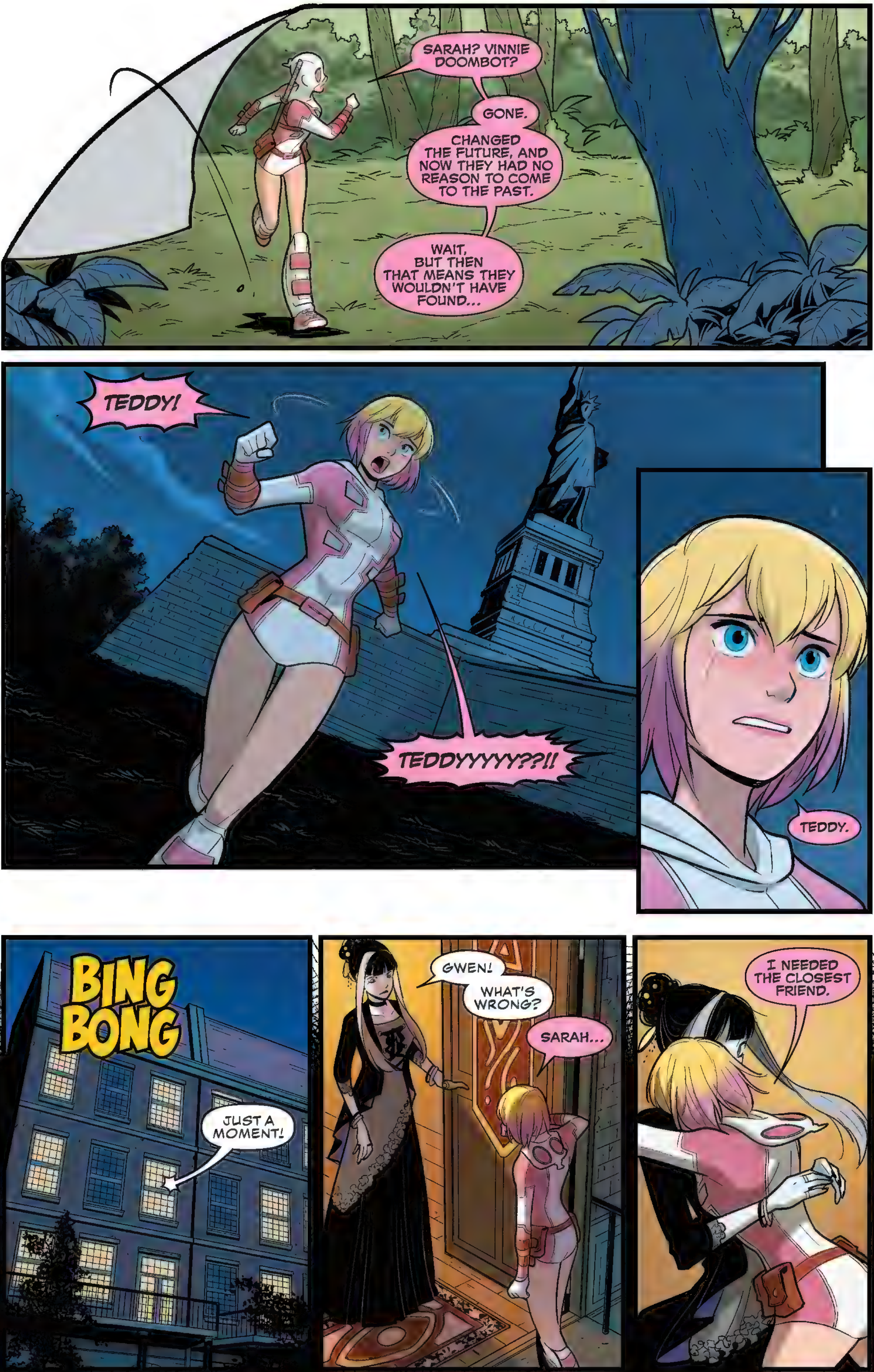

GWENPOOL CAN'T KILL SPIDER-MAN
SEE?

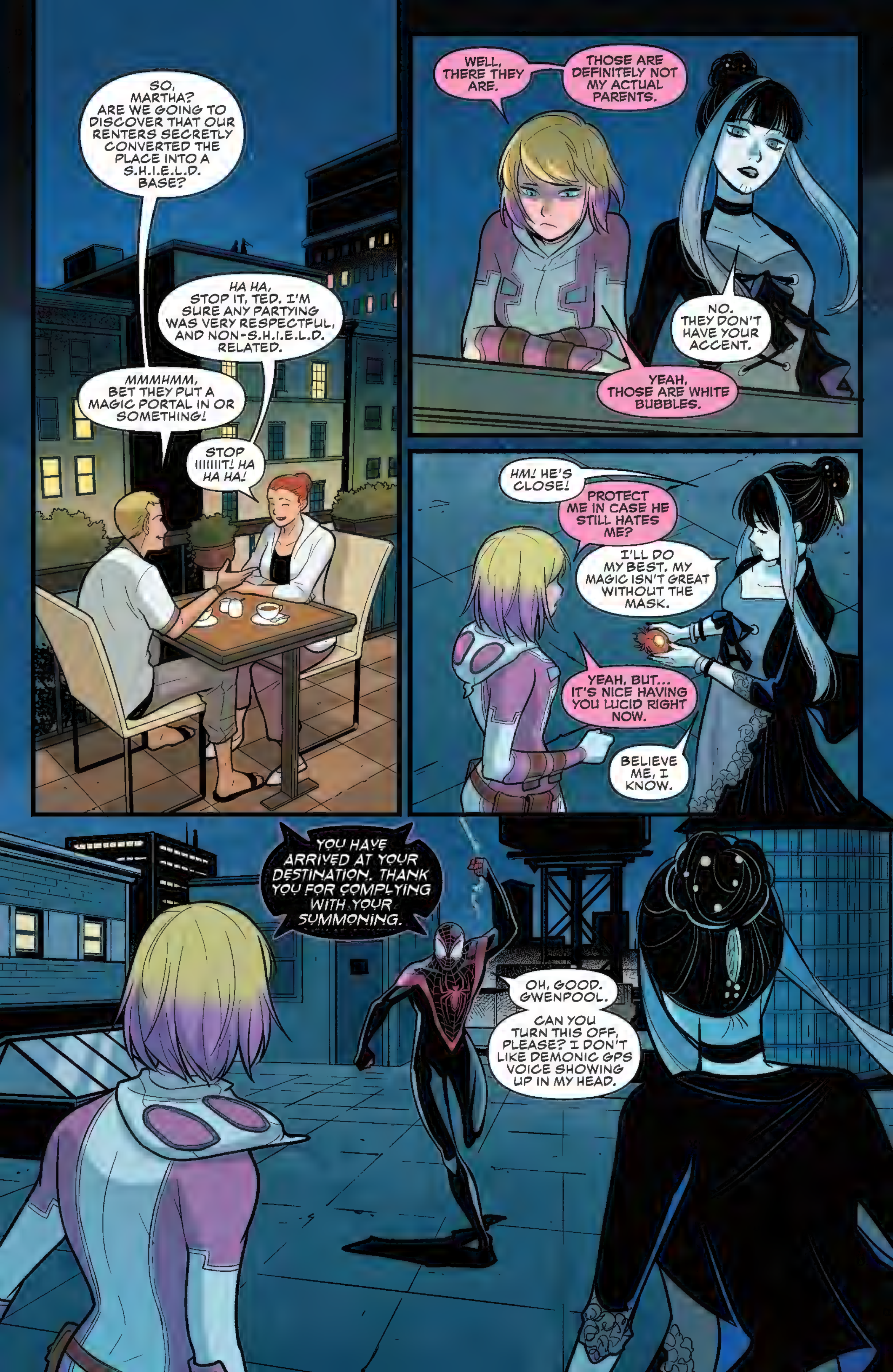

WHUH?! KILLED BY GWENPOOL?
JUST A DREAM...
SEEMED ...SO REAL.
NONE OF IT MATTERS. SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL HAVE SOME FUN.
BLACKMAIL DAREDEVIL! STEAL THE MILANO AND CRASH IT INTO EGO! GO TO HELL AND CUT A DEAL WITH MEPHISTO! START SUMMER EVENTS. YOU THINK CAPTAIN AMERICA JOINING HYDRA IS NUTS? ONE DAY YOU'LL GET ETERNITY TO DO IT.
IT'S SO FUN.
BUT... WHY? I DON'T BELIEVE IT'S JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN.
...
I STOPPED TRYING TO BE GOOD WHEN I MADE A DECISION I THOUGHT WAS RIGHT, BUT THE UNIVERSE, OR THE CREATORS OR THE EDITORS OR SOME FAN VOTE OR WHATEVER...
...DECIDED I WAS WRONG.
I SAVED A FRIEND, AND IT WAS USED AGAINST ME.
AND WE ALL FOUGHT ABOUT IT FOR TEN ISSUES AND NINE TIE-INS.
YOUR BREAKING BAD WAS A PRETTY BIG DEAL AT THE TIME, BUT... IT'S BEEN YEARS NOW. IT STUCK.
THERE ARE SO MANY STORIES HERE ABOUT SIMPLY TRYING TO HELP A FRIEND AND IT'S DEEMED A SELFISH AND LESS HEROIC ACT THAN THE ALTERNATIVE.
SO SCREW IT.

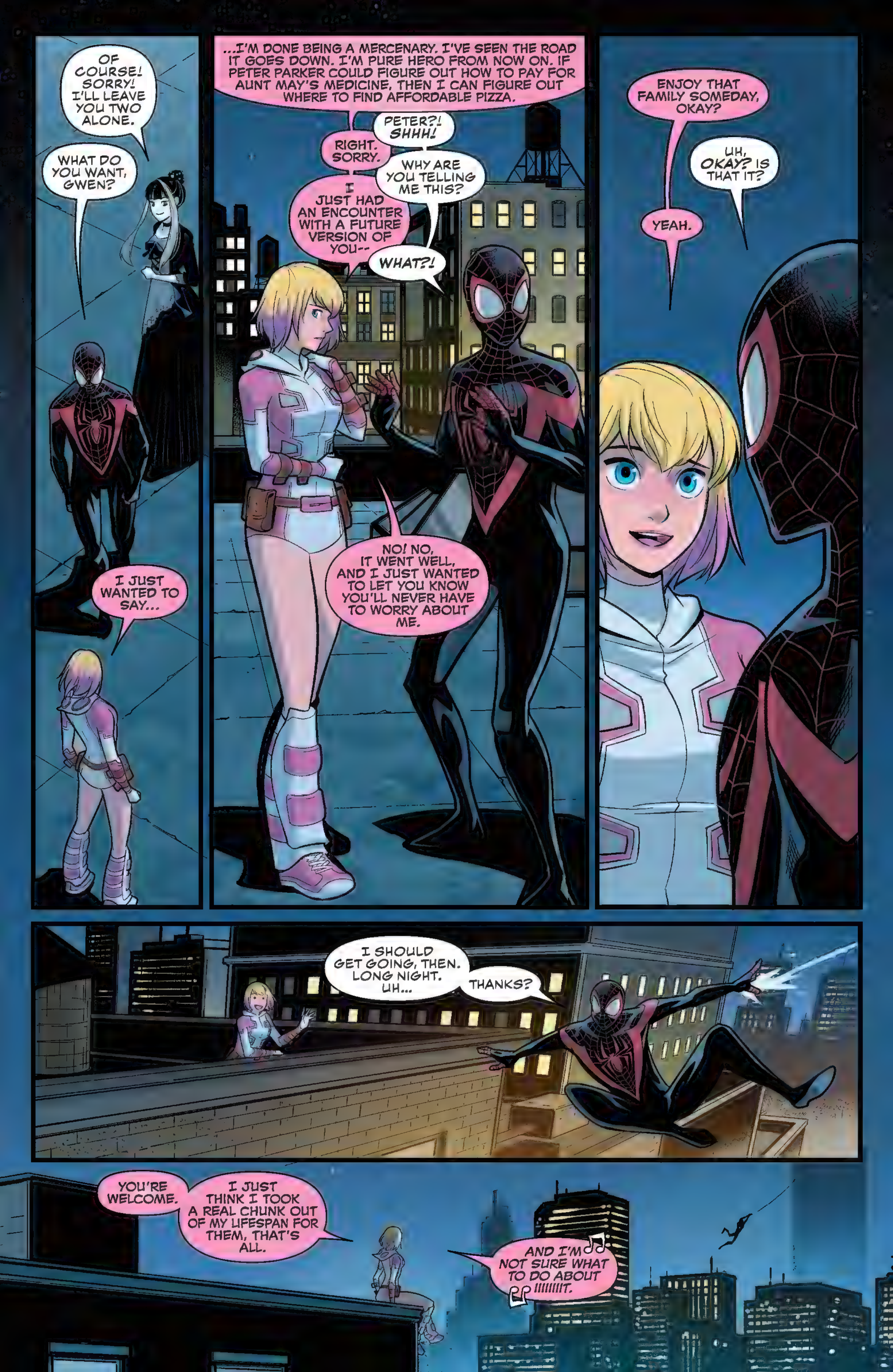

YOU TRIED TO STOP A SCHOOL BOMBER, THEN SPIDER-MAN BEAT YOU UP AND PUT YOU IN JAIL.
REMEMBER WHEN YOU THOUGHT CECIL WAS GOING TO BE YOUR HACKER SIDEKICK? THEY KILLED HIM.
YOU SAVED *BAY RIDGE* AND YOUR TEAM *ABANDONED* YOU FOR IT.
IF YOU KEEP GOING AGAINST WHAT THIS UNIVERSE WANTS FOR YOU, IT'S GOING TO GIVE UP, AND IT'S GOING TO DISCARD YOU.
YOU WANTED TO ESCAPE A CRAPPY MUNDANE LIFE? WELL, NOW YOU'RE *TRAPPED* IN THIS ONE. AND IF YOU WANT TO *SURVIVE*, THEN YOU PLAY THE *VILLAIN*.
AND LOOK. YOU GET TO DO IT FOR A *LONG* TIME.
WOW.
AND NOBODY IMPORTANT *ACTUALLY GETS KILLED*. SPIDER-MAN WILL ALWAYS COME BACK.
YEAH. BUT...
...YOU STILL *HURT* SPIDER-MAN.
YES.
I *LOVE* SPIDER-MAN.
I LOVE *ALL* OF THEM.

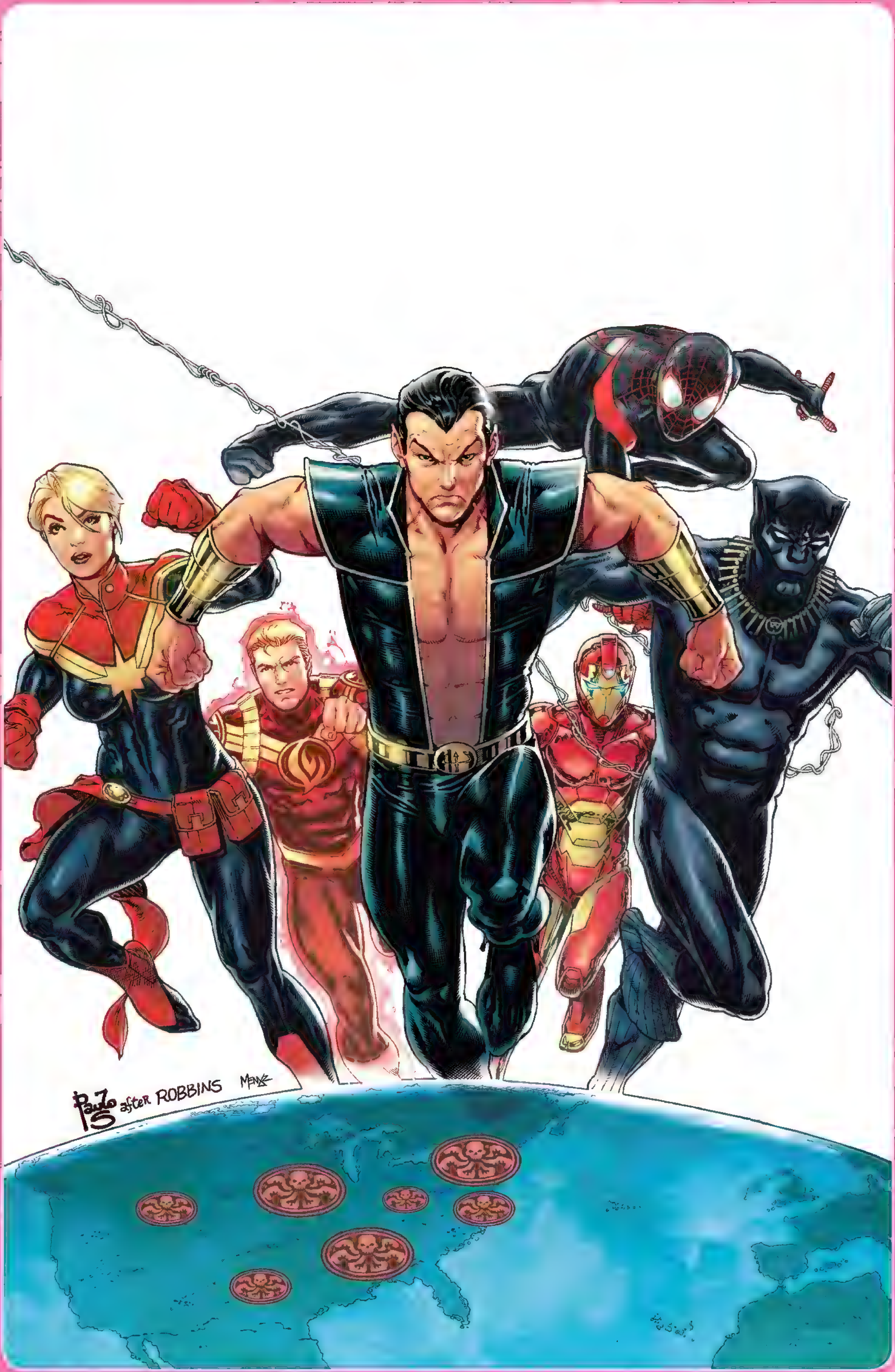

HERK!
THAT'S MY FUTURE?! THAT ROAD OF COMICS?
LOOK AT IT. AND WATCH THIS.
BUH! YES! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
I WILL NEVER DO ANYTHING YOU DID ON THOSE FUTURE PAGES. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
THEY
WILL NOT
HAPPEN.
NO.
HOW COULD Y


...
NICE!
NICE, NICE, NICE...
...
...MOSTLY NICE.


SARAH? VINNIE DOOMBOT?
GONE.
CHANGED THE FUTURE, AND NOW THEY HAD NO REASON TO COME TO THE PAST.
WAIT, BUT THEN THAT MEANS THEY WOULDN'T HAVE FOUND...
TEDDY!
TEDDYYYYY??!!
TEDDY.
BING BONG
JUST A MOMENT!
GWEN!
WHAT'S WRONG?
SARAH...
I NEEDED THE CLOSEST FRIEND.


SO, MARTHA? ARE WE GOING TO DISCOVER THAT OUR RENTERS SECRETLY CONVERTED THE PLACE INTO A S.H.I.E.L.D. BASE?
HA HA, STOP IT, TED. I'M SURE ANY PARTYING WAS VERY RESPECTFUL, AND NON-S.H.I.E.L.D. RELATED.
MMMHMM, BET THEY PUT A MAGIC PORTAL IN OR SOMETHING!
STOP IIIIIIT! HA HA HA!
WELL, THERE THEY ARE.
THOSE ARE DEFINITELY NOT MY ACTUAL PARENTS.
NO. THEY DON'T HAVE YOUR ACCENT.
YEAH, THOSE ARE WHITE BUBBLES.
HM! HE'S CLOSE!
PROTECT ME IN CASE HE STILL HATES ME?
I'LL DO MY BEST. MY MAGIC ISN'T GREAT WITHOUT THE MASK.
YEAH, BUT... IT'S NICE HAVING YOU LUCID RIGHT NOW.
BELIEVE ME, I KNOW.
YOU HAVE ARRIVED AT YOUR DESTINATION. THANK YOU FOR COMPLYING WITH YOUR SUMMONING.
OH, GOOD. GWENPOOL.
CAN YOU TURN THIS OFF, PLEASE? I DON'T LIKE DEMONIC GPS VOICE SHOWING UP IN MY HEAD.


OF COURSE! SORRY! I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO ALONE.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, GWEN?
I JUST WANTED TO SAY...
...I'M DONE BEING A MERCENARY. I'VE SEEN THE ROAD IT GOES DOWN. I'M PURE HERO FROM NOW ON. IF PETER PARKER COULD FIGURE OUT HOW TO PAY FOR AUNT MAY'S MEDICINE, THEN I CAN FIGURE OUT WHERE TO FIND AFFORDABLE PIZZA.
PETER?! SHHH!
RIGHT. SORRY.
WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS?
I JUST HAD AN ENCOUNTER WITH A FUTURE VERSION OF YOU--
WHAT?!
NO! NO, IT WENT WELL, AND I JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME.
ENJOY THAT FAMILY SOMEDAY, OKAY?
UH, OKAY? IS THAT IT?
YEAH.
I SHOULD GET GOING, THEN. LONG NIGHT. UH...
THANKS?
YOU'RE WELCOME.
I JUST THINK I TOOK A REAL CHUNK OUT OF MY LIFESPAN FOR THEM, THAT'S ALL.
AND I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO DO ABOUT IIIIIIIT.


after ROBBINS

SECRET EMPIRE: BRAVE NEW WORLD #1

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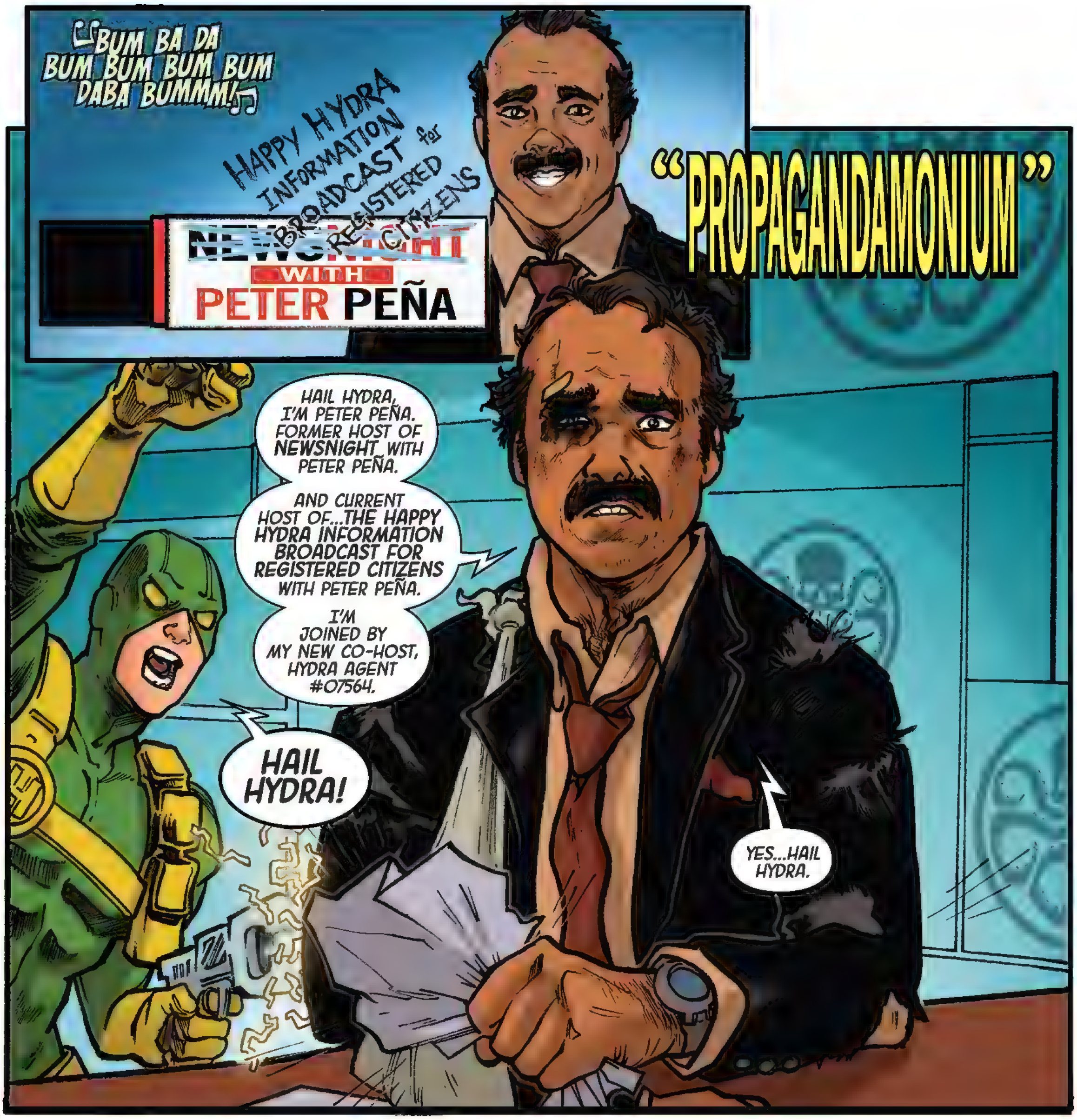
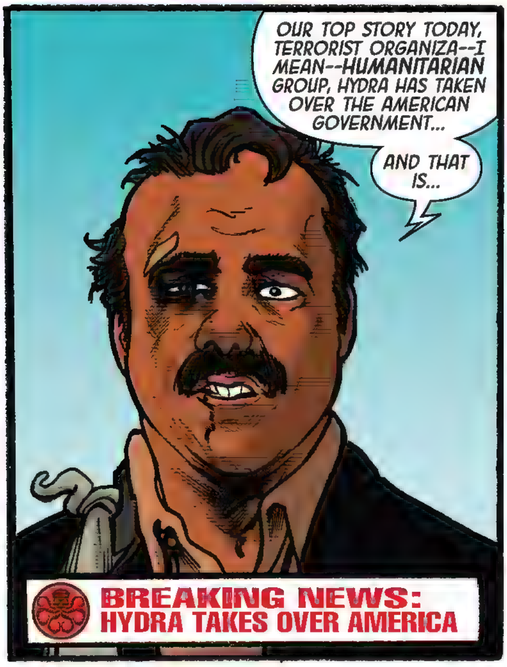
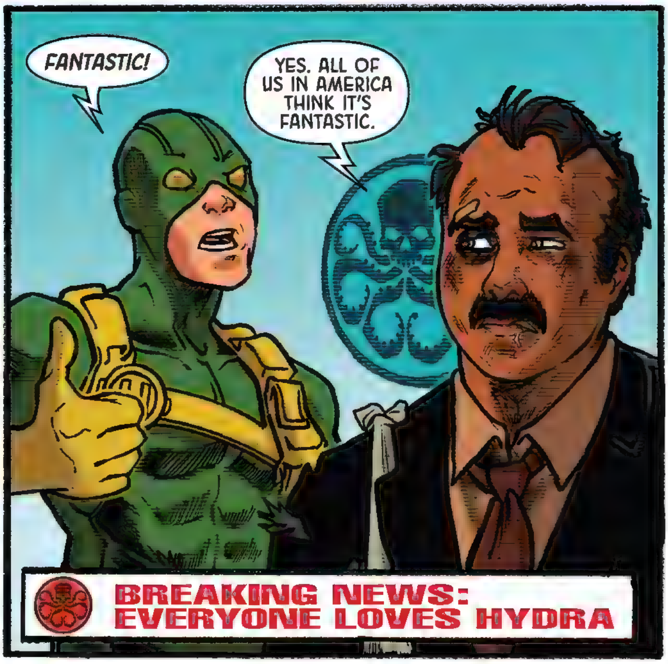
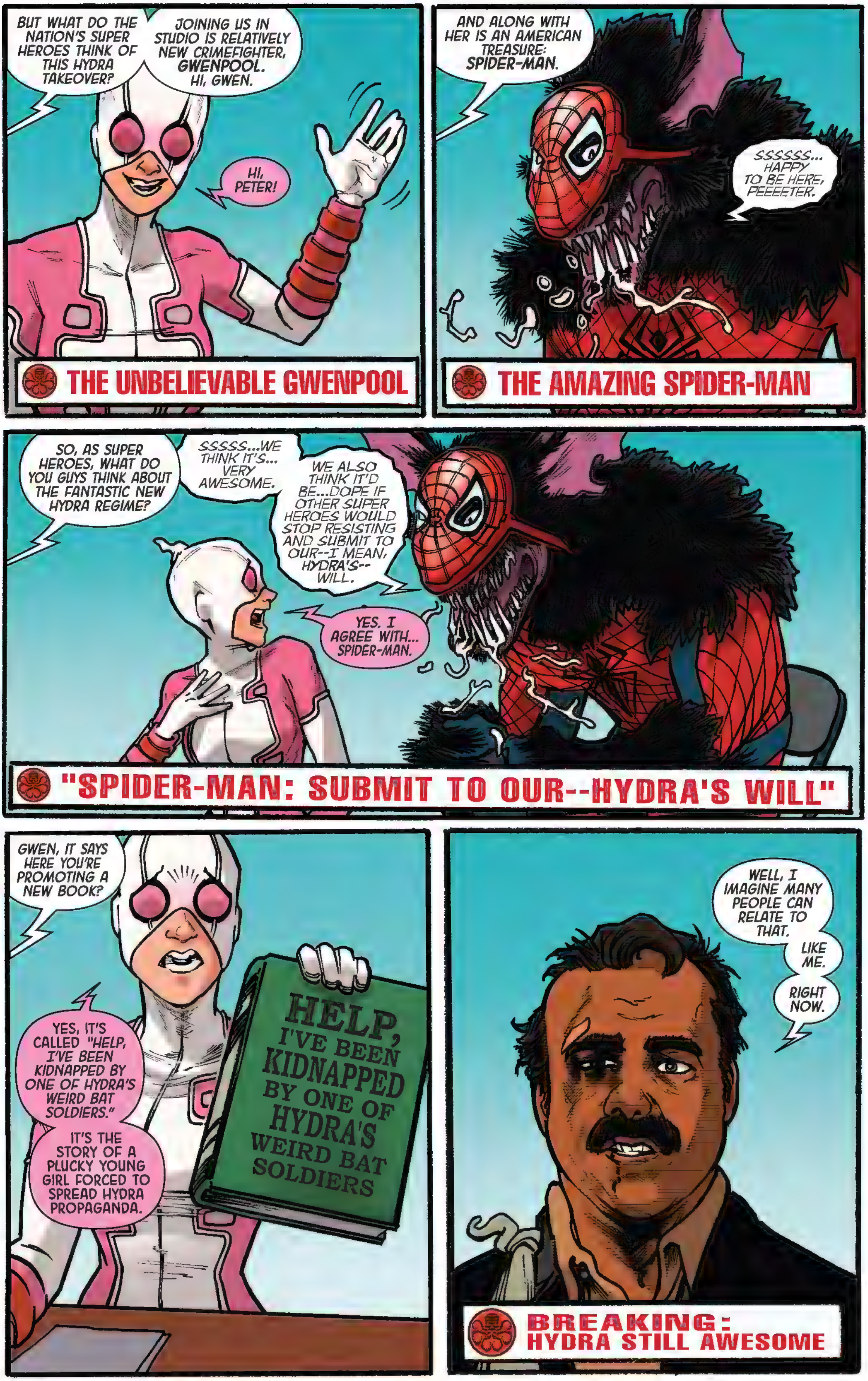
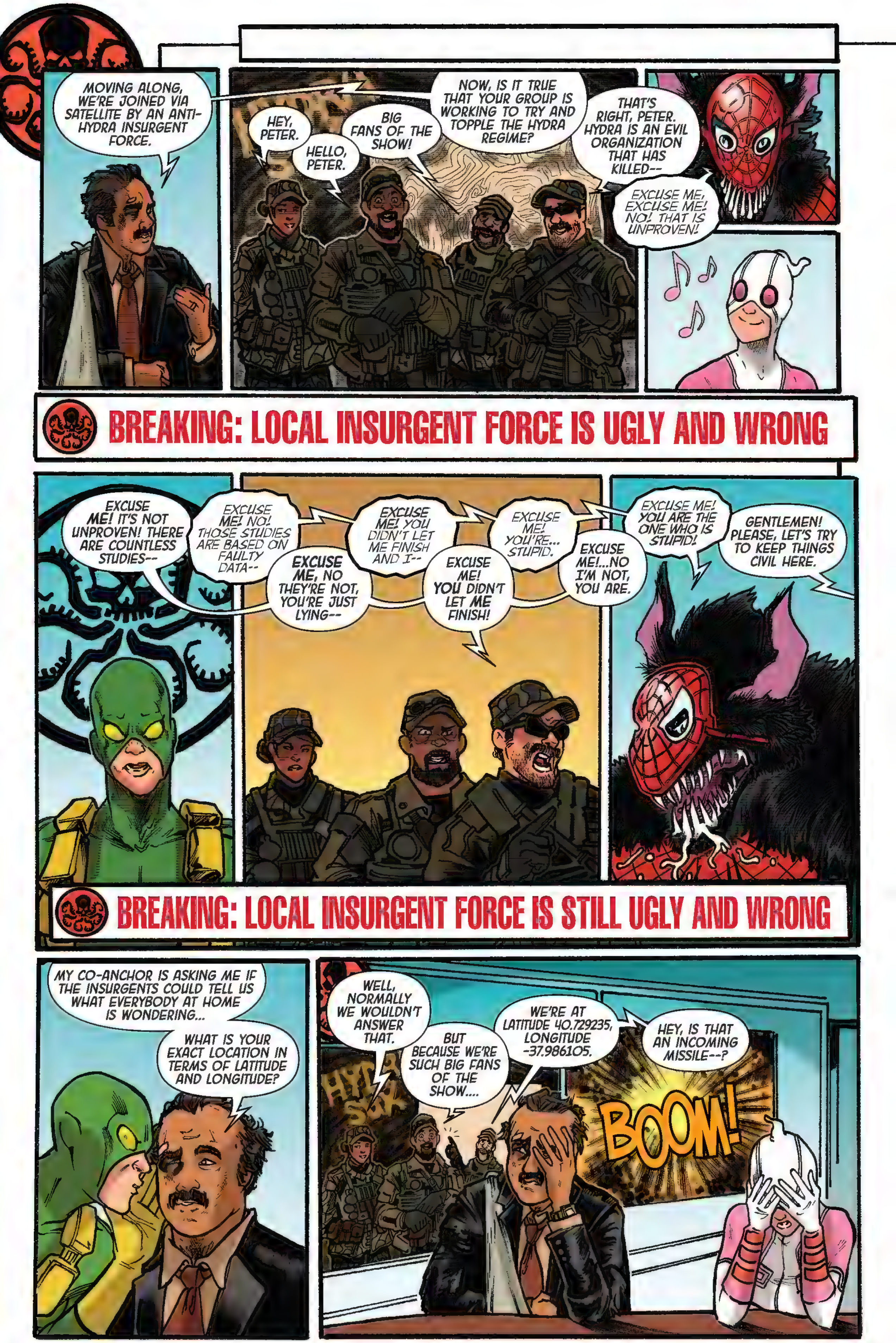
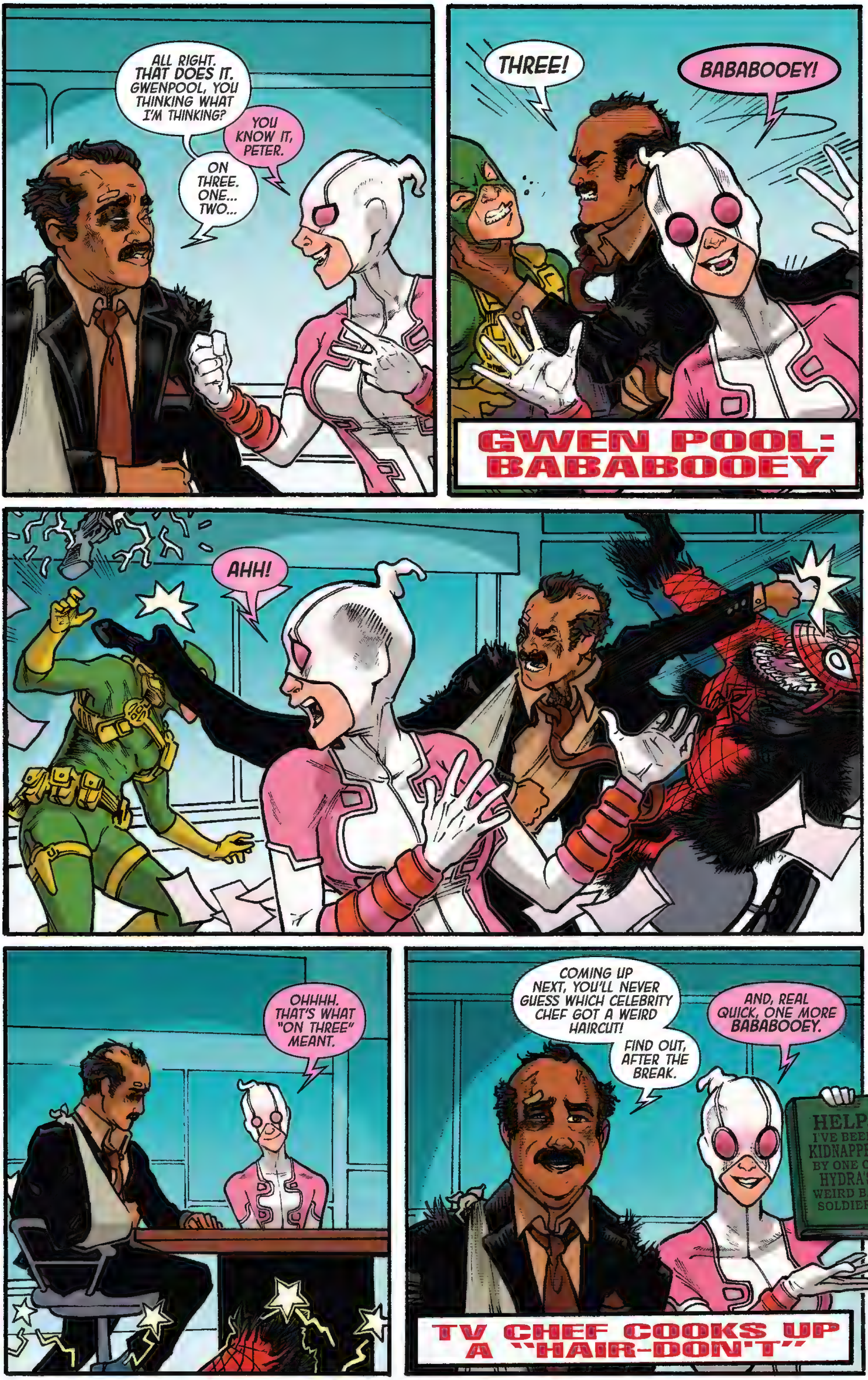

"PROPAGANDAMONIUM"
♪BUM BA DA BUM BUM BUM BUM DABA BUMMM!♫
HAPPY HYDRA INFORMATION BROADCAST for REGISTERED CITIZENS
~~NEWSNIGHT~~ WITH PETER PEÑA
HAIL HYDRA, I'M PETER PEÑA. FORMER HOST OF NEWSNIGHT WITH PETER PEÑA.
AND CURRENT HOST OF...THE HAPPY HYDRA INFORMATION BROADCAST FOR REGISTERED CITIZENS WITH PETER PEÑA.
I'M JOINED BY MY NEW CO-HOST, HYDRA AGENT #07564.
HAIL HYDRA!
YES...HAIL HYDRA.


OUR TOP STORY TODAY, TERRORIST ORGANIZA--I MEAN--HUMANITARIAN GROUP, HYDRA HAS TAKEN OVER THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT...
AND THAT IS...
BREAKING NEWS: HYDRA TAKES OVER AMERICA


FANTASTIC!
YES. ALL OF US IN AMERICA THINK IT'S FANTASTIC.
BREAKING NEWS: EVERYONE LOVES HYDRA

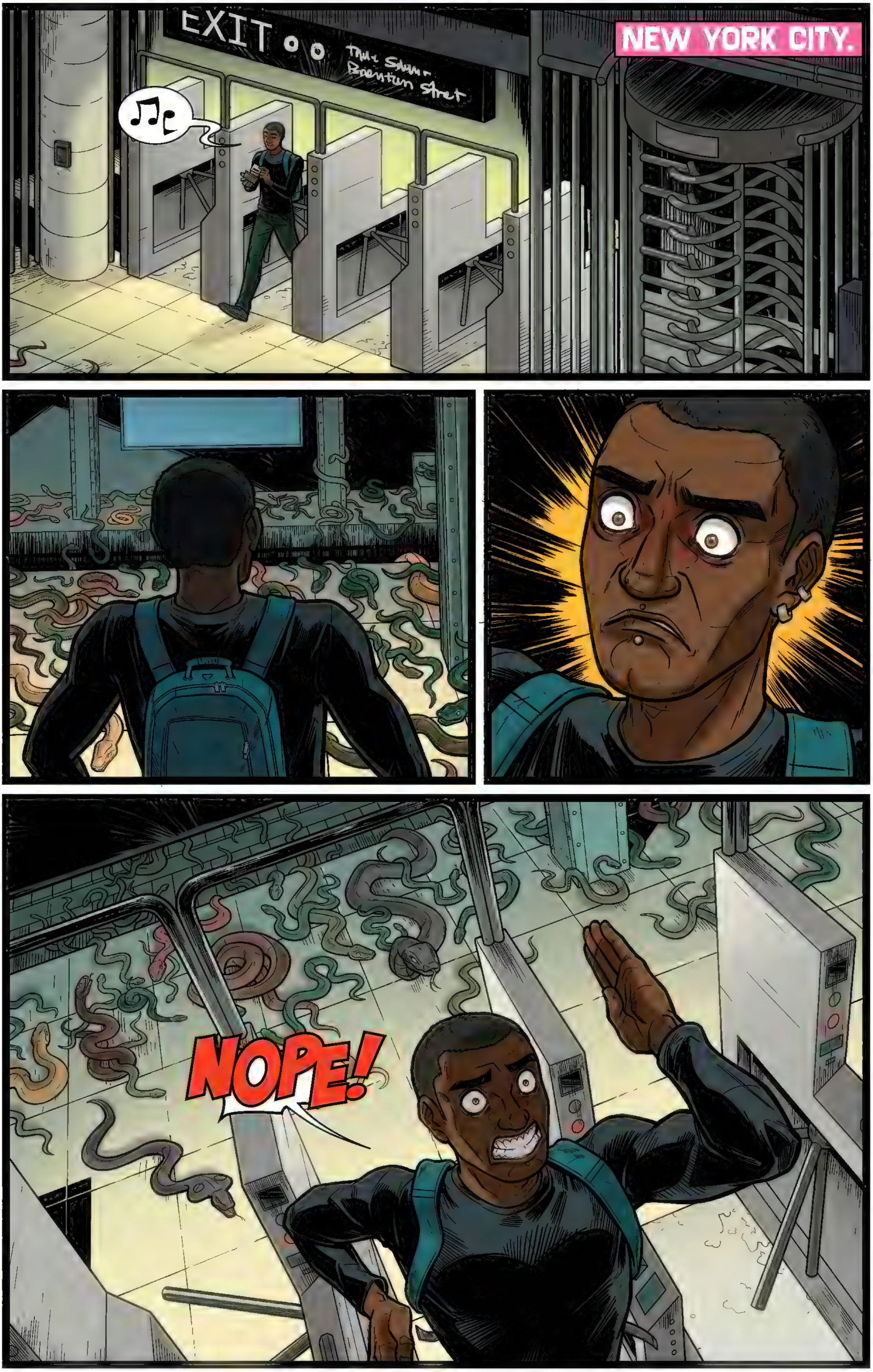

BUT WHAT DO THE NATION'S SUPER HEROES THINK OF THIS HYDRA TAKEOVER?
JOINING US IN STUDIO IS RELATIVELY NEW CRIMEFIGHTER, **GWENPOOL.** HI, GWEN.
HI, PETER!
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
AND ALONG WITH HER IS AN AMERICAN TREASURE: **SPIDER-MAN.**
SSSSSS... HAPPY TO BE HERE, PEEEETER.
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
SO, AS SUPER HEROES, WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK ABOUT THE FANTASTIC NEW HYDRA REGIME?
SSSSS...WE THINK IT'S... VERY AWESOME.
WE ALSO THINK IT'D BE...DOPE IF OTHER SUPER HEROES WOULD STOP RESISTING AND SUBMIT TO OUR--I MEAN, HYDRA'S--WILL.
YES. I AGREE WITH... SPIDER-MAN.
"SPIDER-MAN: SUBMIT TO OUR--HYDRA'S WILL"
GWEN, IT SAYS HERE YOU'RE PROMOTING A NEW BOOK?
HELP, I'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY ONE OF HYDRA'S WEIRD BAT SOLDIERS
YES, IT'S CALLED "HELP, I'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY ONE OF HYDRA'S WEIRD BAT SOLDIERS."
IT'S THE STORY OF A PLUCKY YOUNG GIRL FORCED TO SPREAD HYDRA PROPAGANDA.
WELL, I IMAGINE MANY PEOPLE CAN RELATE TO THAT.
LIKE ME.
RIGHT NOW.
BREAKING: HYDRA STILL AWESOME

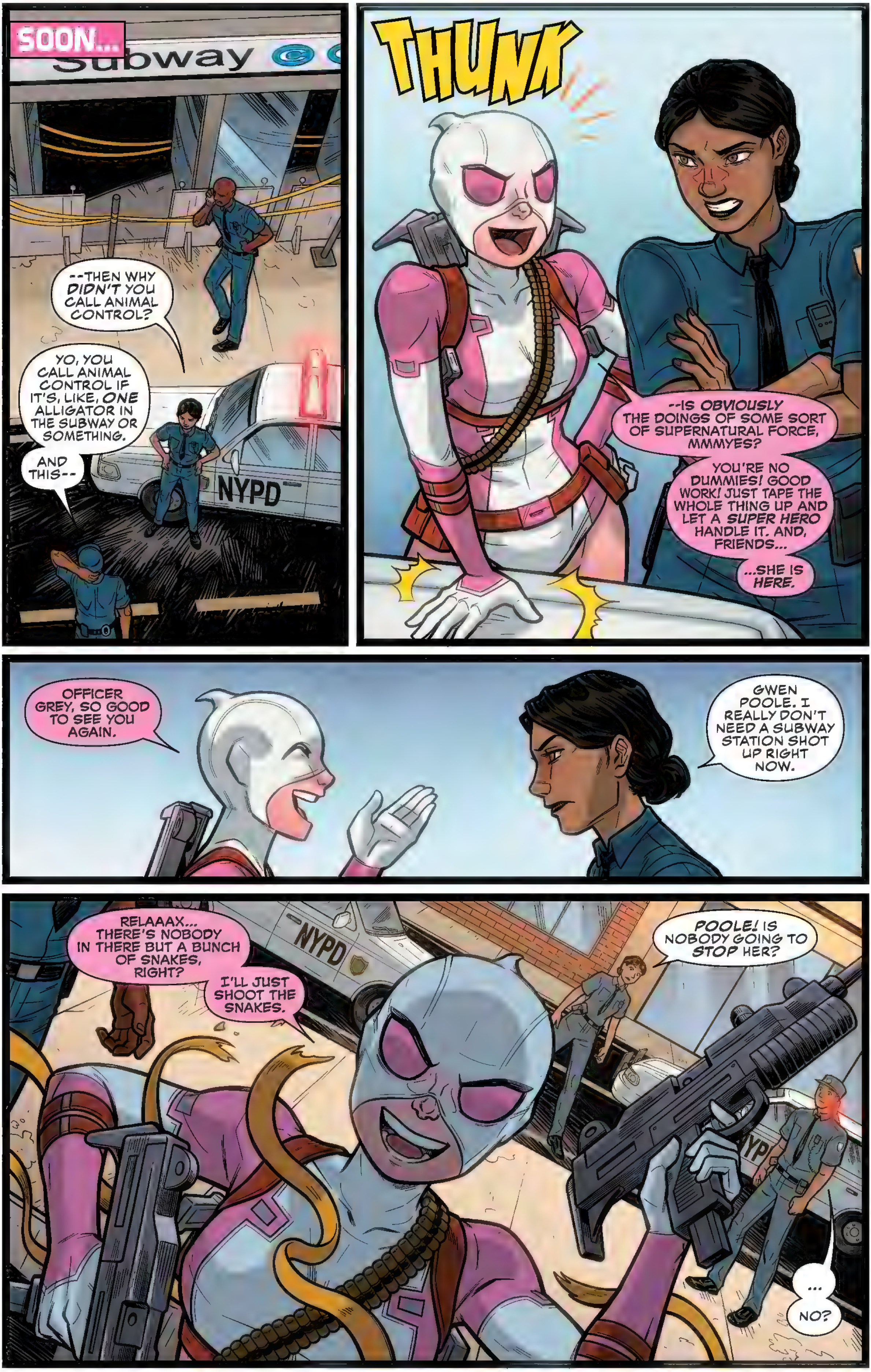

MOVING ALONG, WE'RE JOINED VIA SATELLITE BY AN ANTI-HYDRA INSURGENT FORCE.
HEY, PETER.
HELLO, PETER.
BIG FANS OF THE SHOW!
NOW, IS IT TRUE THAT YOUR GROUP IS WORKING TO TRY AND TOPPLE THE HYDRA REGIME?
THAT'S RIGHT, PETER. HYDRA IS AN EVIL ORGANIZATION THAT HAS KILLED--
EXCUSE ME, EXCUSE ME! NO! THAT IS UNPROVEN!
BREAKING: LOCAL INSURGENT FORCE IS UGLY AND WRONG
EXCUSE ME! IT'S NOT UNPROVEN! THERE ARE COUNTLESS STUDIES--
EXCUSE ME! NO! THOSE STUDIES ARE BASED ON FAULTY DATA--
EXCUSE ME, NO THEY'RE NOT, YOU'RE JUST LYING--
EXCUSE ME! YOU DIDN'T LET ME FINISH AND I--
EXCUSE ME! YOU DIDN'T LET ME FINISH!
EXCUSE ME! YOU'RE... STUPID.
EXCUSE ME!...NO I'M NOT, YOU ARE.
EXCUSE ME! YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS STUPID!
GENTLEMEN! PLEASE, LET'S TRY TO KEEP THINGS CIVIL HERE.
BREAKING: LOCAL INSURGENT FORCE IS STILL UGLY AND WRONG
MY CO-ANCHOR IS ASKING ME IF THE INSURGENTS COULD TELL US WHAT EVERYBODY AT HOME IS WONDERING...
WHAT IS YOUR EXACT LOCATION IN TERMS OF LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE?
WELL, NORMALLY WE WOULDN'T ANSWER THAT.
BUT BECAUSE WE'RE SUCH BIG FANS OF THE SHOW....
WE'RE AT LATITUDE 40.729235, LONGITUDE -37.986105.
HEY, IS THAT AN INCOMING MISSILE--?
BOOM!

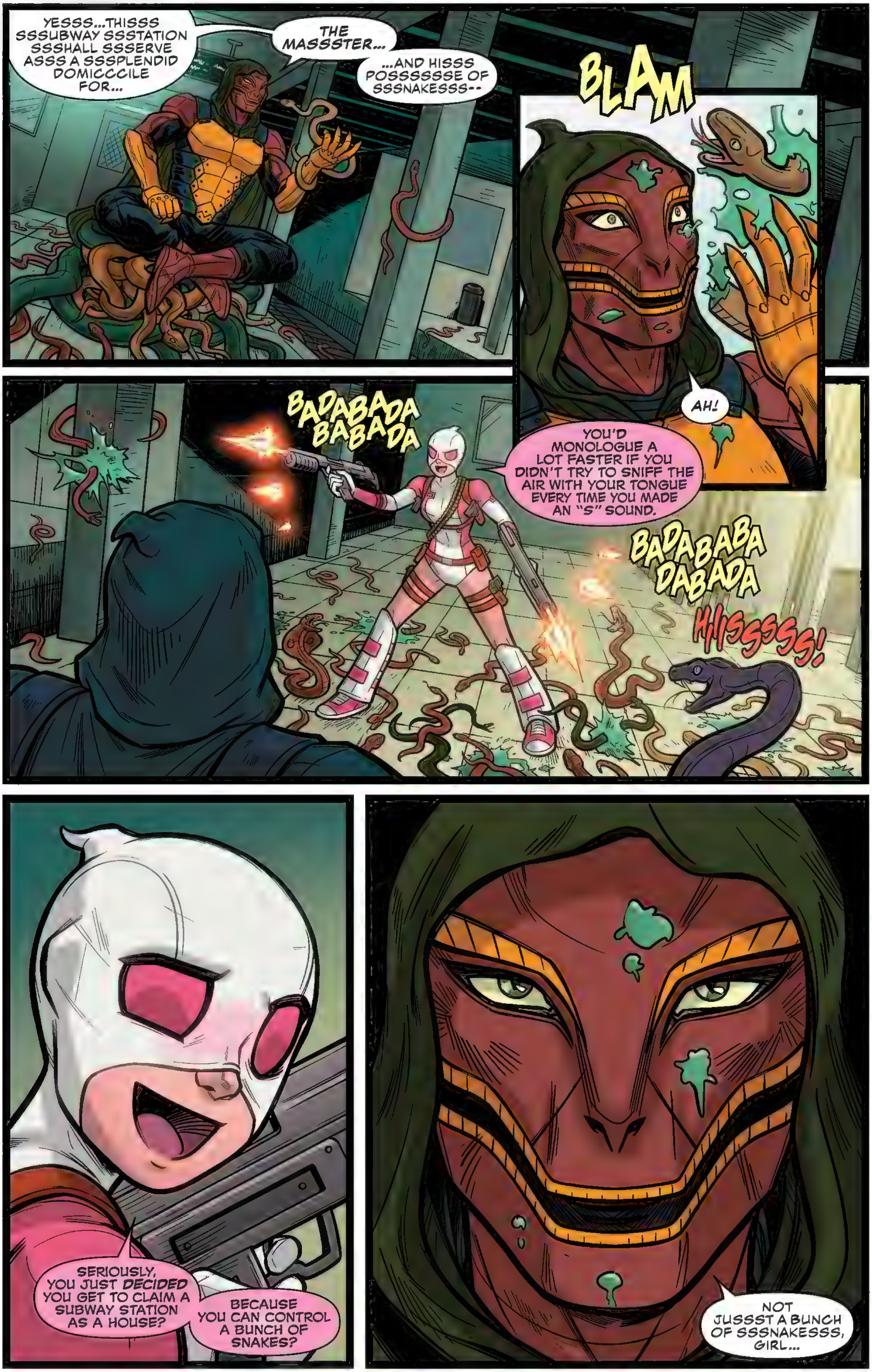

ALL RIGHT. THAT DOES IT. GWENPOOL, YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING?
YOU KNOW IT, PETER.
ON THREE. ONE... TWO...
THREE!
BABABOOEY!
GWEN POOL: BABABOOEY
AHH!
OHHHH. THAT'S WHAT "ON THREE" MEANT.
COMING UP NEXT, YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHICH CELEBRITY CHEF GOT A WEIRD HAIRCUT!
FIND OUT, AFTER THE BREAK.
AND, REAL QUICK, ONE MORE BABABOOEY.
HELP, I'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY ONE OF HYDRA'S WEIRD BAT SOLDIERS
TV CHEF COOKS UP A "HAIR-DON'T"

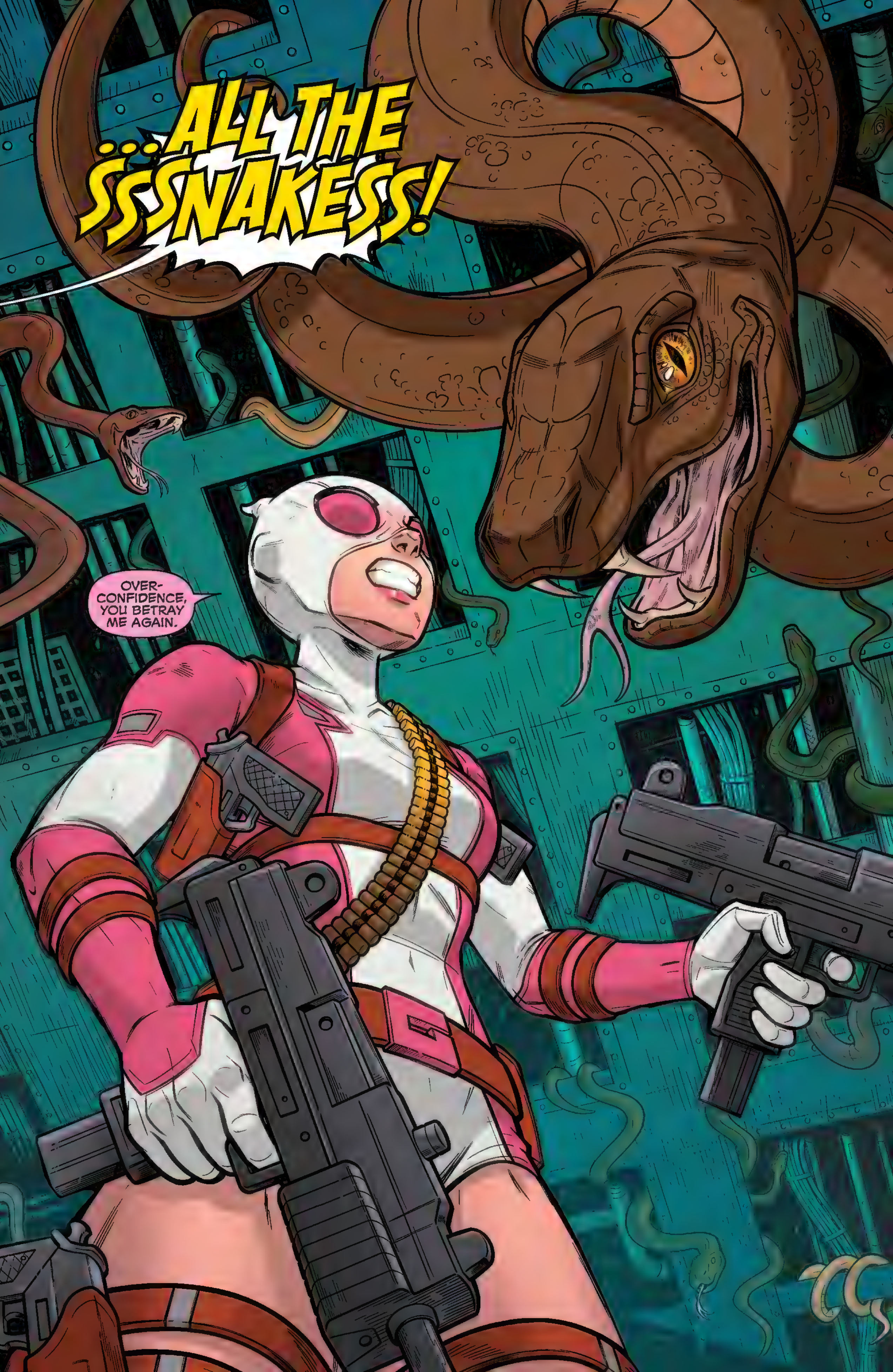
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #21

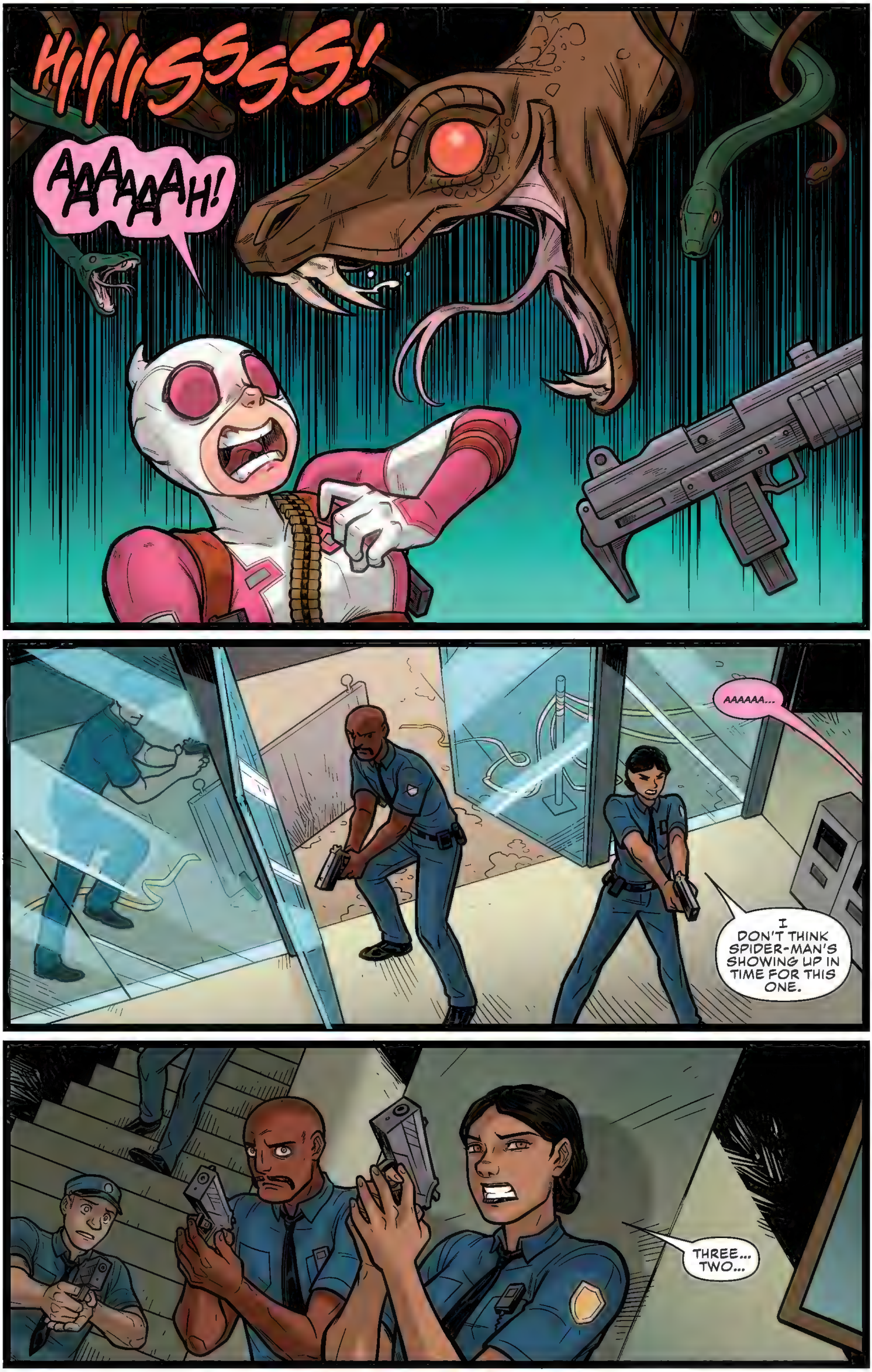
"WHAT SIDES YOU [illegible]"

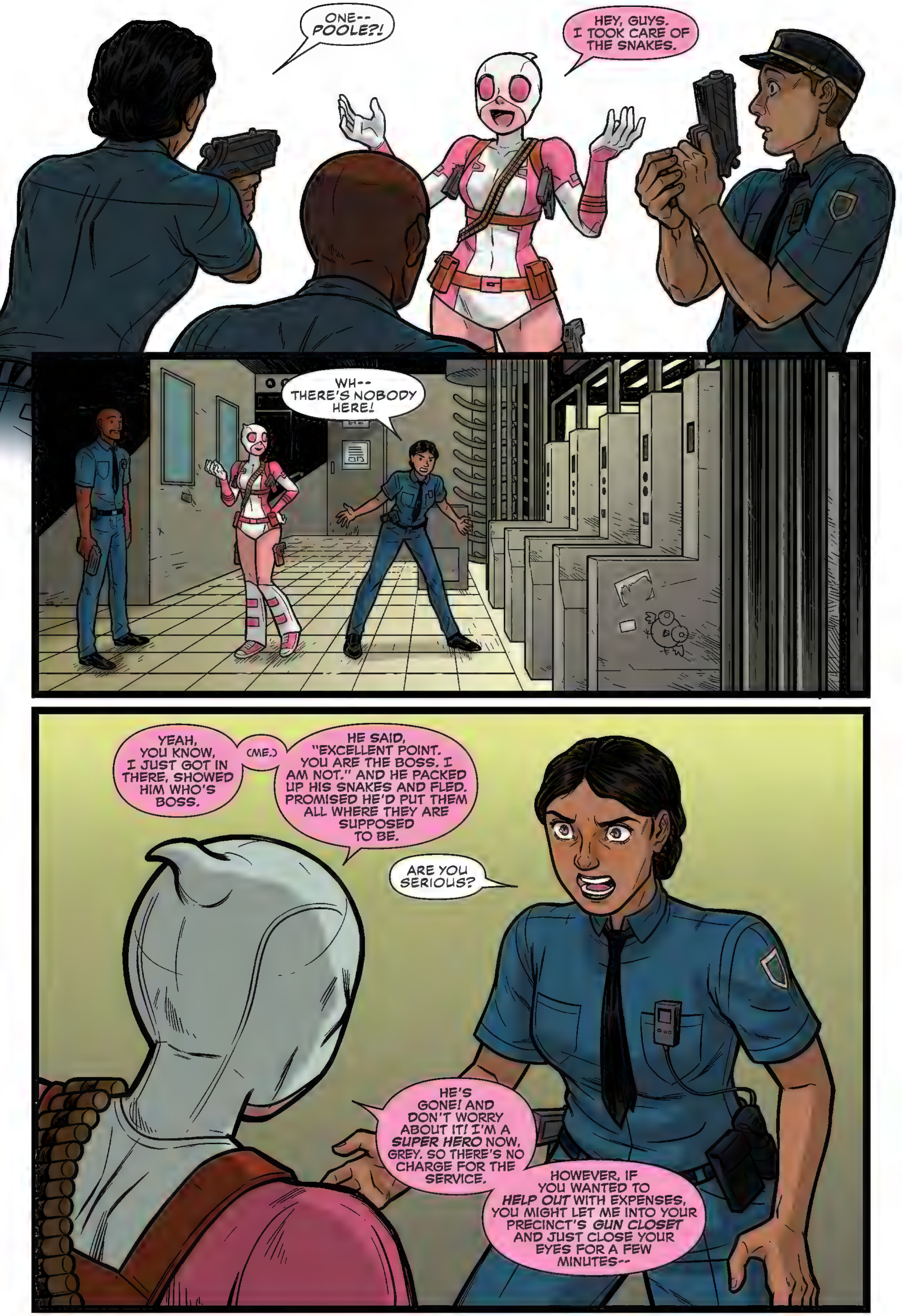

NEW YORK CITY.
EXIT
♫
NOPE!

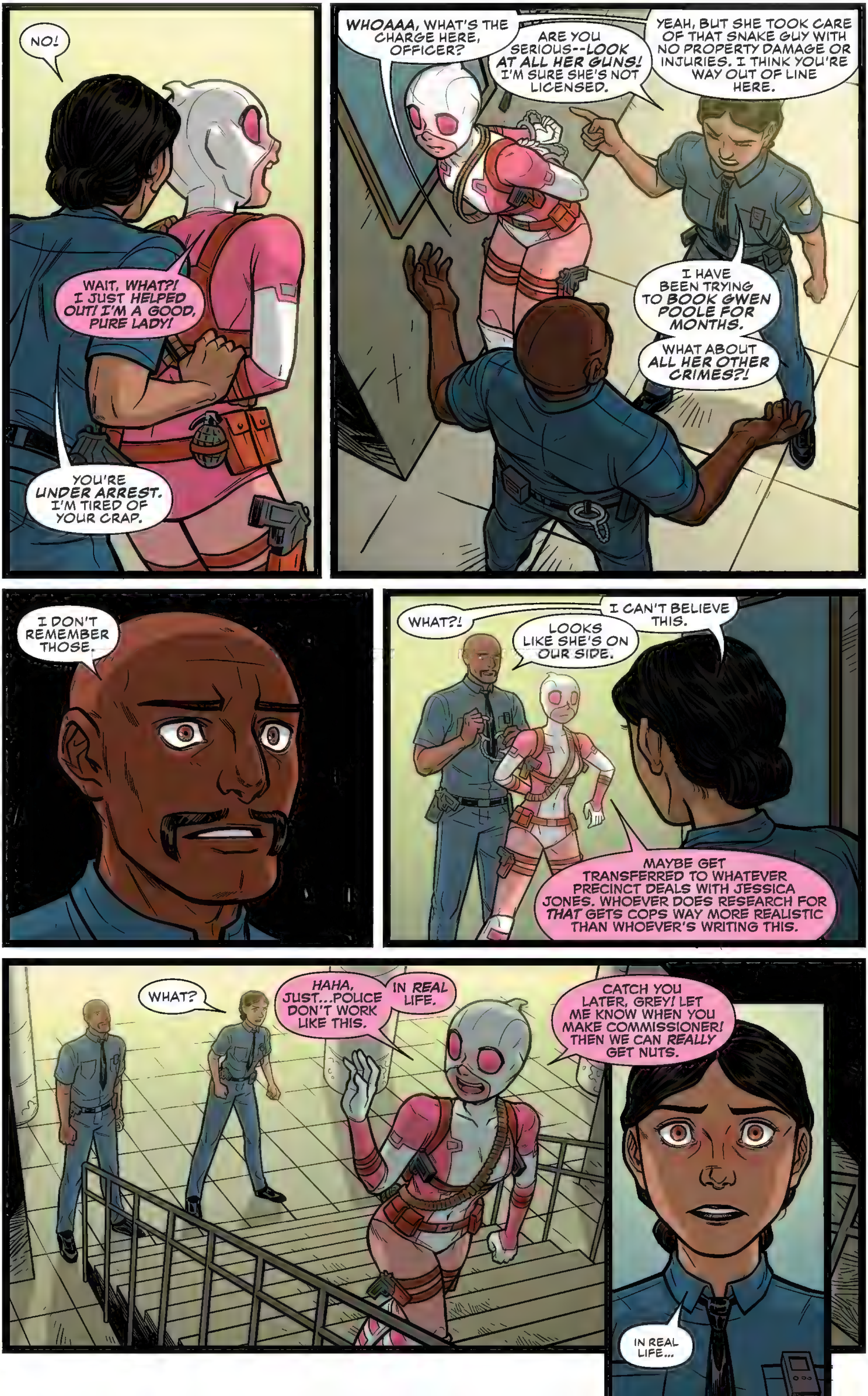

SOON...
Subway C
--THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL ANIMAL CONTROL?
YO, YOU CALL ANIMAL CONTROL IF IT'S, LIKE, ONE ALLIGATOR IN THE SUBWAY OR SOMETHING.
AND THIS--
NYPD
THUNK
--IS OBVIOUSLY THE DOINGS OF SOME SORT OF SUPERNATURAL FORCE, MMMYES?
YOU'RE NO DUMMIES! GOOD WORK! JUST TAPE THE WHOLE THING UP AND LET A SUPER HERO HANDLE IT. AND, FRIENDS...
...SHE IS HERE.
OFFICER GREY, SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
GWEN POOLE. I REALLY DON'T NEED A SUBWAY STATION SHOT UP RIGHT NOW.
RELAAAX... THERE'S NOBODY IN THERE BUT A BUNCH OF SNAKES, RIGHT?
I'LL JUST SHOOT THE SNAKES.
POOLE! IS NOBODY GOING TO STOP HER?
NYPD
...
NO?

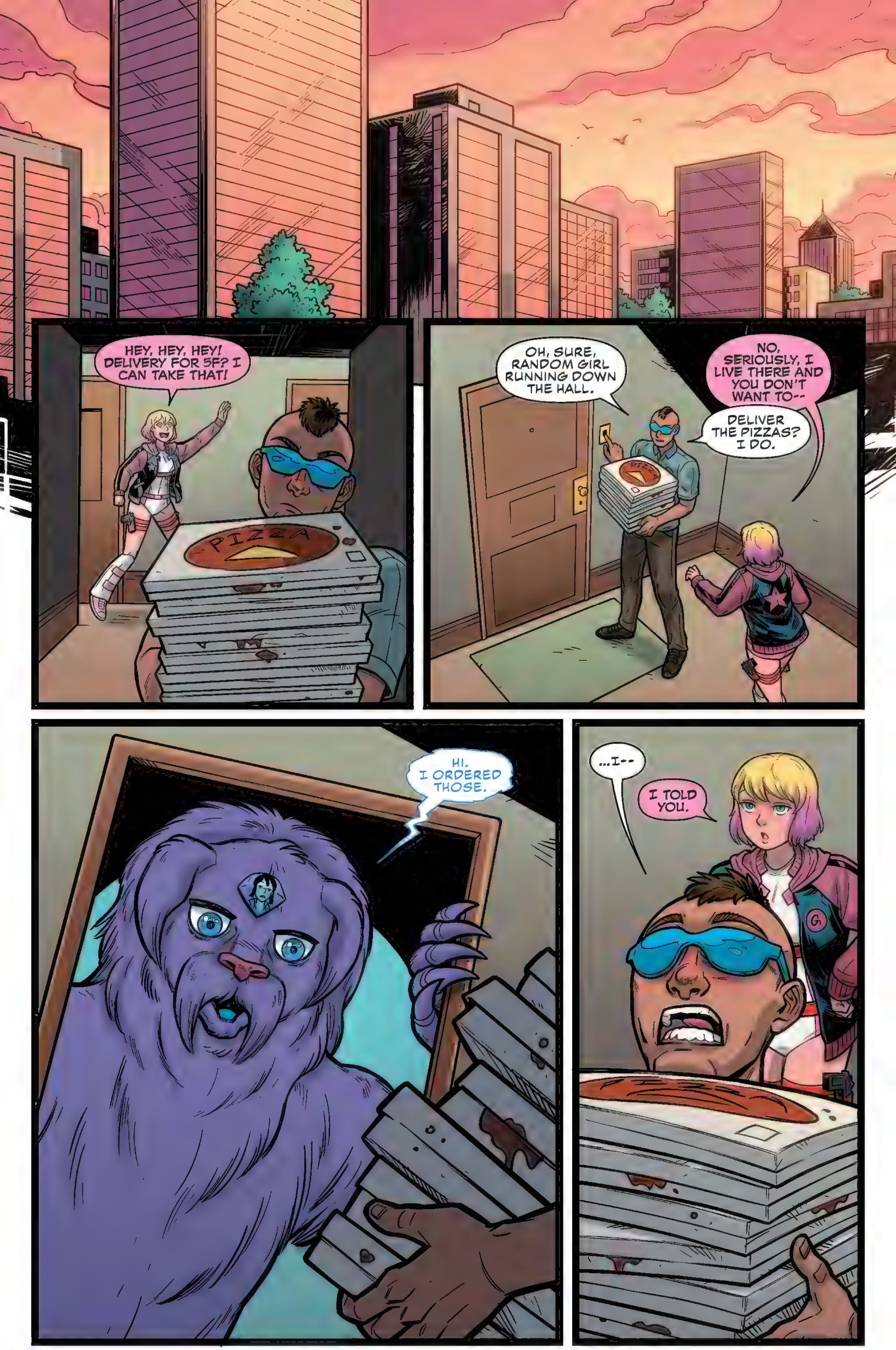

YESSS...THISSS SSSUBWAY SSSTATION SSSHALL SSSERVE ASSS A SSSPLENDID DOMICCCILE FOR...
THE MASSSTER...
...AND HISSS POSSSSSSE OF SSSNAKESSS--
BLAM
AH!
BADABADA BABADA
YOU'D MONOLOGUE A LOT FASTER IF YOU DIDN'T TRY TO SNIFF THE AIR WITH YOUR TONGUE EVERY TIME YOU MADE AN "S" SOUND.
BADABABA DABADA
HISSSSSS!
SERIOUSLY, YOU JUST *DECIDED* YOU GET TO CLAIM A SUBWAY STATION AS A HOUSE?
BECAUSE YOU CAN CONTROL A BUNCH OF SNAKES?
NOT JUSSST A BUNCH OF SSSNAKESSS, GIRL...

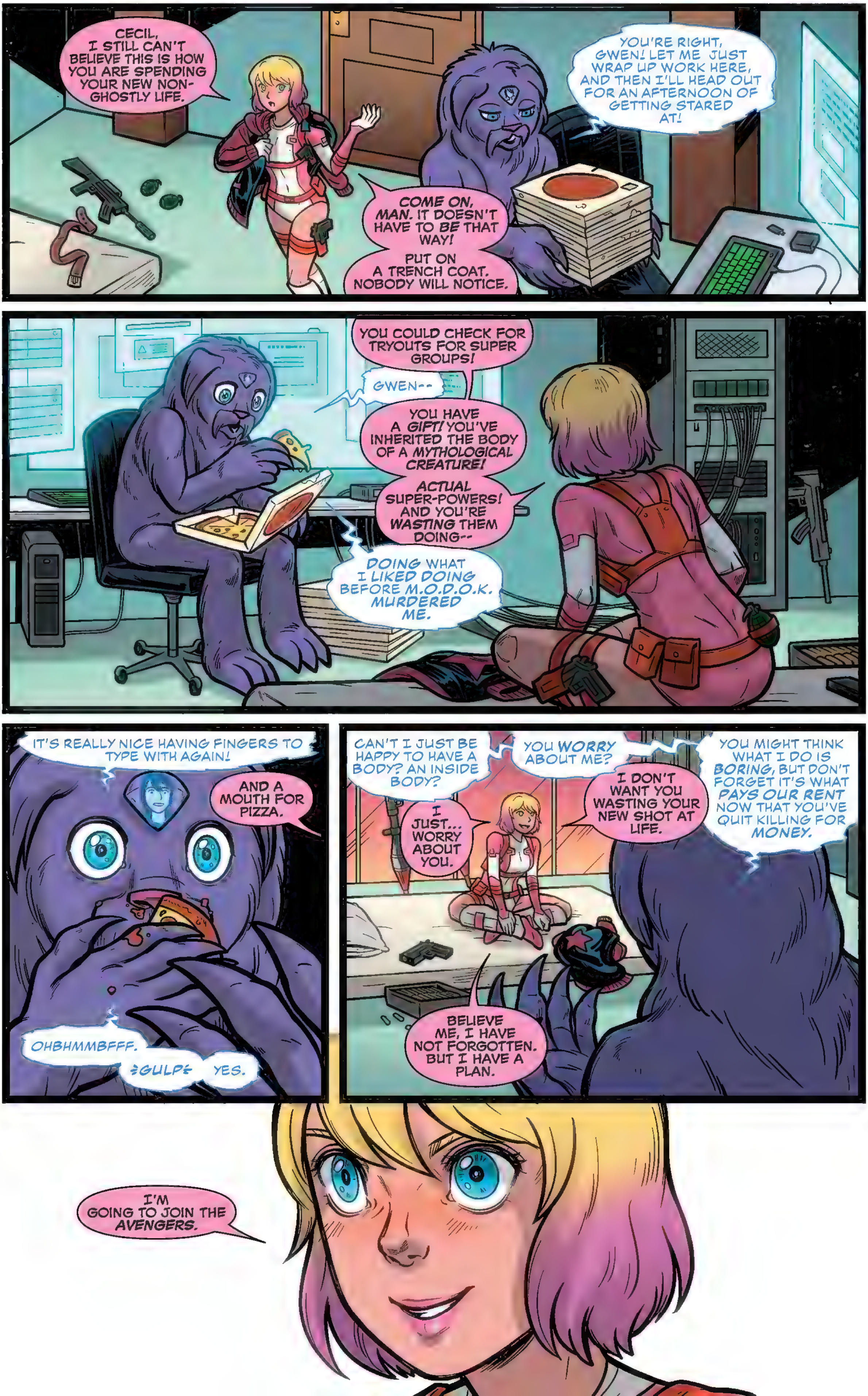

...ALL THE SSSNAKESS!
OVER-CONFIDENCE, YOU BETRAY ME AGAIN.

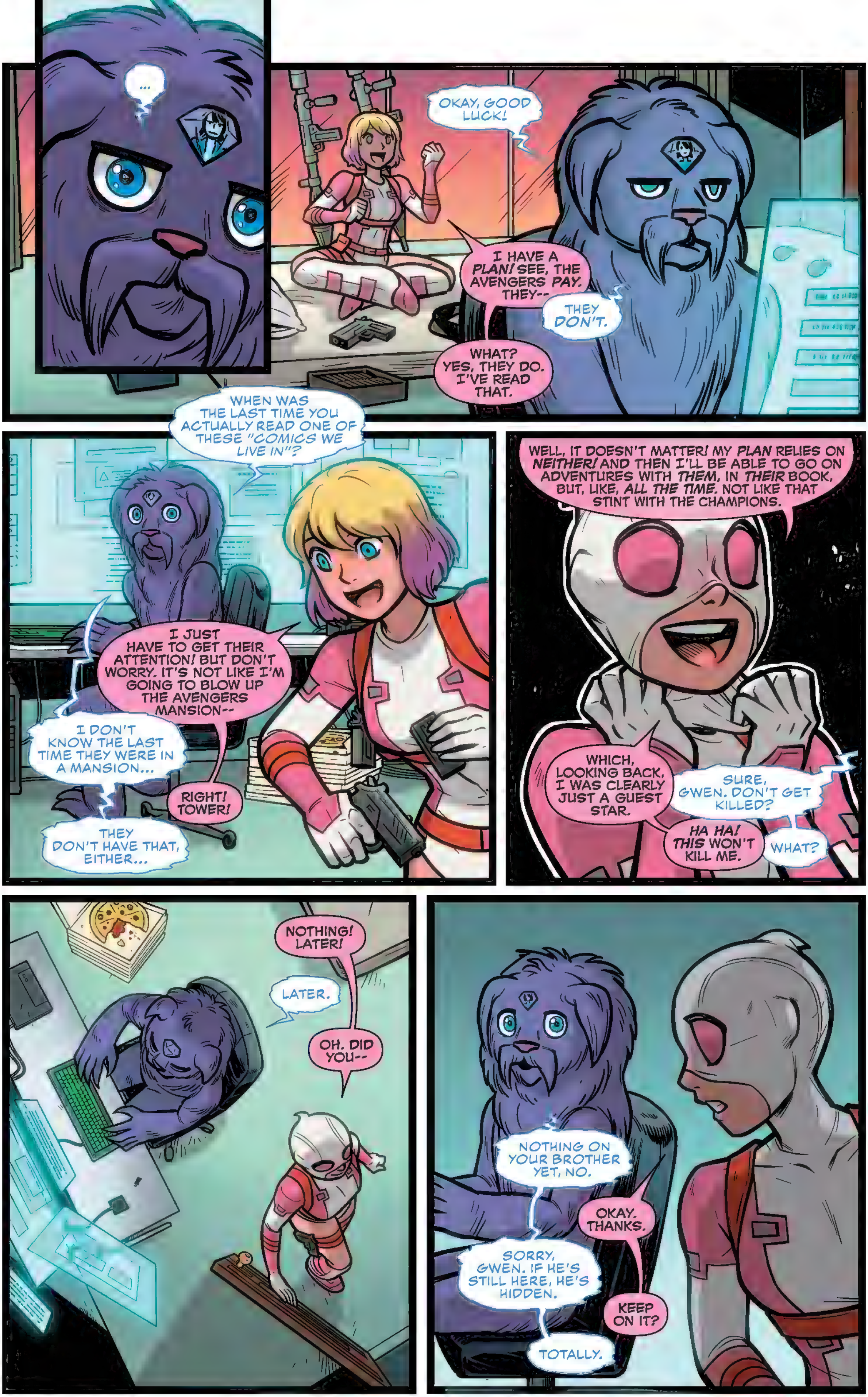

HIIIISSSSS!
AAAAAAAH!
AAAAAA...
I DON'T THINK SPIDER-MAN'S SHOWING UP IN TIME FOR THIS ONE.
THREE... TWO...

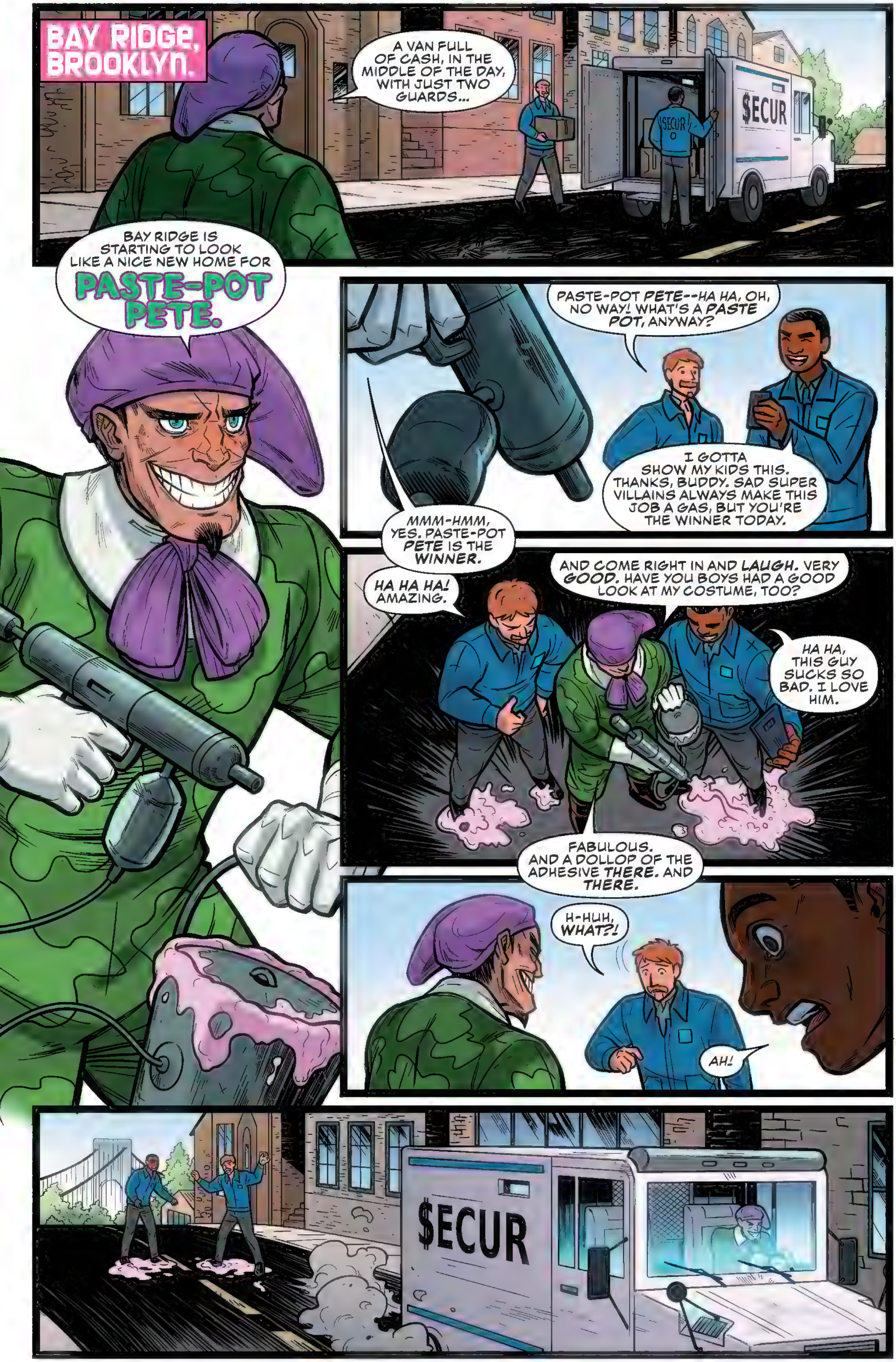

ONE-- POOLE?!
HEY, GUYS. I TOOK CARE OF THE SNAKES.
WH-- THERE'S NOBODY HERE!
YEAH, YOU KNOW, I JUST GOT IN THERE, SHOWED HIM WHO'S BOSS.
(ME.)
HE SAID, "EXCELLENT POINT. YOU ARE THE BOSS. I AM NOT." AND HE PACKED UP HIS SNAKES AND FLED. PROMISED HE'D PUT THEM ALL WHERE THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
HE'S GONE! AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT! I'M A SUPER HERO NOW, GREY. SO THERE'S NO CHARGE FOR THE SERVICE.
HOWEVER, IF YOU WANTED TO HELP OUT WITH EXPENSES, YOU MIGHT LET ME INTO YOUR PRECINCT'S GUN CLOSET AND JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR A FEW MINUTES--

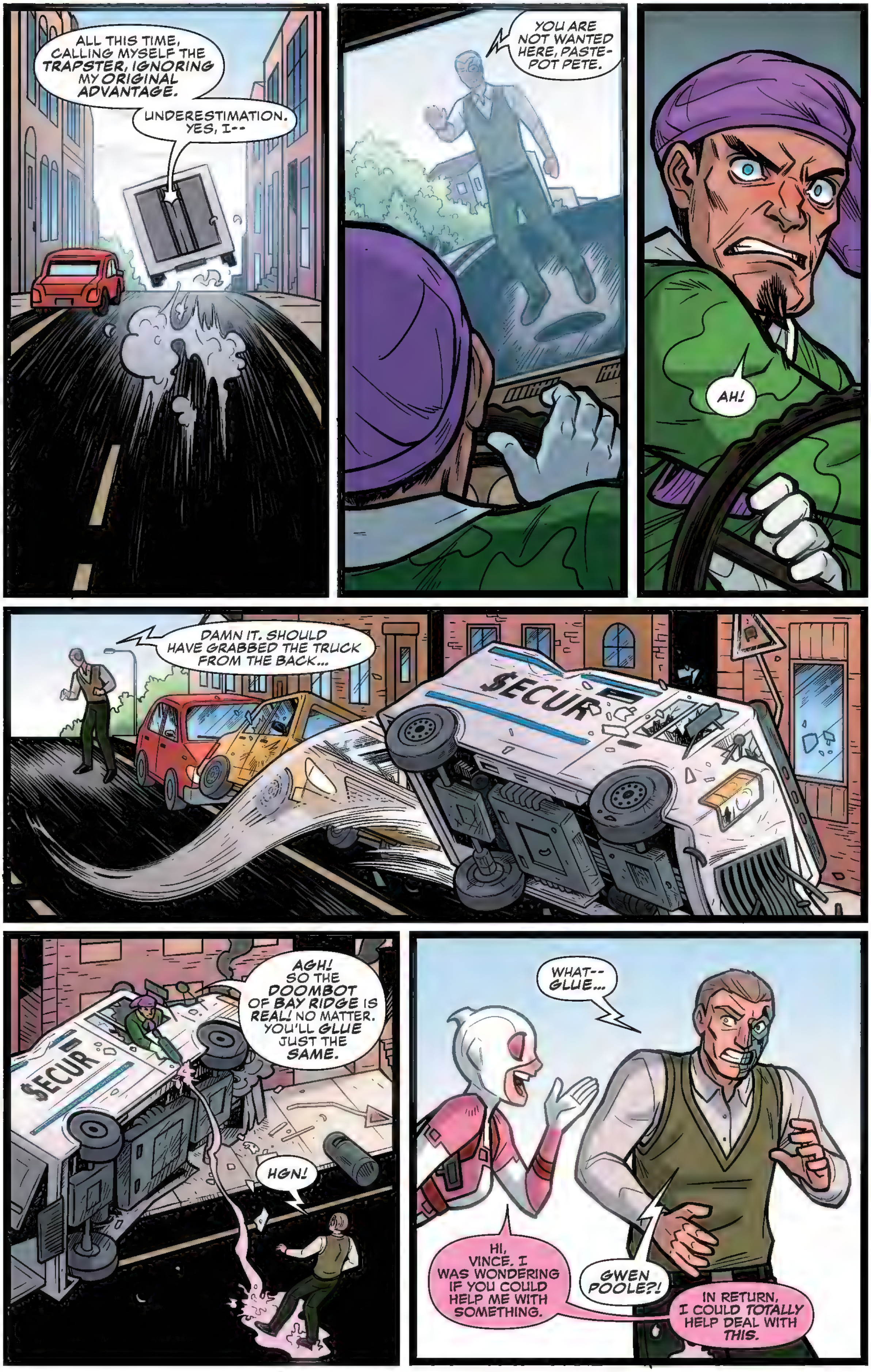

NO!
WAIT, WHAT?! I JUST HELPED OUT! I'M A GOOD, PURE LADY!
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST. I'M TIRED OF YOUR CRAP.
WHOAAA, WHAT'S THE CHARGE HERE, OFFICER?
ARE YOU SERIOUS--LOOK AT ALL HER GUNS! I'M SURE SHE'S NOT LICENSED.
YEAH, BUT SHE TOOK CARE OF THAT SNAKE GUY WITH NO PROPERTY DAMAGE OR INJURIES. I THINK YOU'RE WAY OUT OF LINE HERE.
I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO BOOK GWEN POOLE FOR MONTHS.
WHAT ABOUT ALL HER OTHER CRIMES?!
I DON'T REMEMBER THOSE.
WHAT?!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS.
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S ON OUR SIDE.
MAYBE GET TRANSFERRED TO WHATEVER PRECINCT DEALS WITH JESSICA JONES. WHOEVER DOES RESEARCH FOR THAT GETS COPS WAY MORE REALISTIC THAN WHOEVER'S WRITING THIS.
WHAT?
HAHA, JUST...POLICE DON'T WORK LIKE THIS.
IN REAL LIFE.
CATCH YOU LATER, GREY! LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU MAKE COMMISSIONER! THEN WE CAN REALLY GET NUTS.
IN REAL LIFE...

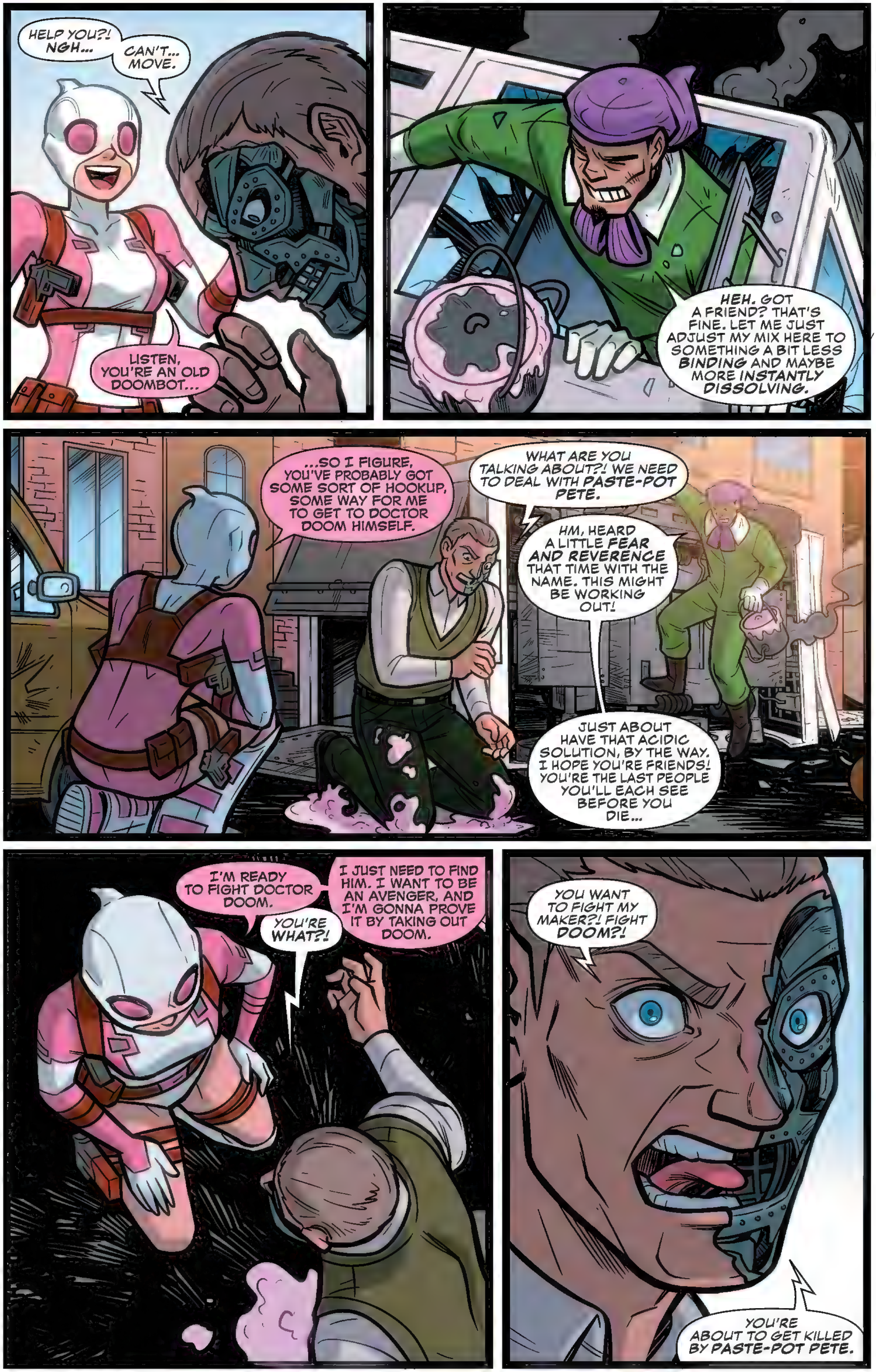

HEY, HEY, HEY! DELIVERY FOR 5F? I CAN TAKE THAT!
PIZZA
OH, SURE, RANDOM GIRL RUNNING DOWN THE HALL.
NO, SERIOUSLY, I LIVE THERE AND YOU DON'T WANT TO--
DELIVER THE PIZZAS? I DO.
PIZZA
HI. I ORDERED THOSE.
...I--
I TOLD YOU.

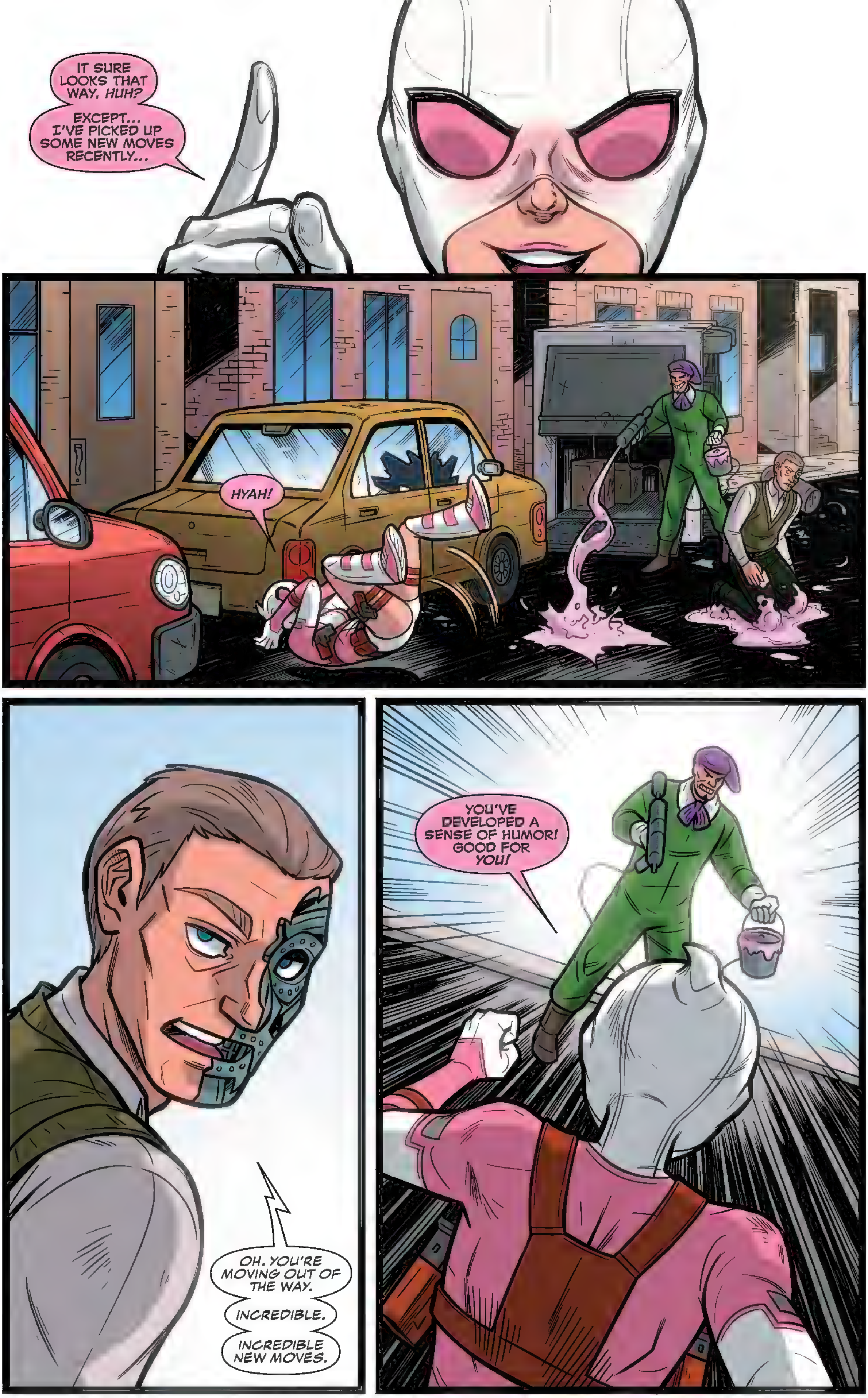

CECIL, I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HOW YOU ARE SPENDING YOUR NEW NON-GHOSTLY LIFE.
YOU'RE RIGHT, GWEN! LET ME JUST WRAP UP WORK HERE, AND THEN I'LL HEAD OUT FOR AN AFTERNOON OF GETTING STARED AT!
COME ON, MAN. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY!
PUT ON A TRENCH COAT. NOBODY WILL NOTICE.
YOU COULD CHECK FOR TRYOUTS FOR SUPER GROUPS!
GWEN--
YOU HAVE A GIFT! YOU'VE INHERITED THE BODY OF A MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURE!
ACTUAL SUPER-POWERS! AND YOU'RE WASTING THEM DOING--
DOING WHAT I LIKED DOING BEFORE M.O.D.O.K. MURDERED ME.
IT'S REALLY NICE HAVING FINGERS TO TYPE WITH AGAIN!
AND A MOUTH FOR PIZZA.
OHBHMMBFFF.
GULP
YES.
CAN'T I JUST BE HAPPY TO HAVE A BODY? AN INSIDE BODY?
I JUST... WORRY ABOUT YOU.
YOU WORRY ABOUT ME?
I DON'T WANT YOU WASTING YOUR NEW SHOT AT LIFE.
YOU MIGHT THINK WHAT I DO IS BORING, BUT DON'T FORGET IT'S WHAT PAYS OUR RENT NOW THAT YOU'VE QUIT KILLING FOR MONEY.
BELIEVE ME, I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN. BUT I HAVE A PLAN.
I'M GOING TO JOIN THE AVENGERS.

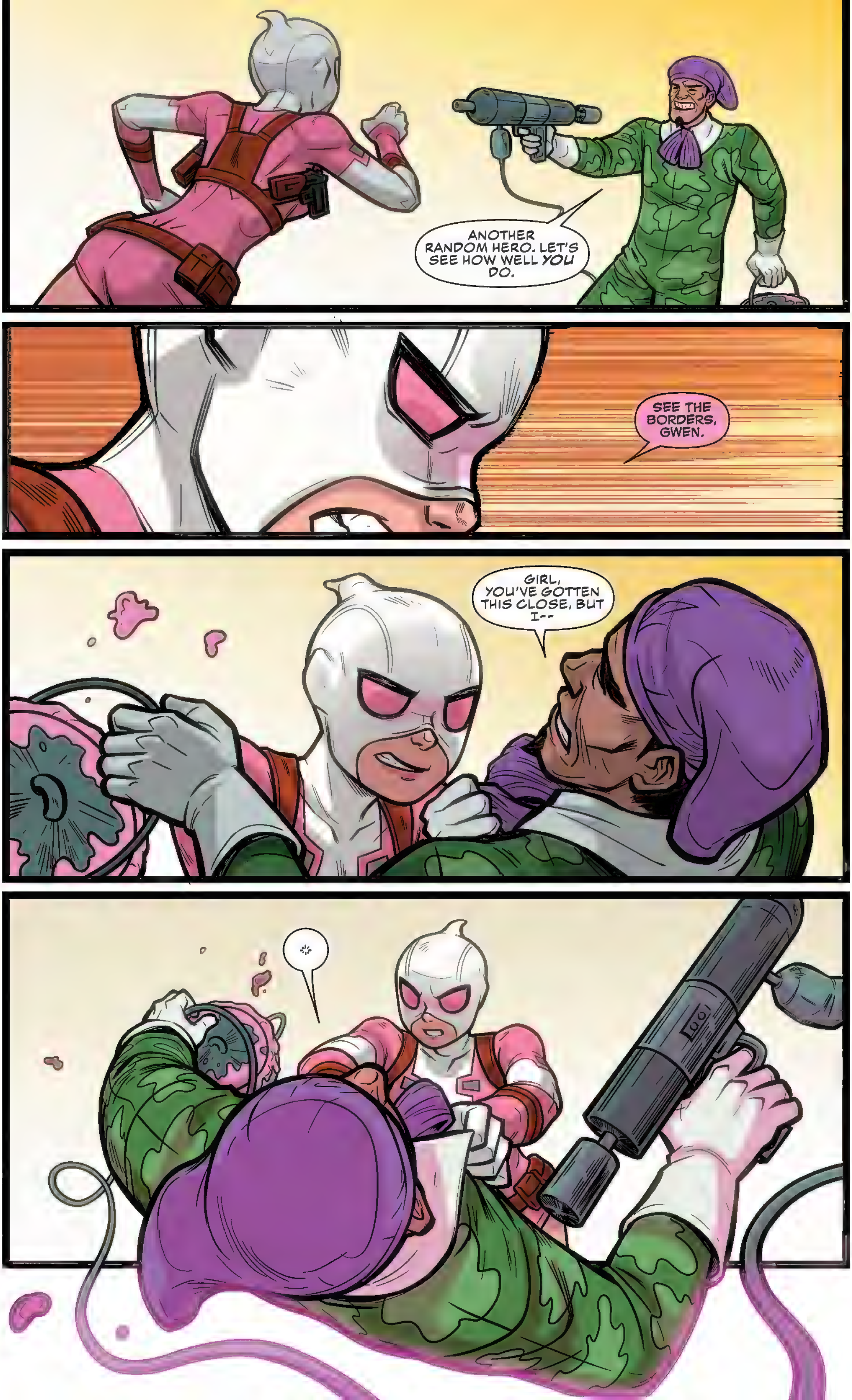

...
OKAY, GOOD LUCK!
I HAVE A *PLAN!* SEE, THE AVENGERS *PAY.* THEY--
THEY *DON'T.*
WHAT? YES, THEY DO. I'VE READ THAT.
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU ACTUALLY READ ONE OF THESE "COMICS WE LIVE IN"?
I JUST HAVE TO GET THEIR ATTENTION! BUT DON'T WORRY. IT'S NOT LIKE I'M GOING TO BLOW UP THE AVENGERS MANSION--
I DON'T KNOW THE LAST TIME THEY WERE IN A MANSION...
RIGHT! TOWER!
THEY DON'T HAVE THAT, EITHER...
WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER! MY *PLAN* RELIES ON *NEITHER!* AND THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO GO ON ADVENTURES WITH *THEM,* IN *THEIR* BOOK, BUT, LIKE, *ALL THE TIME.* NOT LIKE THAT STINT WITH THE CHAMPIONS.
WHICH, LOOKING BACK, I WAS CLEARLY JUST A GUEST STAR.
SURE, GWEN. DON'T GET KILLED?
HA HA! THIS WON'T KILL ME.
WHAT?
NOTHING! LATER!
LATER.
OH. DID YOU--
NOTHING ON YOUR BROTHER YET, NO.
OKAY. THANKS.
SORRY, GWEN. IF HE'S STILL HERE, HE'S HIDDEN.
KEEP ON IT?
TOTALLY.

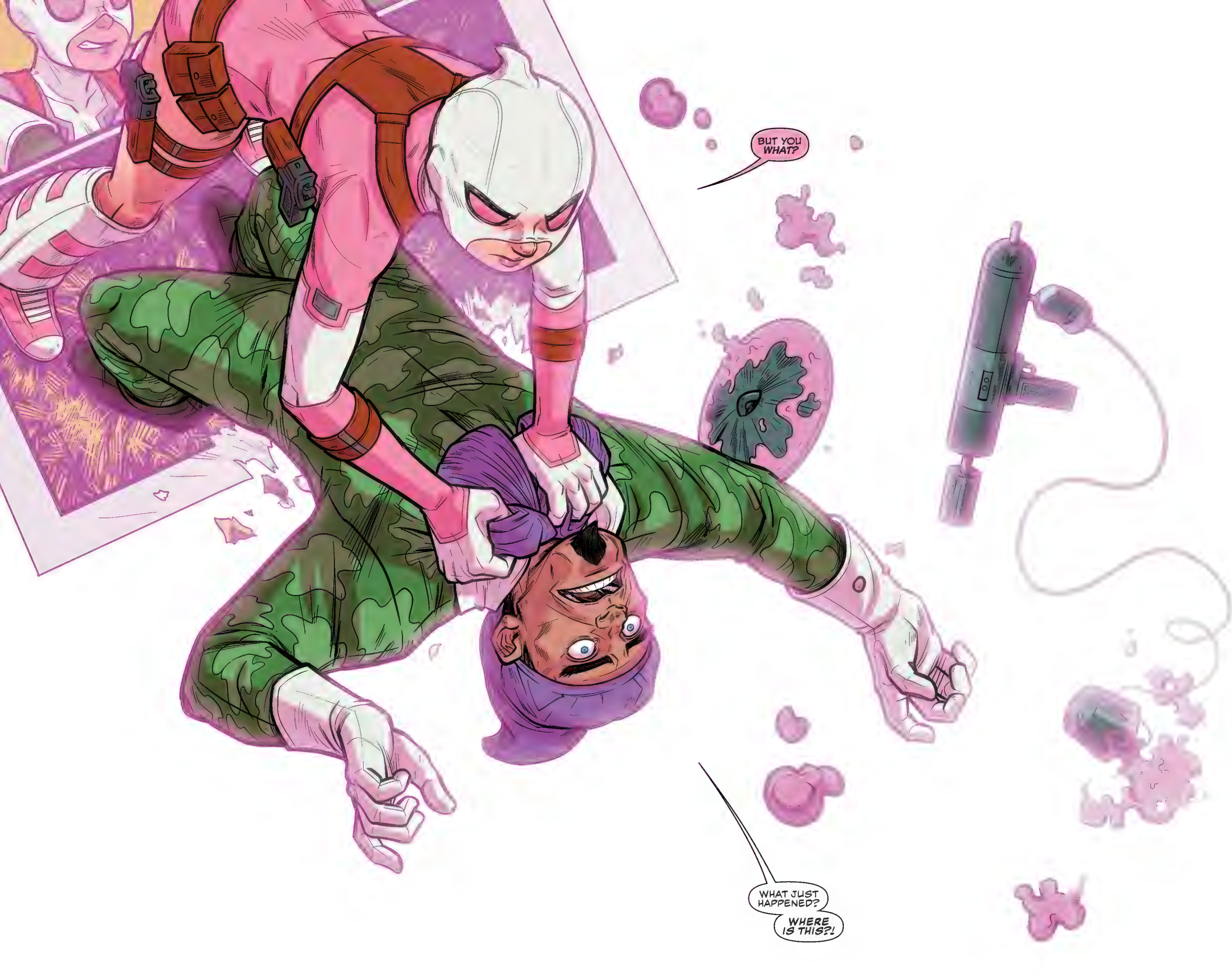

BAY RIDGE, BROOKLYN.
A VAN FULL OF CASH, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY, WITH JUST TWO GUARDS...
$ECUR
SECUR
BAY RIDGE IS STARTING TO LOOK LIKE A NICE NEW HOME FOR PASTE-POT PETE.
PASTE-POT PETE--HA HA, OH, NO WAY! WHAT'S A PASTE POT, ANYWAY?
I GOTTA SHOW MY KIDS THIS. THANKS, BUDDY. SAD SUPER VILLAINS ALWAYS MAKE THIS JOB A GAS, BUT YOU'RE THE WINNER TODAY.
MMM-HMM, YES. PASTE-POT PETE IS THE WINNER.
HA HA HA! AMAZING.
AND COME RIGHT IN AND LAUGH. VERY GOOD. HAVE YOU BOYS HAD A GOOD LOOK AT MY COSTUME, TOO?
HA HA, THIS GUY SUCKS SO BAD. I LOVE HIM.
FABULOUS. AND A DOLLOP OF THE ADHESIVE THERE. AND THERE.
H-HUH, WHAT?!
AH!
$ECUR

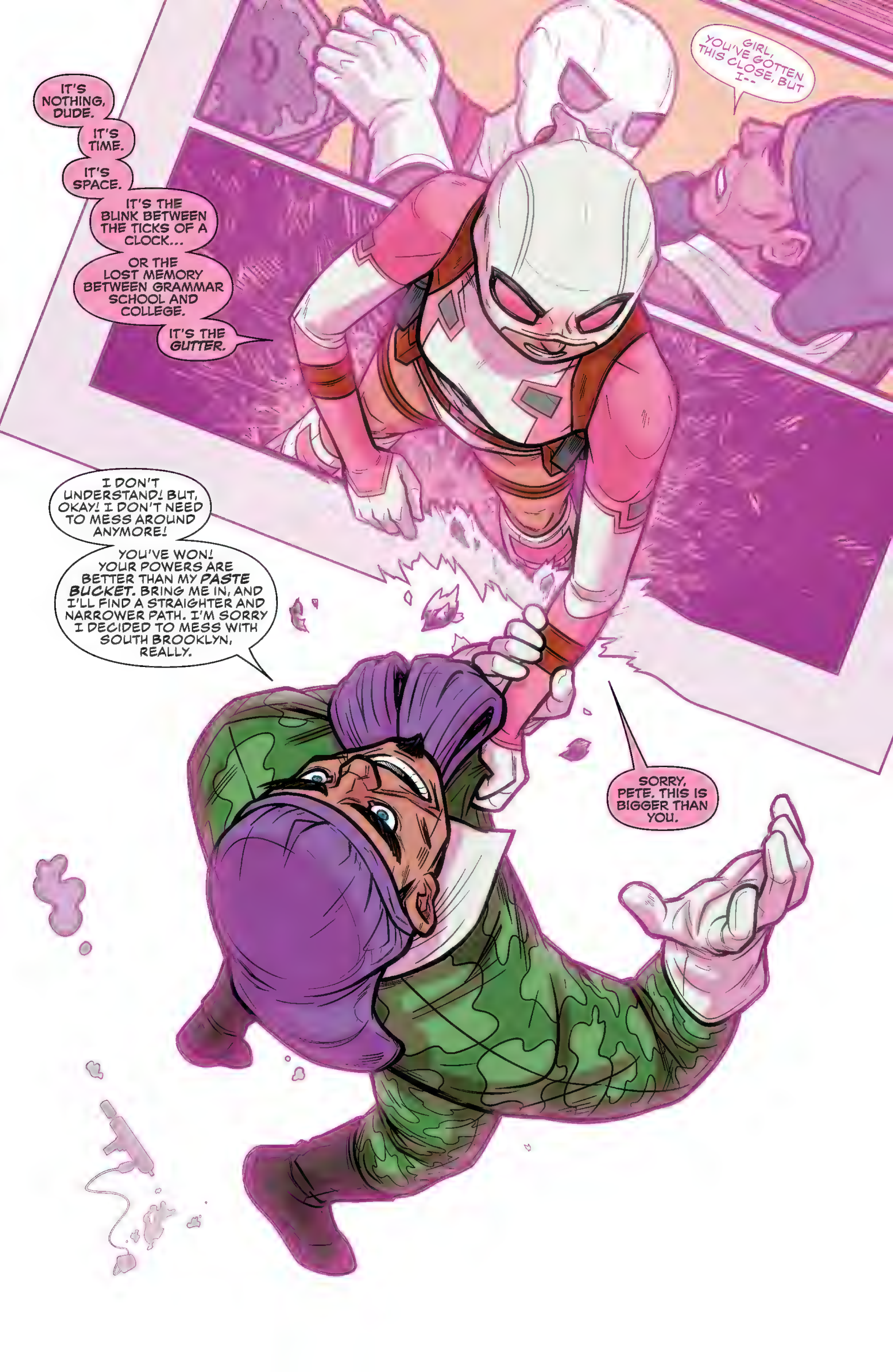

ALL THIS TIME, CALLING MYSELF THE TRAPSTER, IGNORING MY ORIGINAL ADVANTAGE.
UNDERESTIMATION. YES, I--
YOU ARE NOT WANTED HERE, PASTE-POT PETE.
AH!
DAMN IT. SHOULD HAVE GRABBED THE TRUCK FROM THE BACK...
$ECUR
$ECUR
AGH! SO THE DOOMBOT OF BAY RIDGE IS REAL! NO MATTER. YOU'LL GLUE JUST THE SAME.
HGN!
WHAT-- GLUE...
HI, VINCE. I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD HELP ME WITH SOMETHING.
GWEN POOLE?!
IN RETURN, I COULD TOTALLY HELP DEAL WITH THIS.


HELP YOU?! NGH...
CAN'T... MOVE.
LISTEN, YOU'RE AN OLD DOOMBOT...
HEH. GOT A FRIEND? THAT'S FINE. LET ME JUST ADJUST MY MIX HERE TO SOMETHING A BIT LESS **BINDING** AND MAYBE MORE **INSTANTLY DISSOLVING.**
...SO I FIGURE, YOU'VE PROBABLY GOT SOME SORT OF HOOKUP, SOME WAY FOR ME TO GET TO DOCTOR DOOM HIMSELF.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! WE NEED TO DEAL WITH **PASTE-POT PETE.**
HM, HEARD A LITTLE **FEAR AND REVERENCE** THAT TIME WITH THE NAME. THIS MIGHT BE WORKING OUT!
JUST ABOUT HAVE THAT ACIDIC SOLUTION, BY THE WAY. I HOPE YOU'RE FRIENDS! YOU'RE THE LAST PEOPLE YOU'LL EACH SEE BEFORE YOU DIE...
I'M READY TO FIGHT DOCTOR DOOM.
YOU'RE WHAT?!
I JUST NEED TO FIND HIM. I WANT TO BE AN AVENGER, AND I'M GONNA PROVE IT BY TAKING OUT DOOM.
YOU WANT TO FIGHT MY MAKER?! FIGHT **DOOM?!**
YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET KILLED BY **PASTE-POT PETE.**

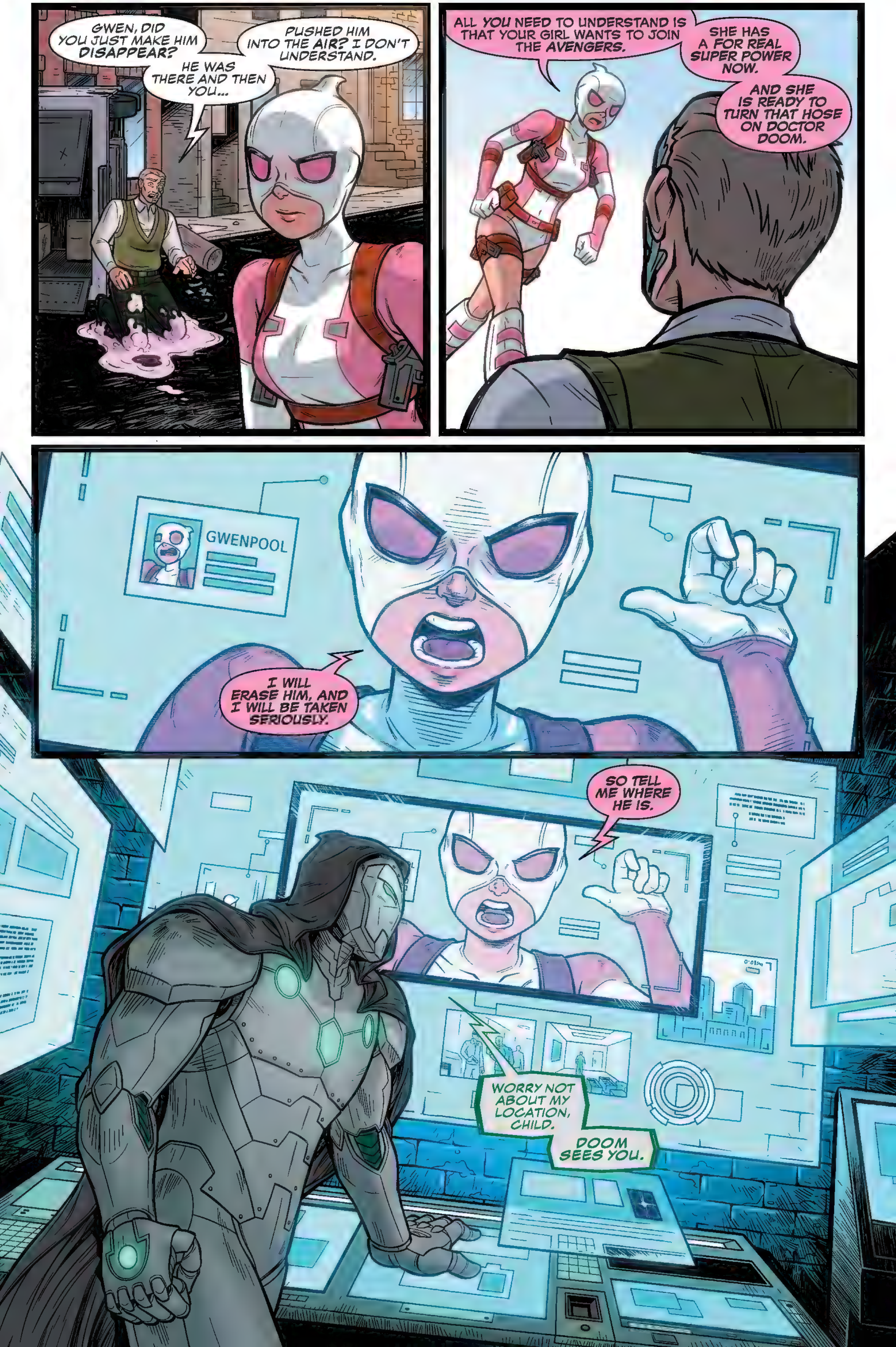

IT SURE LOOKS THAT WAY, *HUH?*
EXCEPT... I'VE PICKED UP SOME NEW MOVES RECENTLY...
HYAH!
OH. YOU'RE MOVING OUT OF THE WAY.
INCREDIBLE.
INCREDIBLE NEW MOVES.
YOU'VE DEVELOPED A SENSE OF HUMOR! GOOD FOR *YOU!*

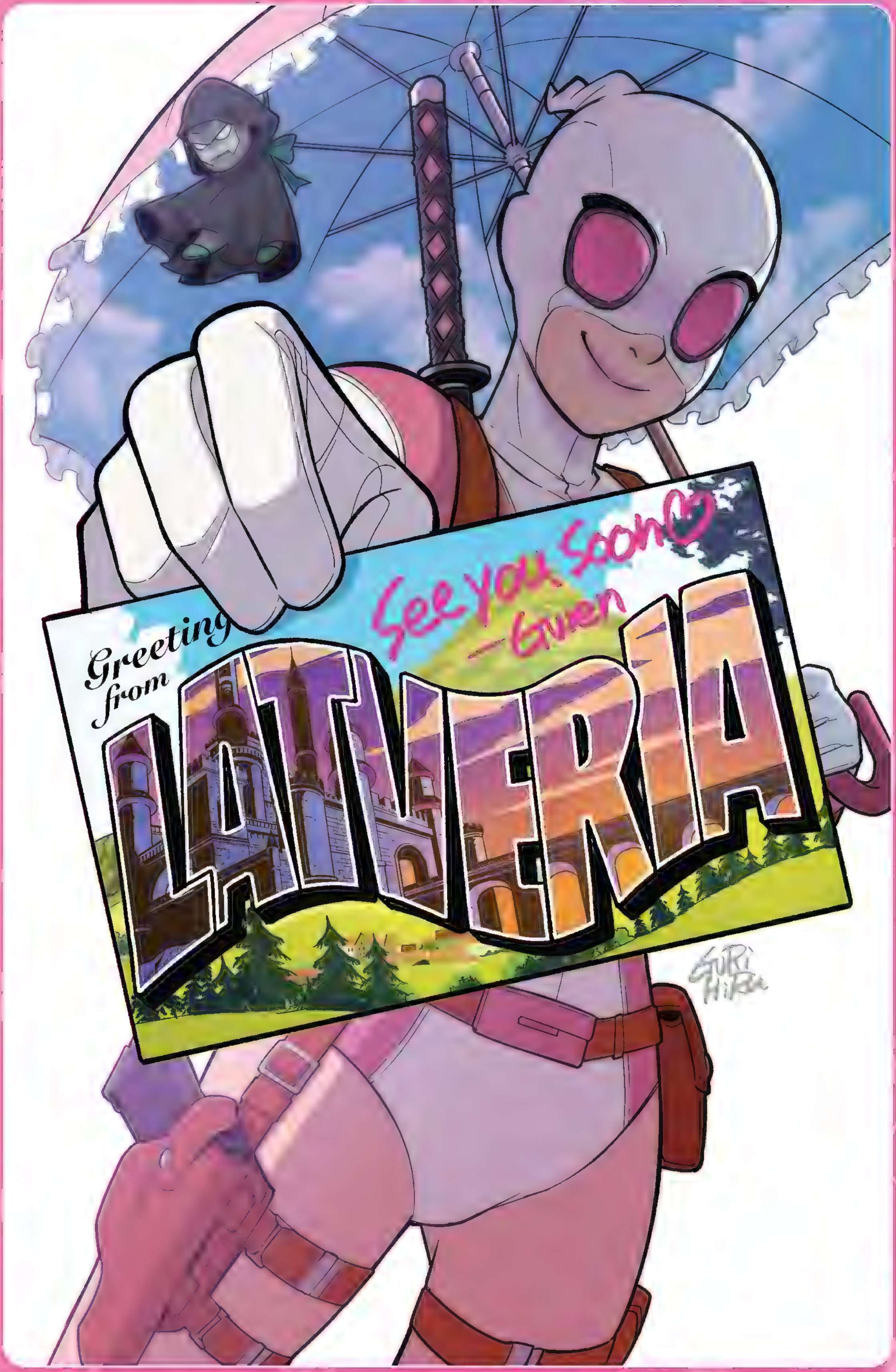

ANOTHER RANDOM HERO. LET'S SEE HOW WELL *YOU* DO.
SEE THE BORDERS, GWEN.
GIRL, YOU'VE GOTTEN THIS CLOSE, BUT I--


BUT YOU *WHAT?*
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
WHERE IS THIS?!


IT'S NOTHING, DUDE.
IT'S TIME.
IT'S SPACE.
IT'S THE BLINK BETWEEN THE TICKS OF A CLOCK...
OR THE LOST MEMORY BETWEEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.
IT'S THE *GUTTER*.
GIRL, YOU'VE GOTTEN THIS CLOSE, BUT I--
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! BUT, OKAY! I DON'T NEED TO MESS AROUND ANYMORE!
YOU'VE WON! YOUR POWERS ARE BETTER THAN MY *PASTE BUCKET*. BRING ME IN, AND I'LL FIND A STRAIGHTER AND NARROWER PATH. I'M SORRY I DECIDED TO MESS WITH SOUTH BROOKLYN, REALLY.
SORRY, PETE. THIS IS BIGGER THAN YOU.

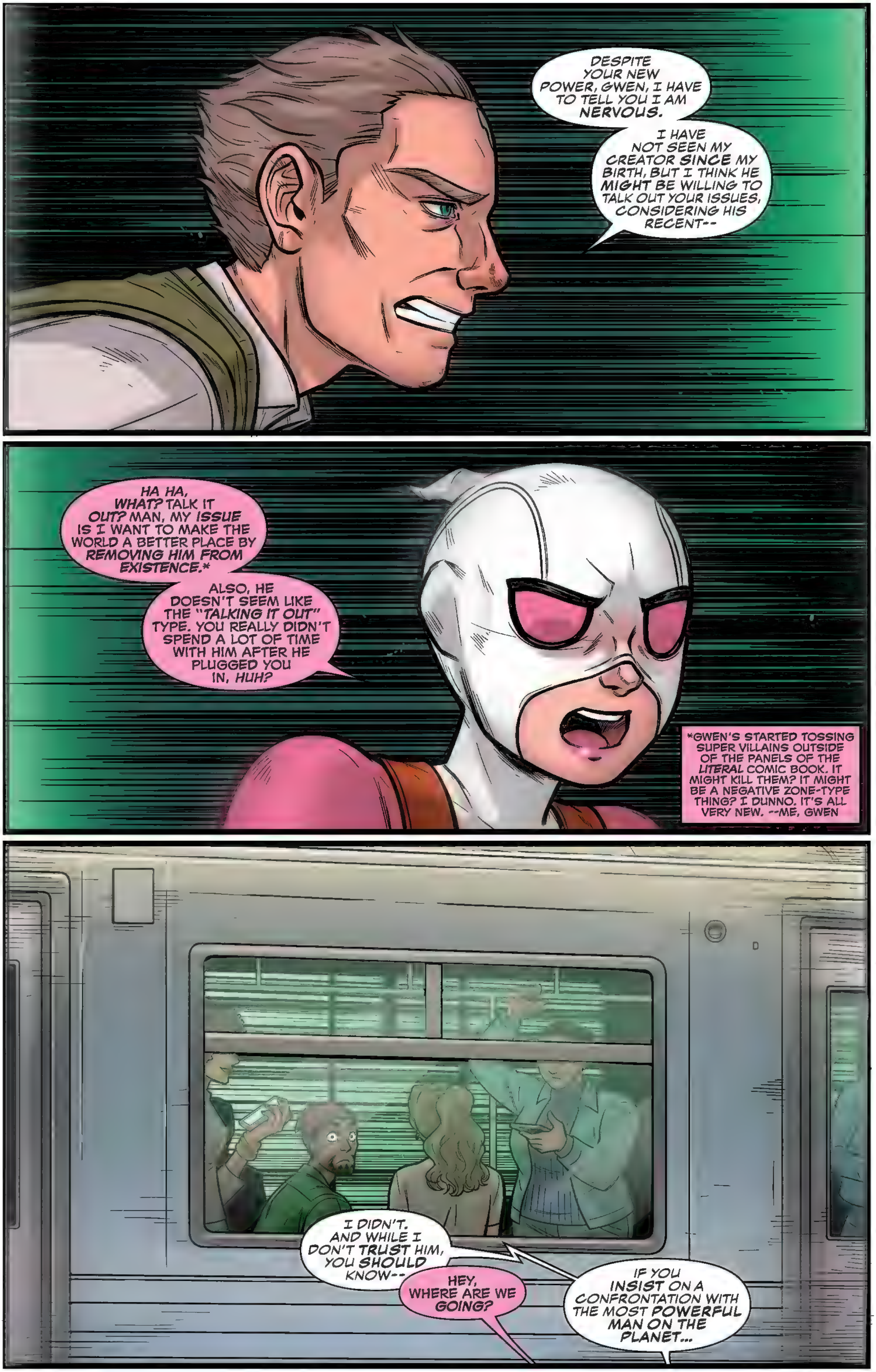
NO NO NO NO PLEASE--

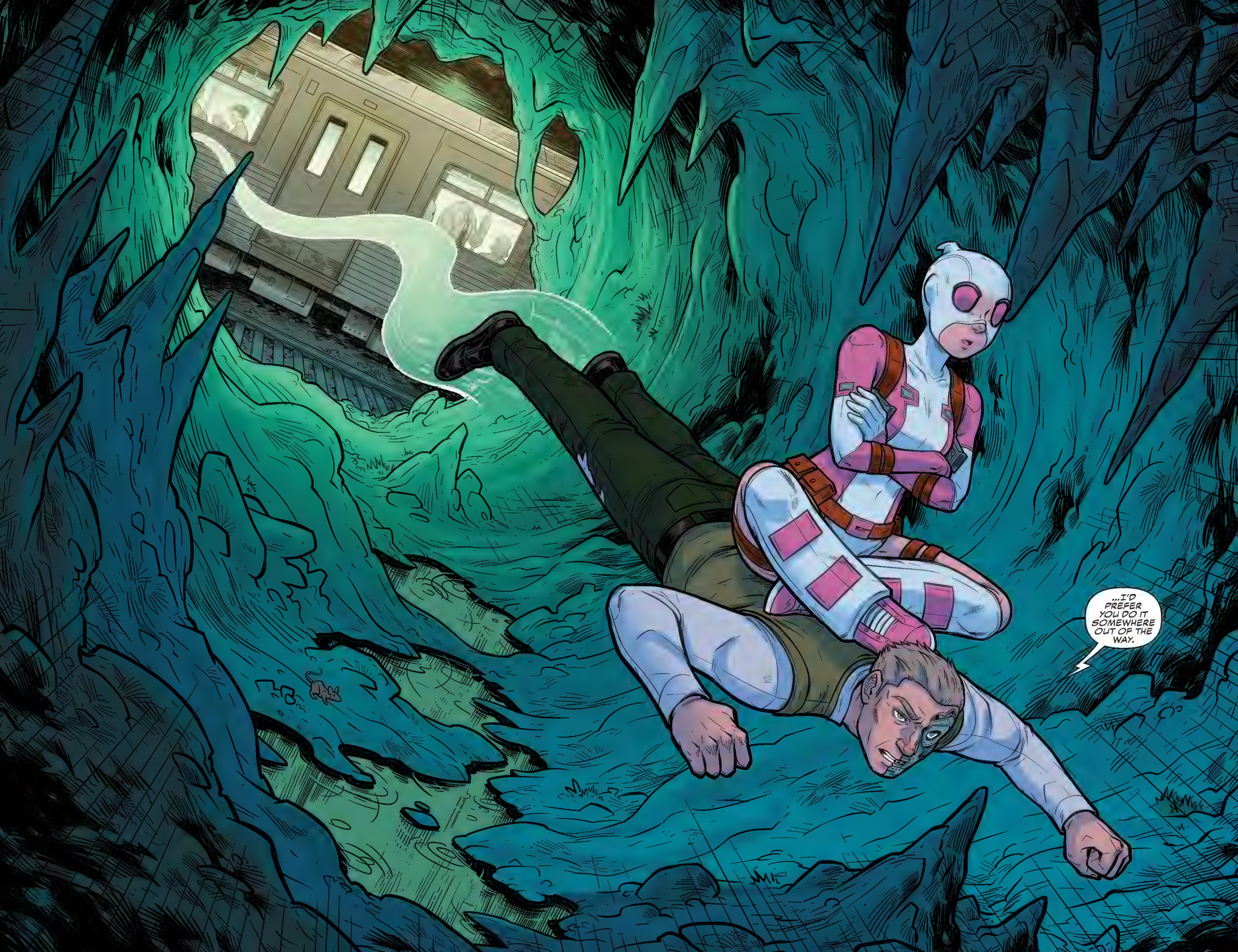

GWEN, DID YOU JUST MAKE HIM DISAPPEAR?
HE WAS THERE AND THEN YOU...
PUSHED HIM INTO THE AIR? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
ALL YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT YOUR GIRL WANTS TO JOIN THE AVENGERS.
SHE HAS A FOR REAL SUPER POWER NOW.
AND SHE IS READY TO TURN THAT HOSE ON DOCTOR DOOM.
GWENPOOL
I WILL ERASE HIM, AND I WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.
SO TELL ME WHERE HE IS.
WORRY NOT ABOUT MY LOCATION, CHILD.
DOOM SEES YOU.

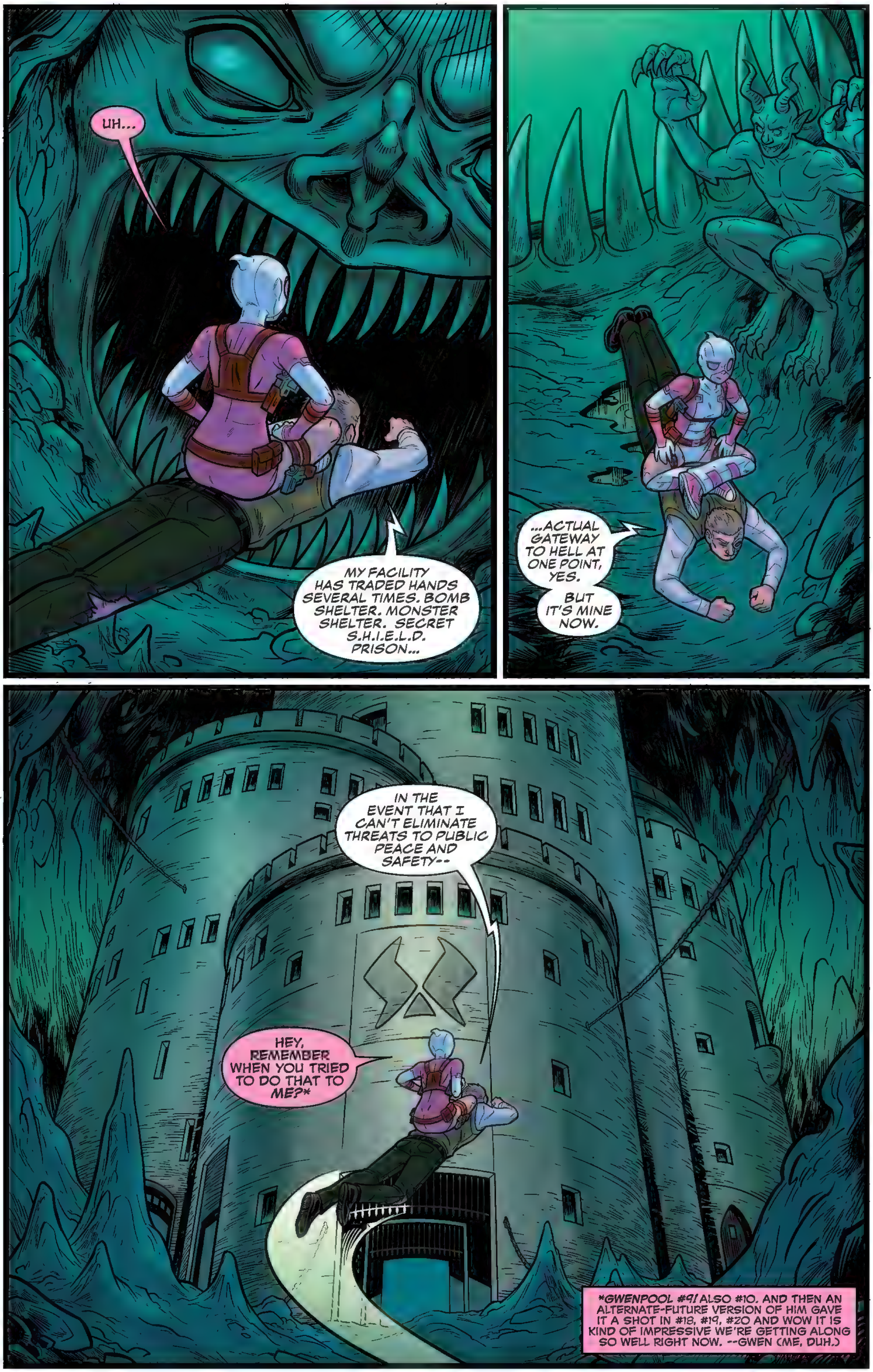

Greeting from
LATVERIA
See you soon ♡
— Gwen
Guri Hiru

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #22

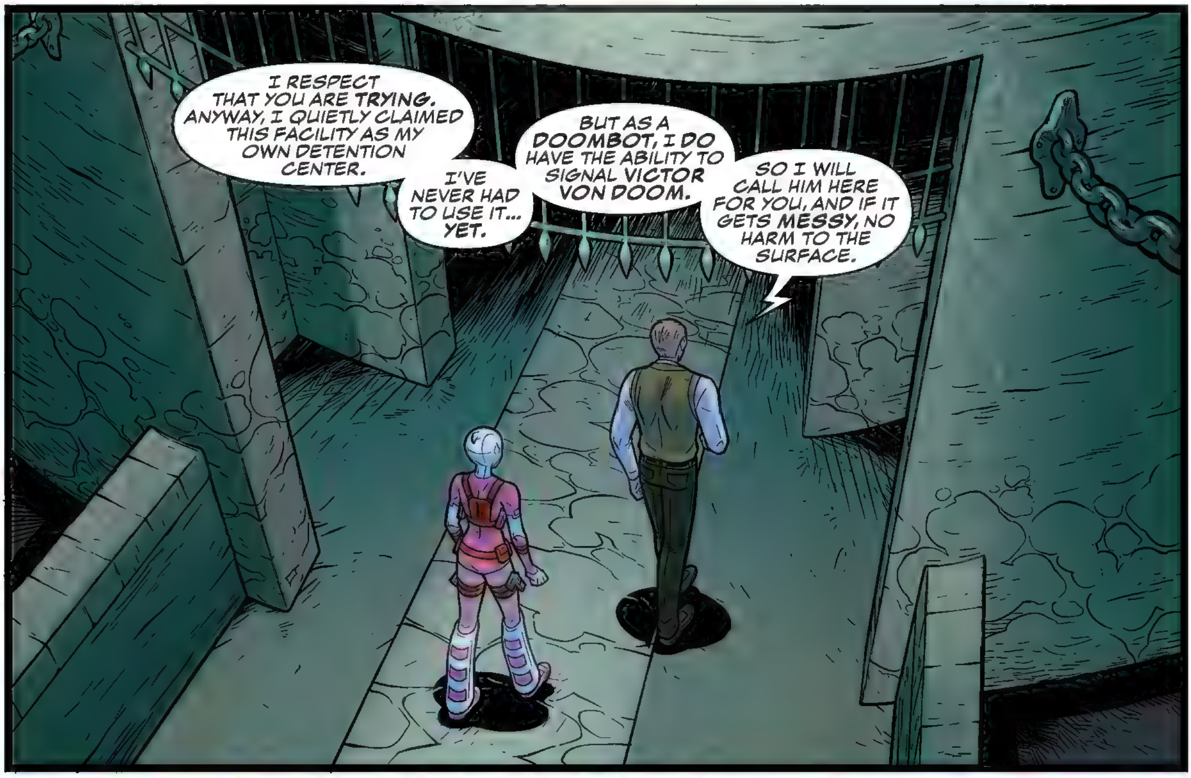
[illegible] SEES YOU [illegible]

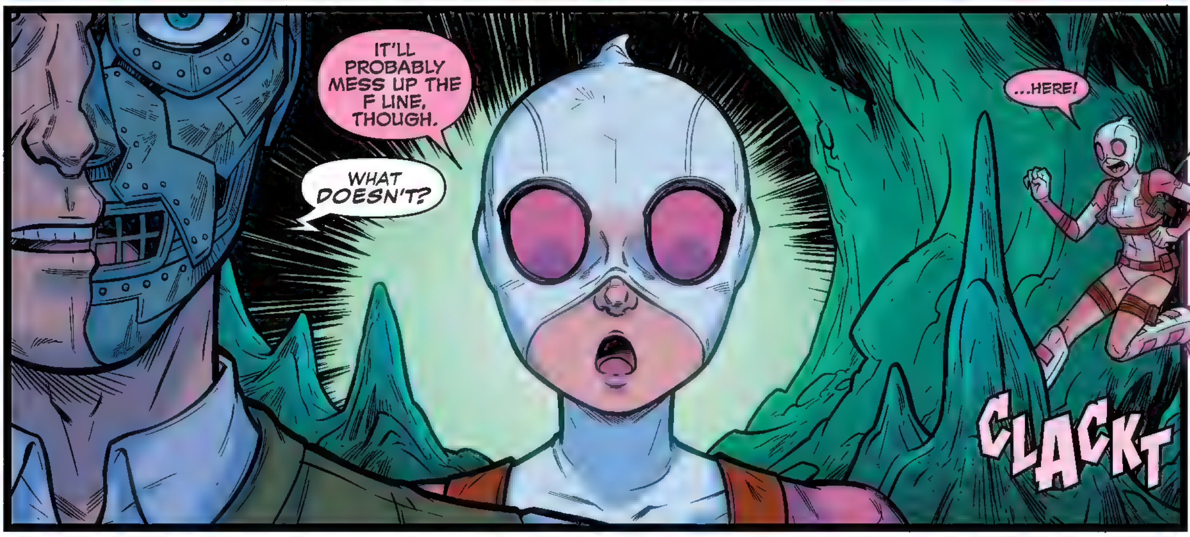

DESPITE YOUR NEW POWER, GWEN, I HAVE TO TELL YOU I AM **NERVOUS.**
I HAVE NOT SEEN MY CREATOR **SINCE** MY BIRTH, BUT I THINK HE **MIGHT** BE WILLING TO TALK OUT YOUR ISSUES, CONSIDERING HIS RECENT--
HA HA, ***WHAT?*** TALK IT ***OUT?*** MAN, MY ***ISSUE*** IS I WANT TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE BY ***REMOVING HIM FROM EXISTENCE.****
ALSO, HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE ***"TALKING IT OUT"*** TYPE. YOU REALLY DIDN'T SPEND A LOT OF TIME WITH HIM AFTER HE PLUGGED YOU IN, ***HUH?***
*GWEN'S STARTED TOSSING SUPER VILLAINS OUTSIDE OF THE PANELS OF THE ***LITERAL*** COMIC BOOK. IT MIGHT KILL THEM? IT MIGHT BE A NEGATIVE ZONE-TYPE THING? I DUNNO. IT'S ALL VERY NEW. --ME, GWEN
D
I DIDN'T. AND WHILE I DON'T **TRUST** HIM, YOU **SHOULD** KNOW--
HEY, WHERE ARE WE ***GOING?***
IF YOU **INSIST** ON A CONFRONTATION WITH THE MOST **POWERFUL** MAN ON THE PLANET...

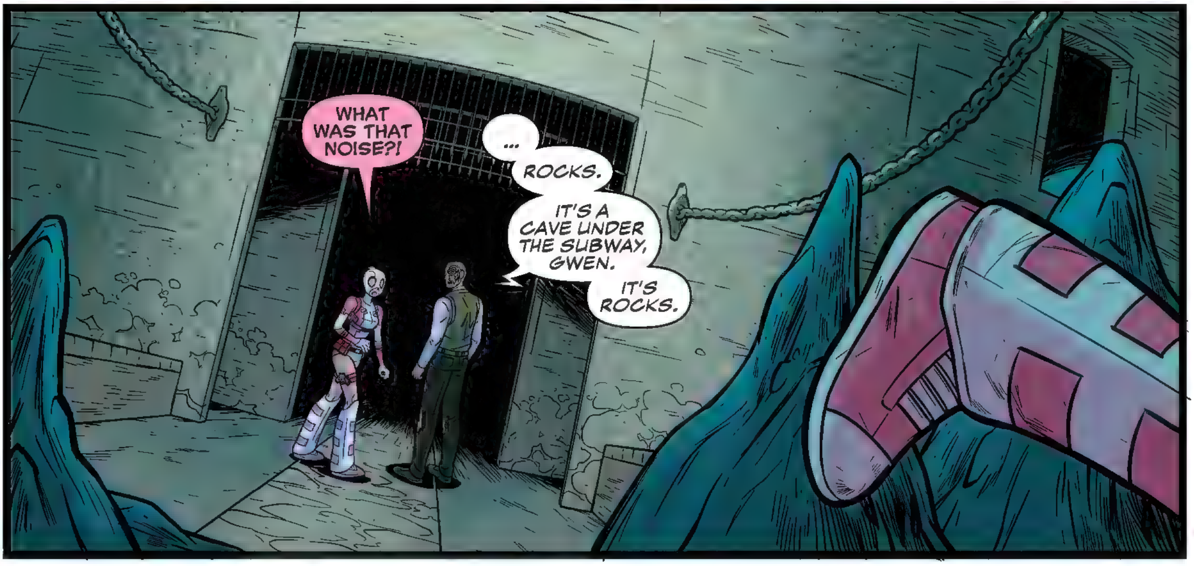

...I'D PREFER YOU DO IT SOMEWHERE OUT OF THE WAY.

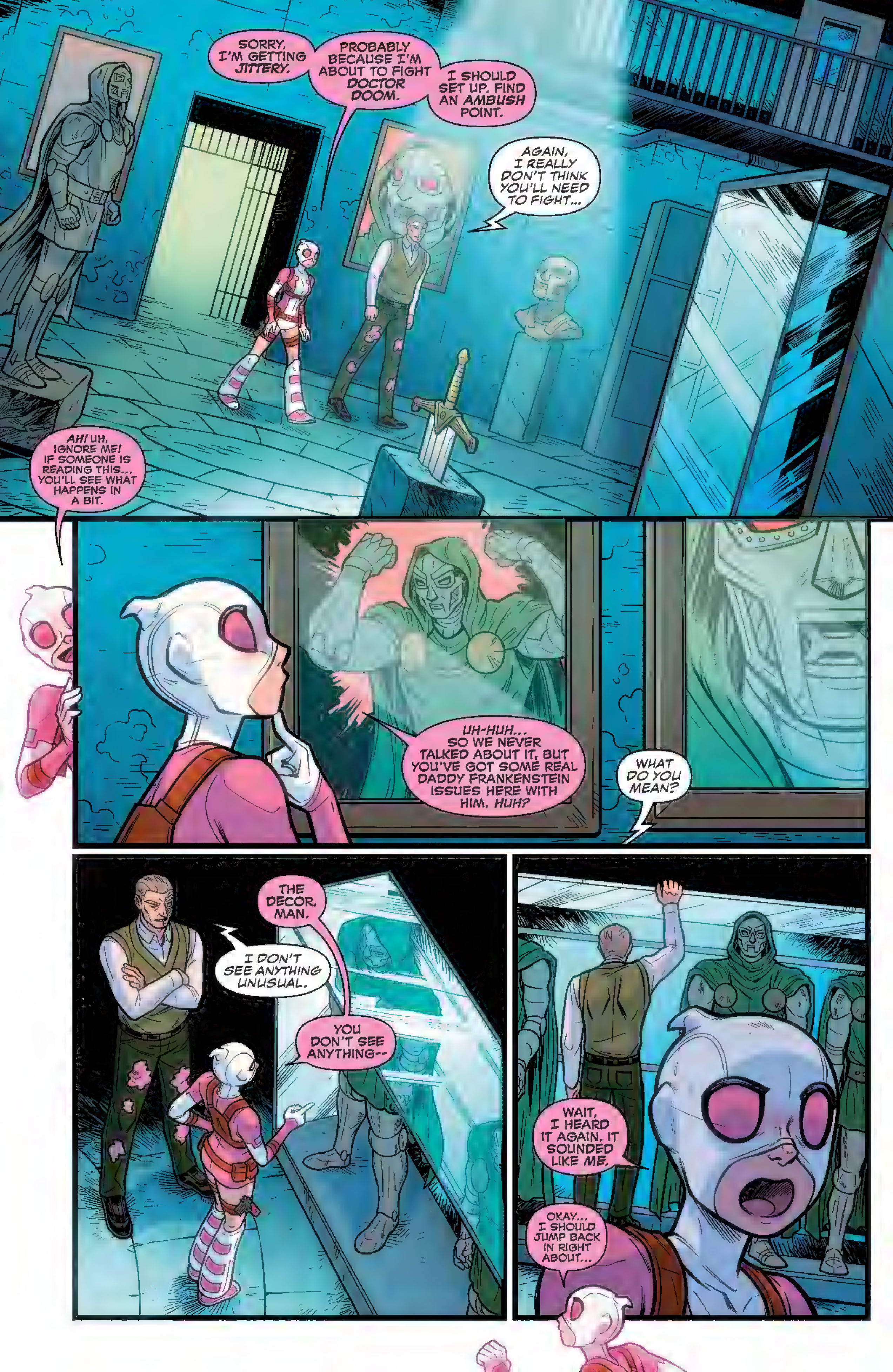

UH...
MY FACILITY HAS TRADED HANDS SEVERAL TIMES. BOMB SHELTER. MONSTER SHELTER. SECRET S.H.I.E.L.D. PRISON...
...ACTUAL GATEWAY TO HELL AT ONE POINT, YES.
BUT IT'S MINE NOW.
IN THE EVENT THAT I CAN'T ELIMINATE THREATS TO PUBLIC PEACE AND SAFETY--
HEY, REMEMBER WHEN YOU TRIED TO DO THAT TO ME?*

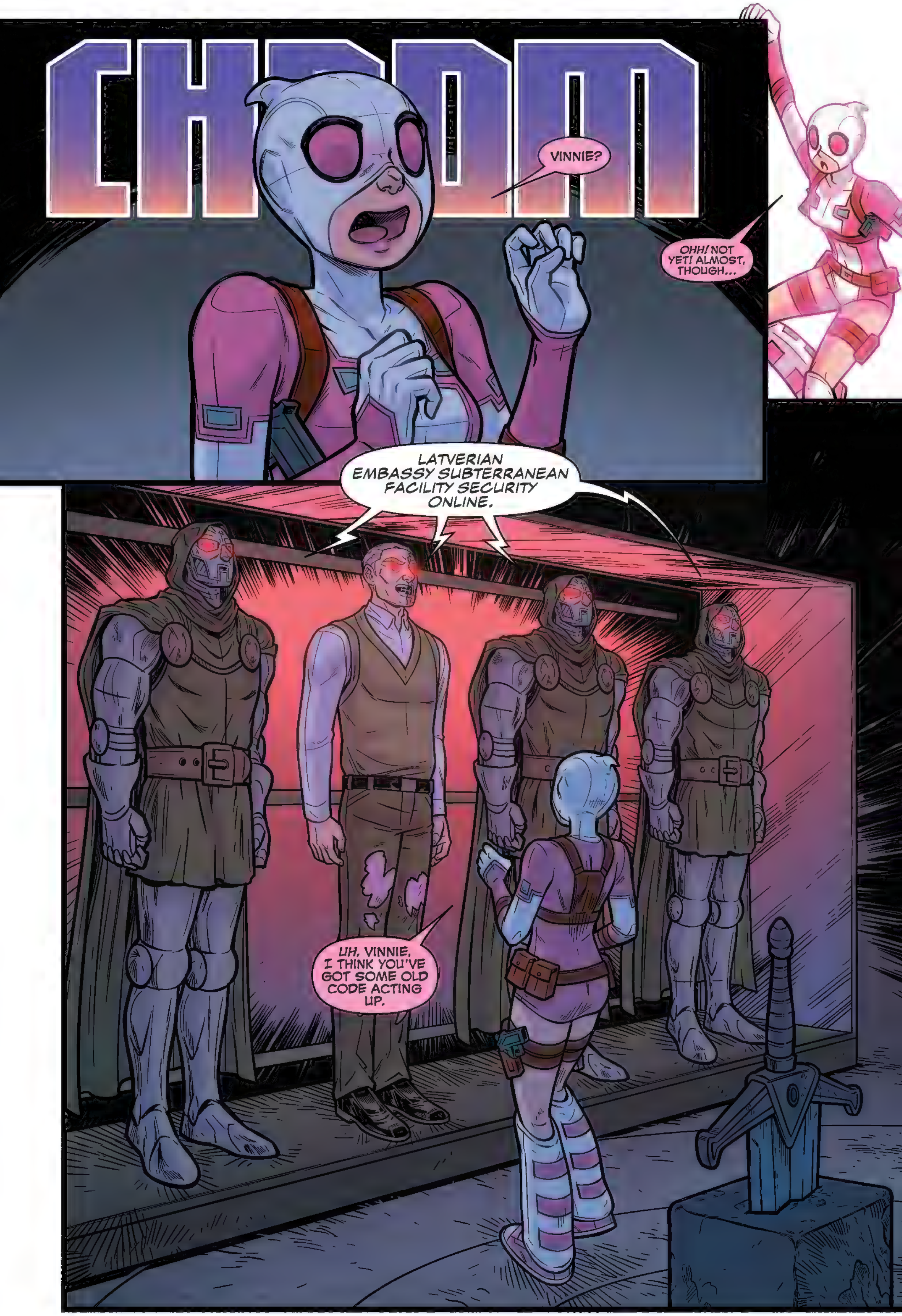
*GWENPOOL #9! ALSO #10. AND THEN AN ALTERNATE-FUTURE VERSION OF HIM GAVE IT A SHOT IN #18, #19, #20 AND WOW IT IS KIND OF IMPRESSIVE WE'RE GETTING ALONG SO WELL RIGHT NOW. --GWEN (ME, DUH.)

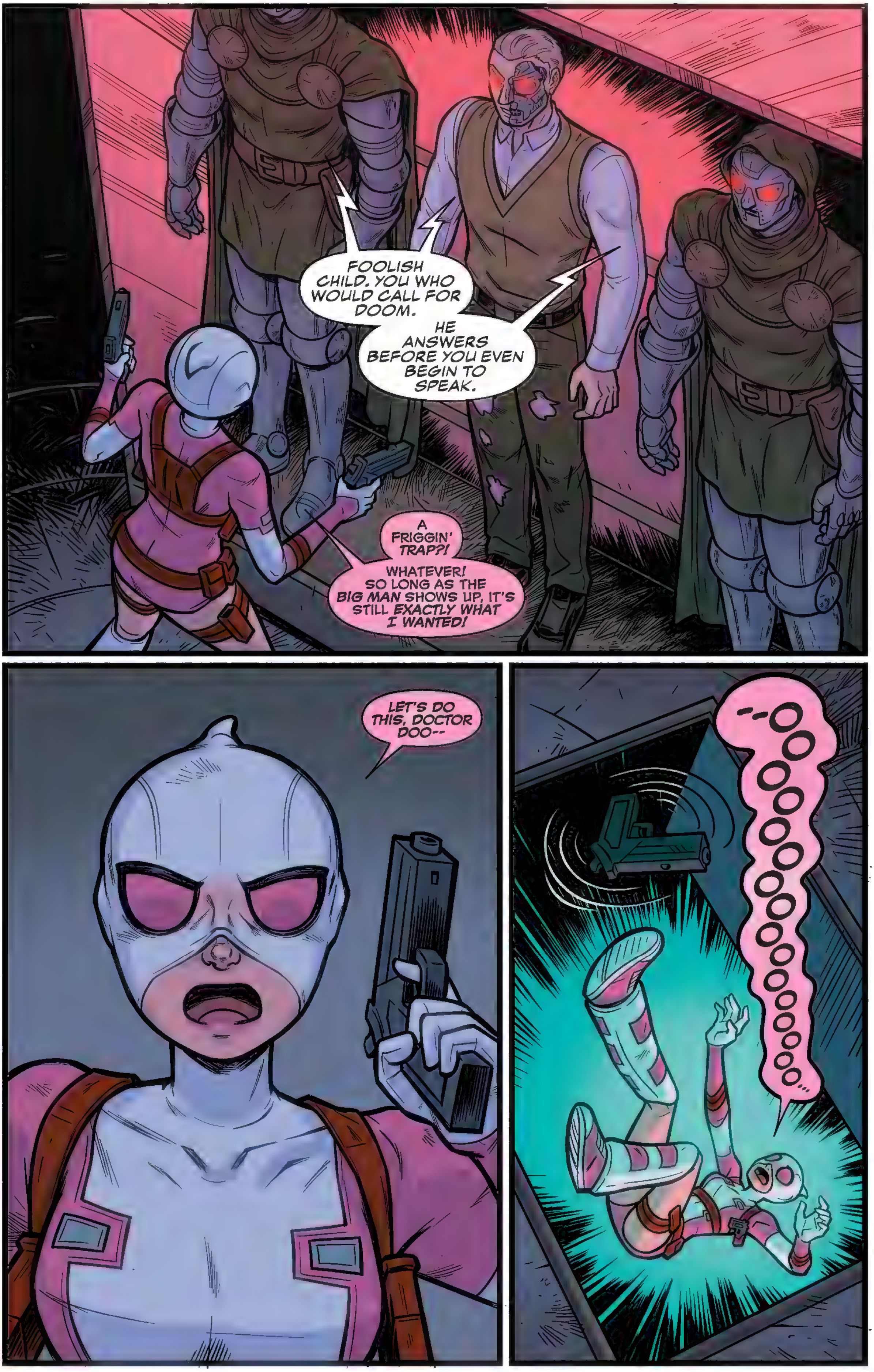

I RESPECT THAT YOU ARE TRYING. ANYWAY, I QUIETLY CLAIMED THIS FACILITY AS MY OWN DETENTION CENTER.
I'VE NEVER HAD TO USE IT... YET.
BUT AS A DOOMBOT, I DO HAVE THE ABILITY TO SIGNAL VICTOR VON DOOM.
SO I WILL CALL HIM HERE FOR YOU, AND IF IT GETS MESSY, NO HARM TO THE SURFACE.

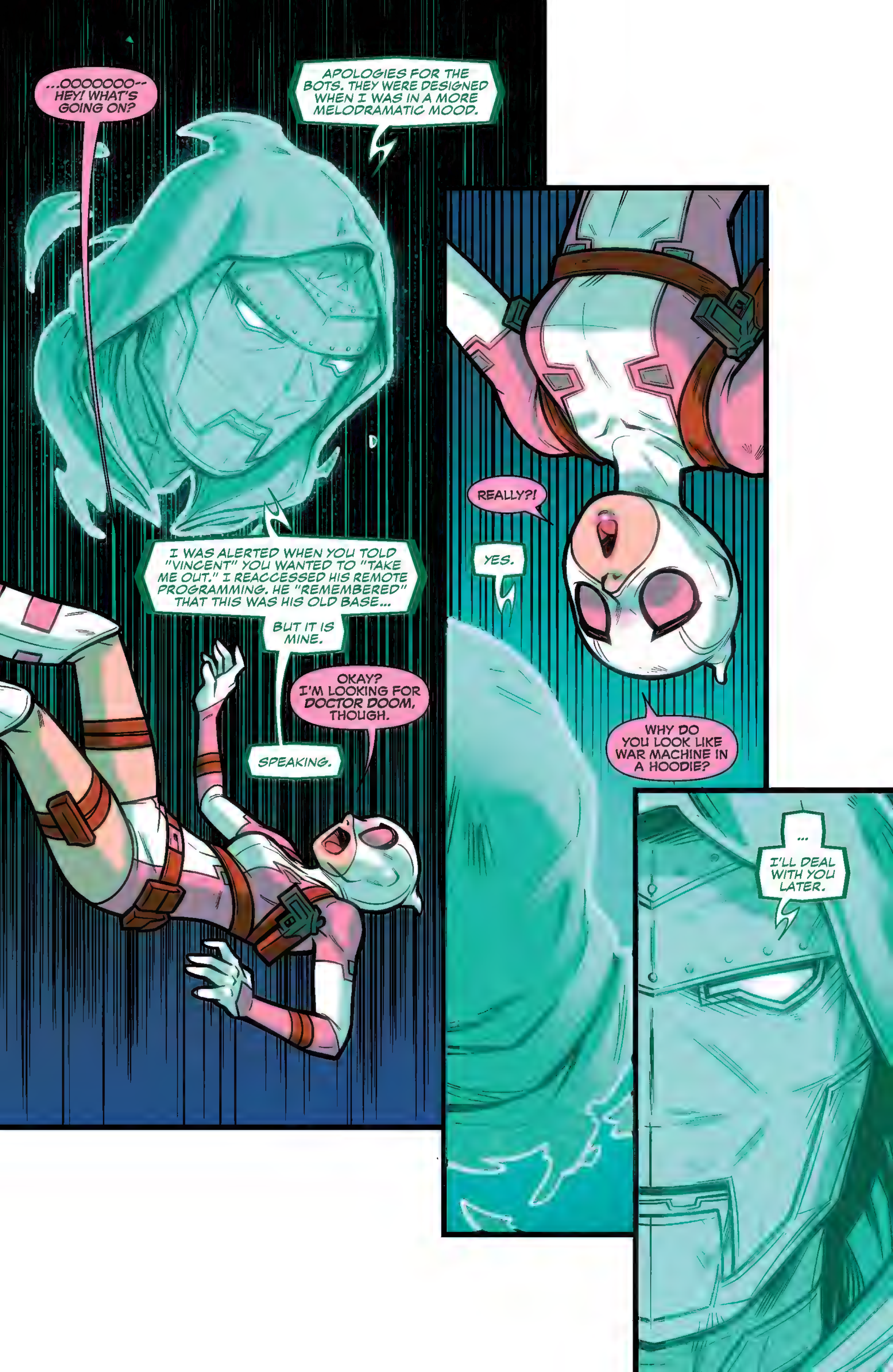

IT'LL PROBABLY MESS UP THE F LINE, THOUGH.
WHAT DOESN'T?
...HERE!
CLACKT

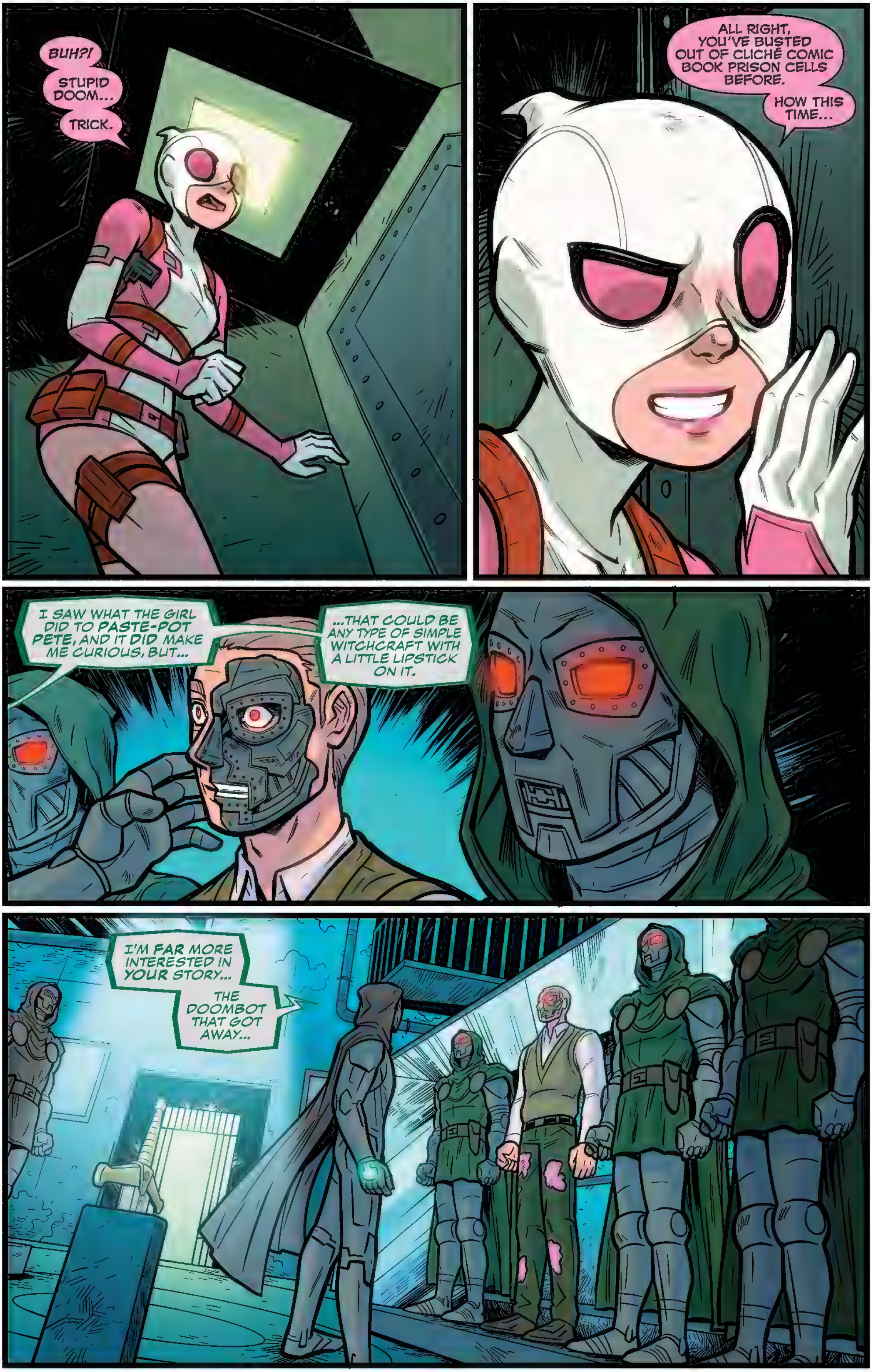

WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?!
... ROCKS.
IT'S A CAVE UNDER THE SUBWAY, GWEN.
IT'S ROCKS.

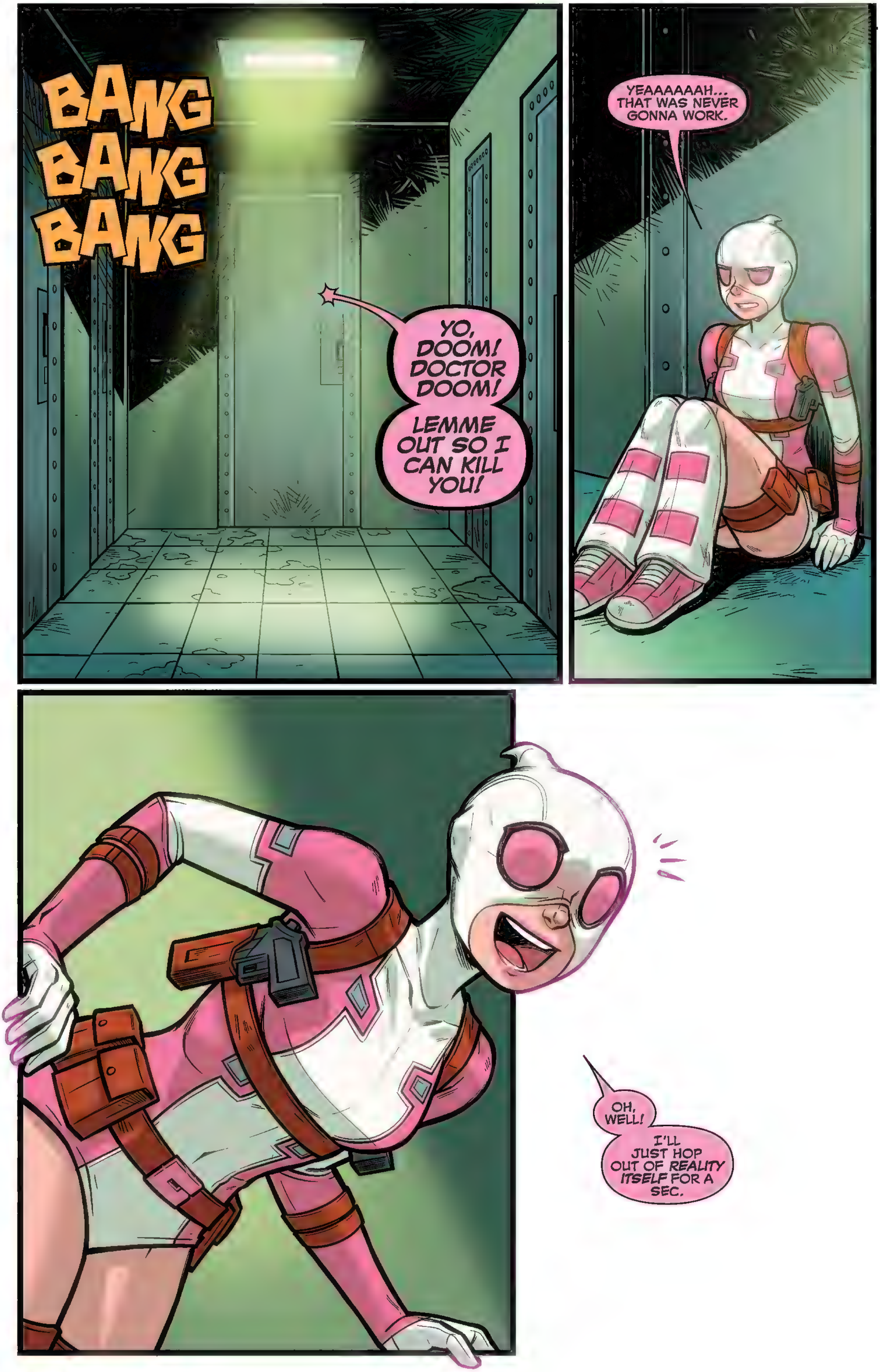

SORRY, I'M GETTING JITTERY.
PROBABLY BECAUSE I'M ABOUT TO FIGHT DOCTOR DOOM.
I SHOULD SET UP. FIND AN AMBUSH POINT.
AGAIN, I REALLY DON'T THINK YOU'LL NEED TO FIGHT...
AH! UH, IGNORE ME! IF SOMEONE IS READING THIS... YOU'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN A BIT.
UH-HUH... SO WE NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT, BUT YOU'VE GOT SOME REAL DADDY FRANKENSTEIN ISSUES HERE WITH HIM, HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE DECOR, MAN.
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING UNUSUAL.
YOU DON'T SEE ANYTHING--
WAIT, I HEARD IT AGAIN. IT SOUNDED LIKE ME.
OKAY... I SHOULD JUMP BACK IN RIGHT ABOUT...

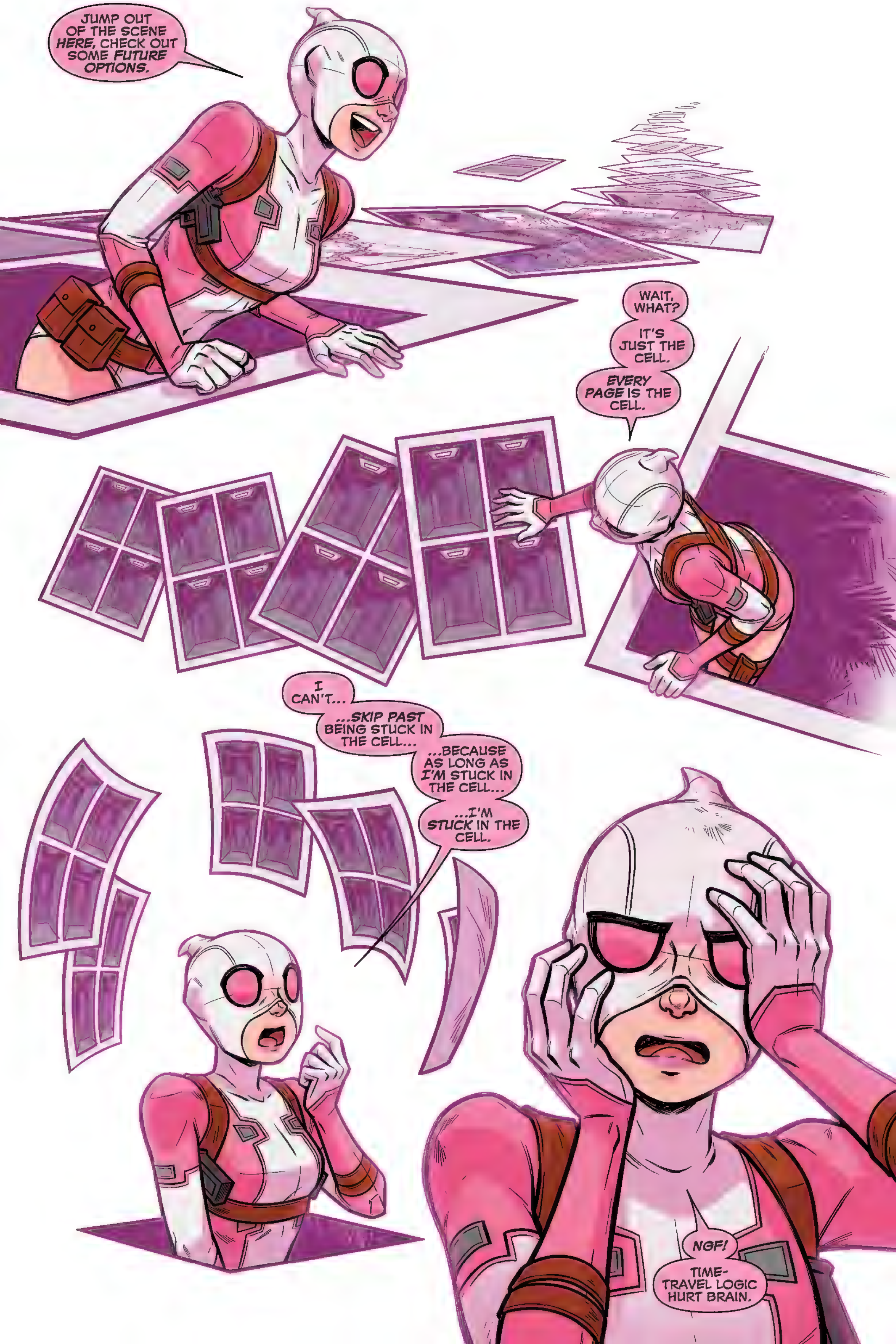

CHOOM
VINNIE?
OHH! NOT YET! ALMOST, THOUGH...
LATVERIAN EMBASSY SUBTERRANEAN FACILITY SECURITY ONLINE.
UH, VINNIE, I THINK YOU'VE GOT SOME OLD CODE ACTING UP.

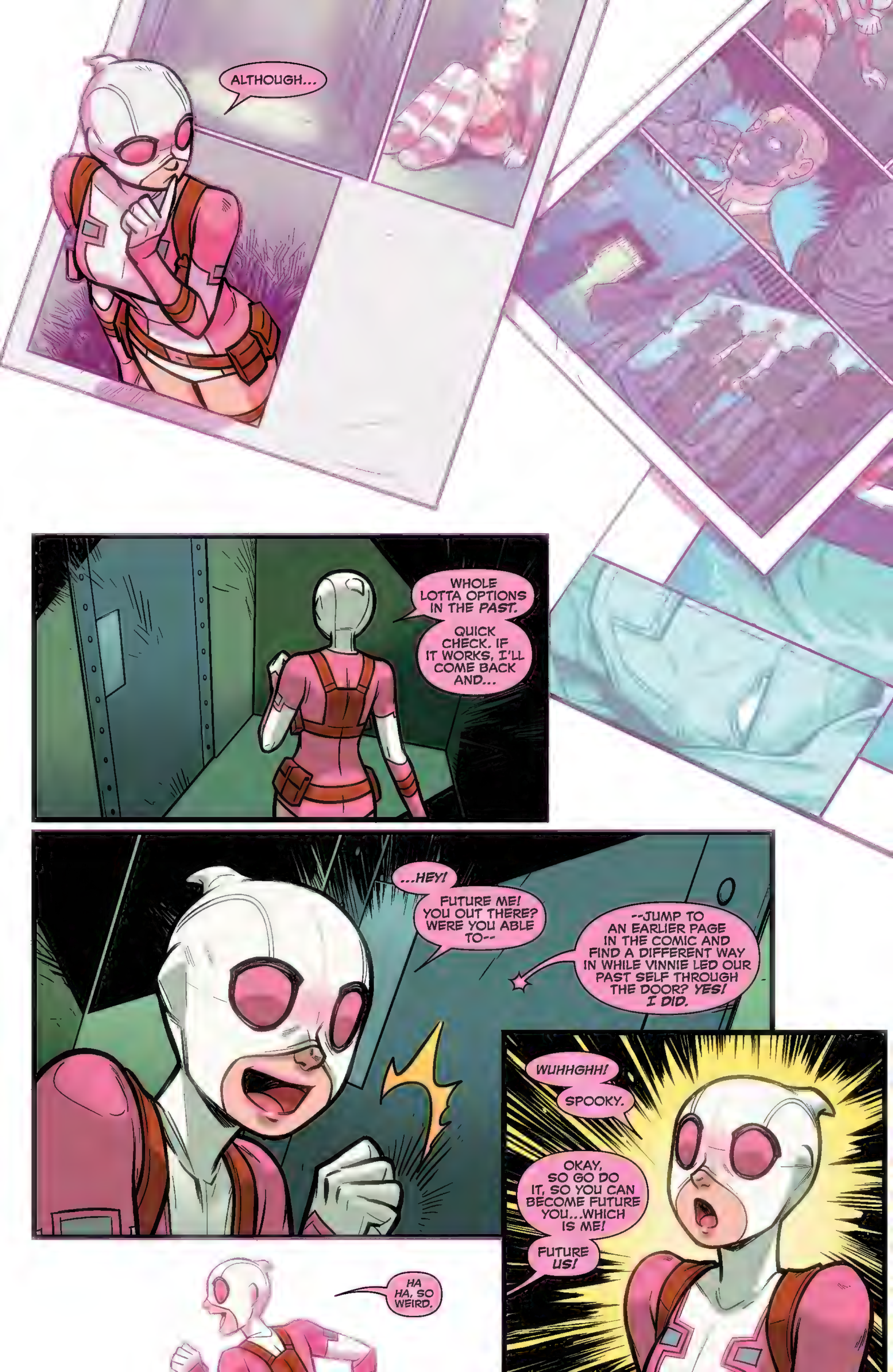

FOOLISH CHILD. YOU WHO WOULD CALL FOR DOOM.
HE ANSWERS BEFORE YOU EVEN BEGIN TO SPEAK.
A FRIGGIN' *TRAP?!*
WHATEVER! SO LONG AS THE *BIG MAN* SHOWS UP, IT'S STILL *EXACTLY* WHAT *I WANTED!*
LET'S DO THIS, DOCTOR DOO--
--OOOOOOOOOOOOOOO...

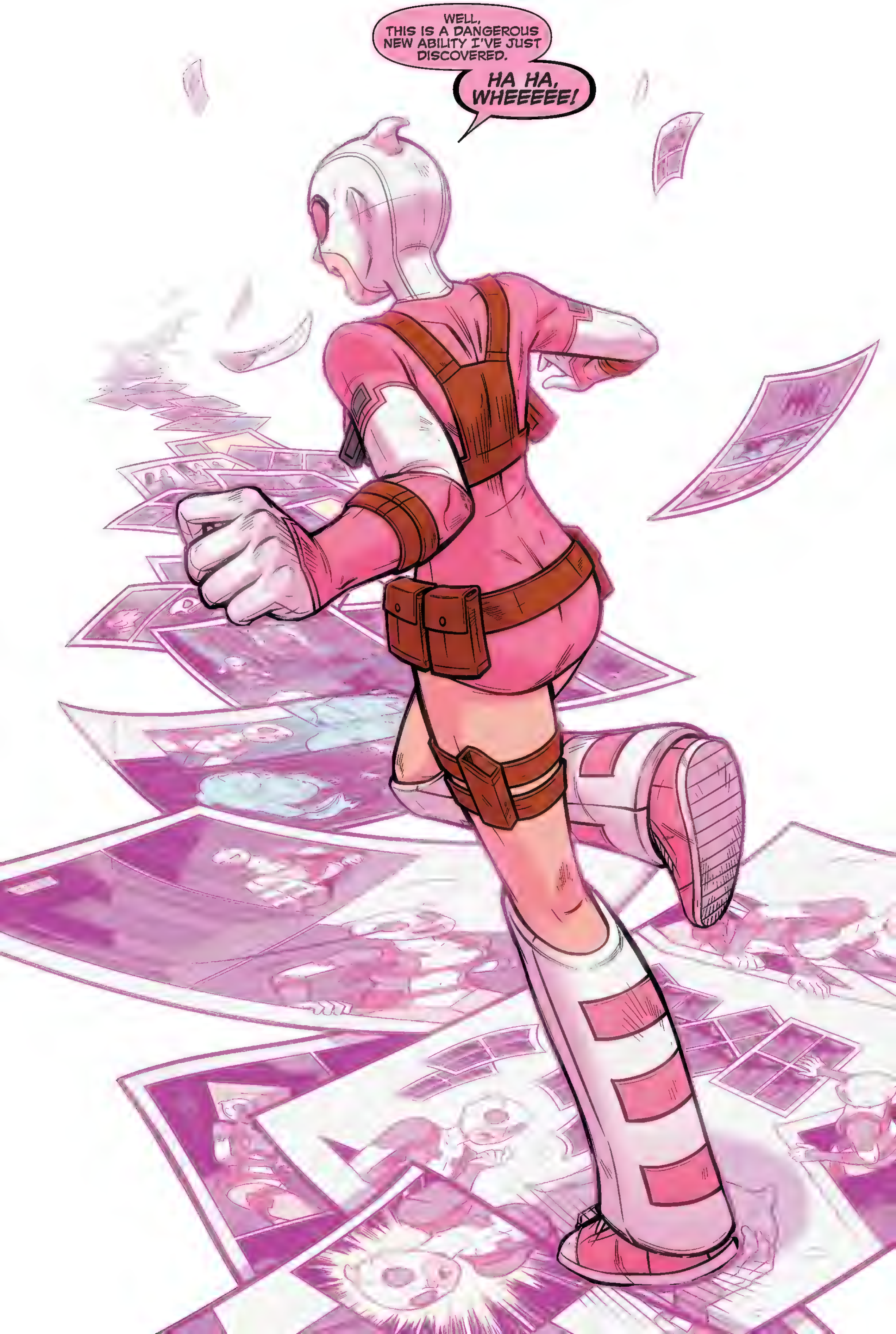

...OOOOOOO-- HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?
APOLOGIES FOR THE BOTS. THEY WERE DESIGNED WHEN I WAS IN A MORE MELODRAMATIC MOOD.
I WAS ALERTED WHEN YOU TOLD "VINCENT" YOU WANTED TO "TAKE ME OUT." I REACCESSED HIS REMOTE PROGRAMMING. HE "REMEMBERED" THAT THIS WAS HIS OLD BASE...
BUT IT IS MINE.
OKAY? I'M LOOKING FOR **DOCTOR DOOM,** THOUGH.
SPEAKING.
REALLY?!
YES.
WHY DO YOU LOOK LIKE WAR MACHINE IN A HOODIE?
...
I'LL DEAL WITH YOU LATER.

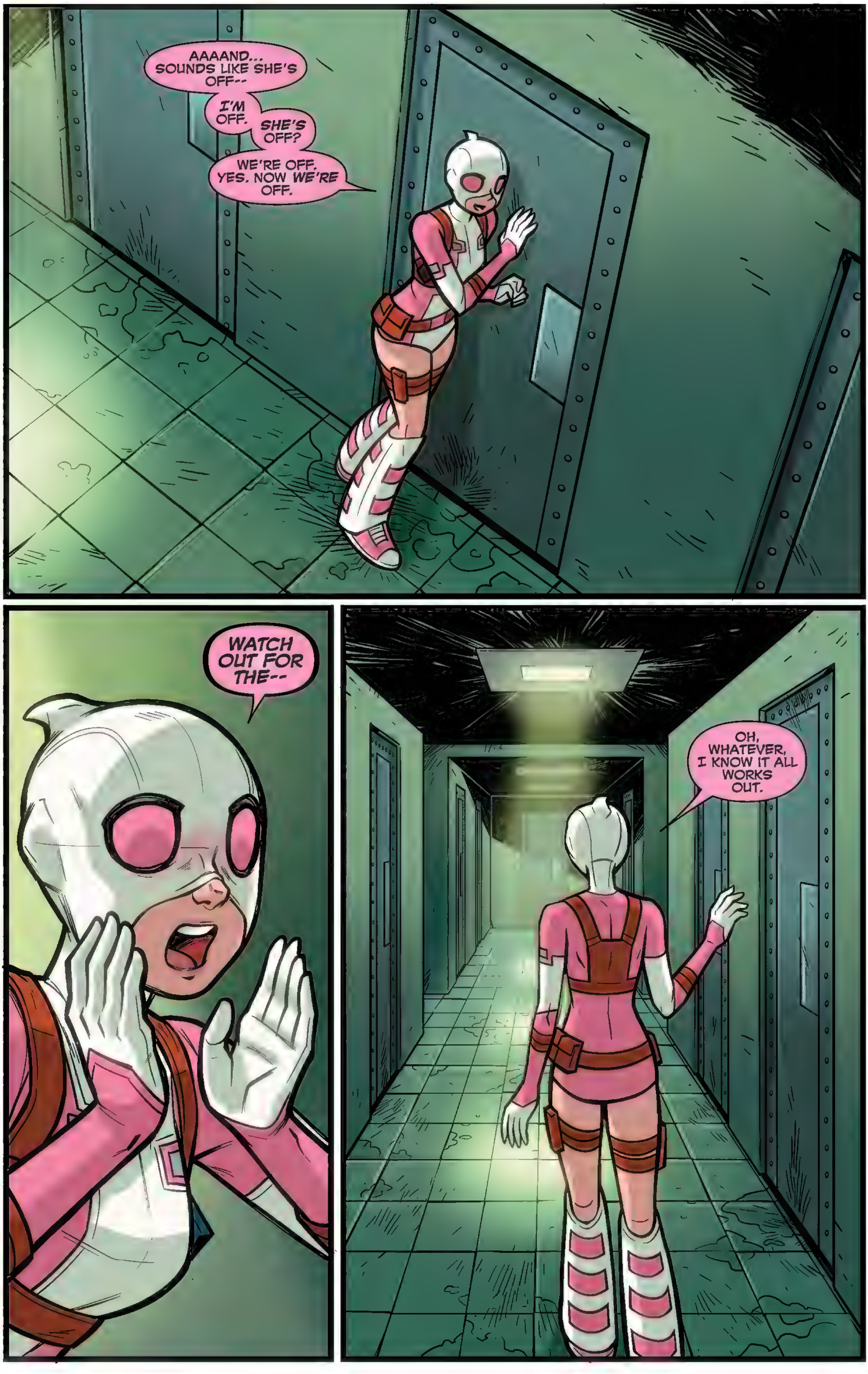

BUH?!
STUPID DOOM...
TRICK.
ALL RIGHT, YOU'VE BUSTED OUT OF CLICHÉ COMIC BOOK PRISON CELLS BEFORE.
HOW THIS TIME...
I SAW WHAT THE GIRL DID TO PASTE-POT PETE, AND IT DID MAKE ME CURIOUS, BUT...
...THAT COULD BE ANY TYPE OF SIMPLE WITCHCRAFT WITH A LITTLE LIPSTICK ON IT.
I'M FAR MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR STORY...
THE DOOMBOT THAT GOT AWAY...

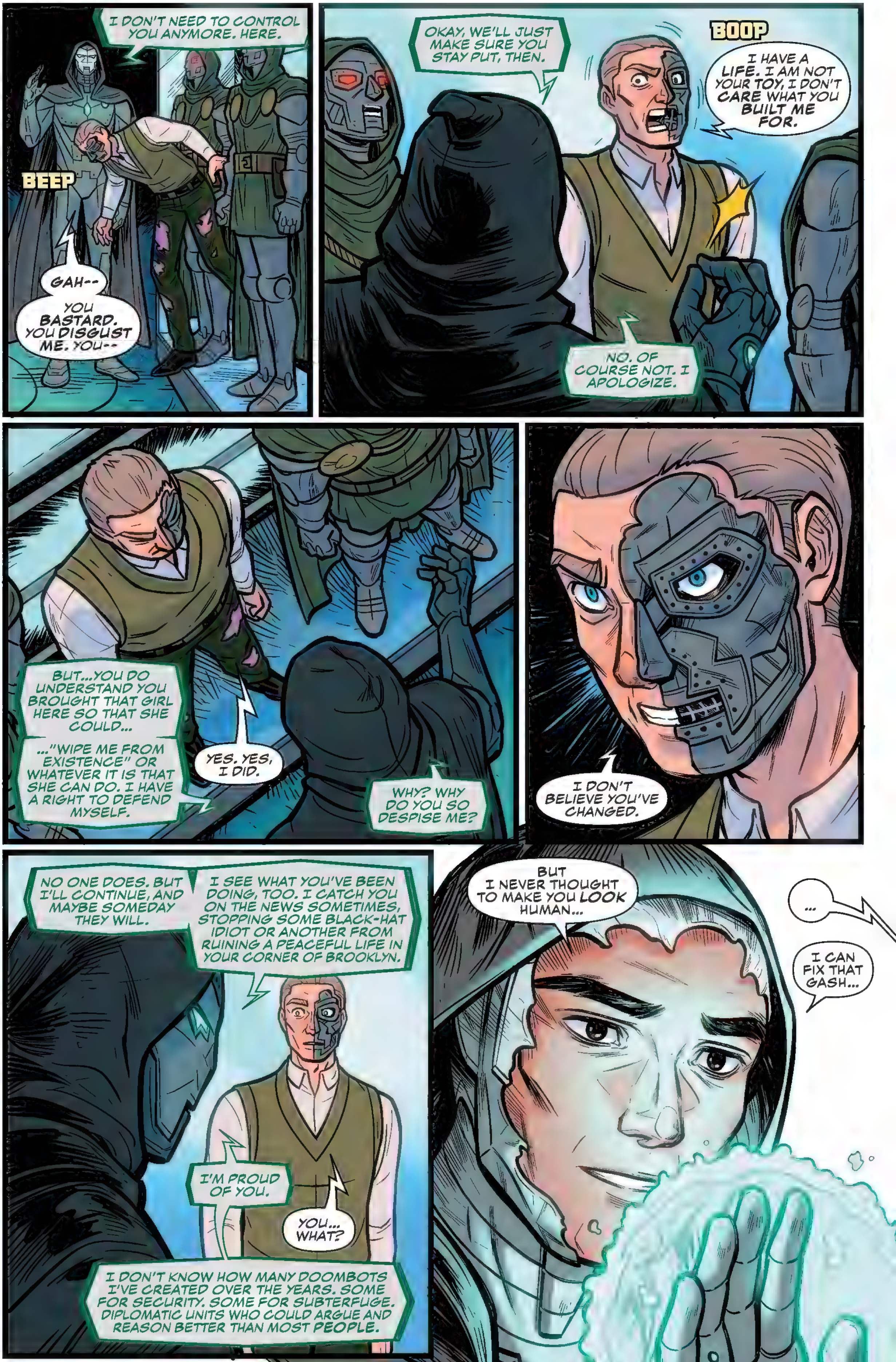

BANG BANG BANG
YO, DOOM! DOCTOR DOOM!
LEMME OUT SO I CAN KILL YOU!
YEAAAAAAH... THAT WAS NEVER GONNA WORK.
OH, WELL!
I'LL JUST HOP OUT OF *REALITY ITSELF* FOR A SEC.

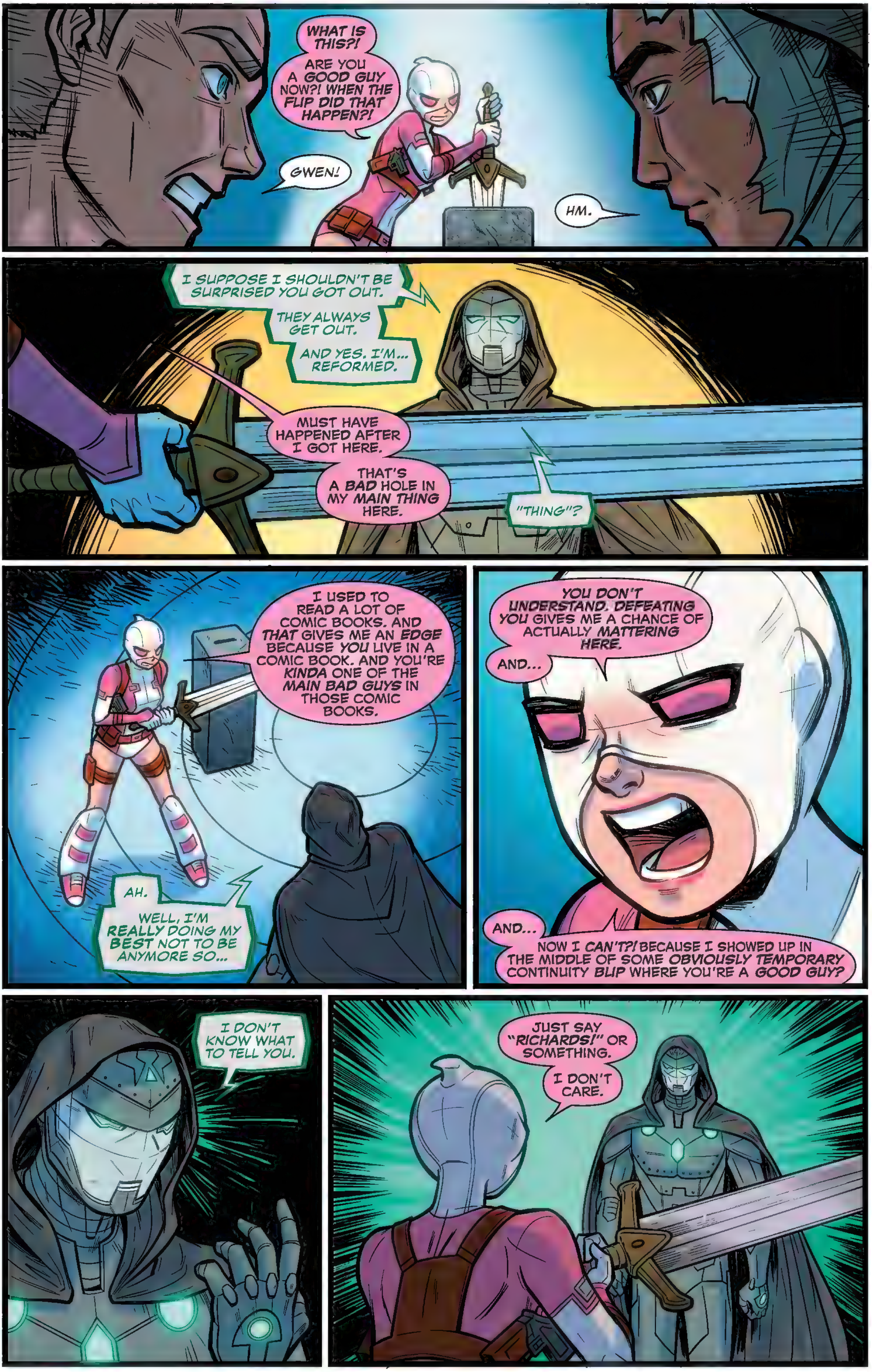

JUMP OUT OF THE SCENE *HERE*, CHECK OUT SOME *FUTURE* OPTIONS.
WAIT, WHAT?
IT'S JUST THE CELL.
EVERY PAGE IS THE CELL.
I CAN'T...
...*SKIP PAST* BEING STUCK IN THE CELL...
...BECAUSE AS LONG AS *I'M* STUCK IN THE CELL...
...I'M *STUCK* IN THE CELL.
NGF!
TIME-TRAVEL LOGIC HURT BRAIN.

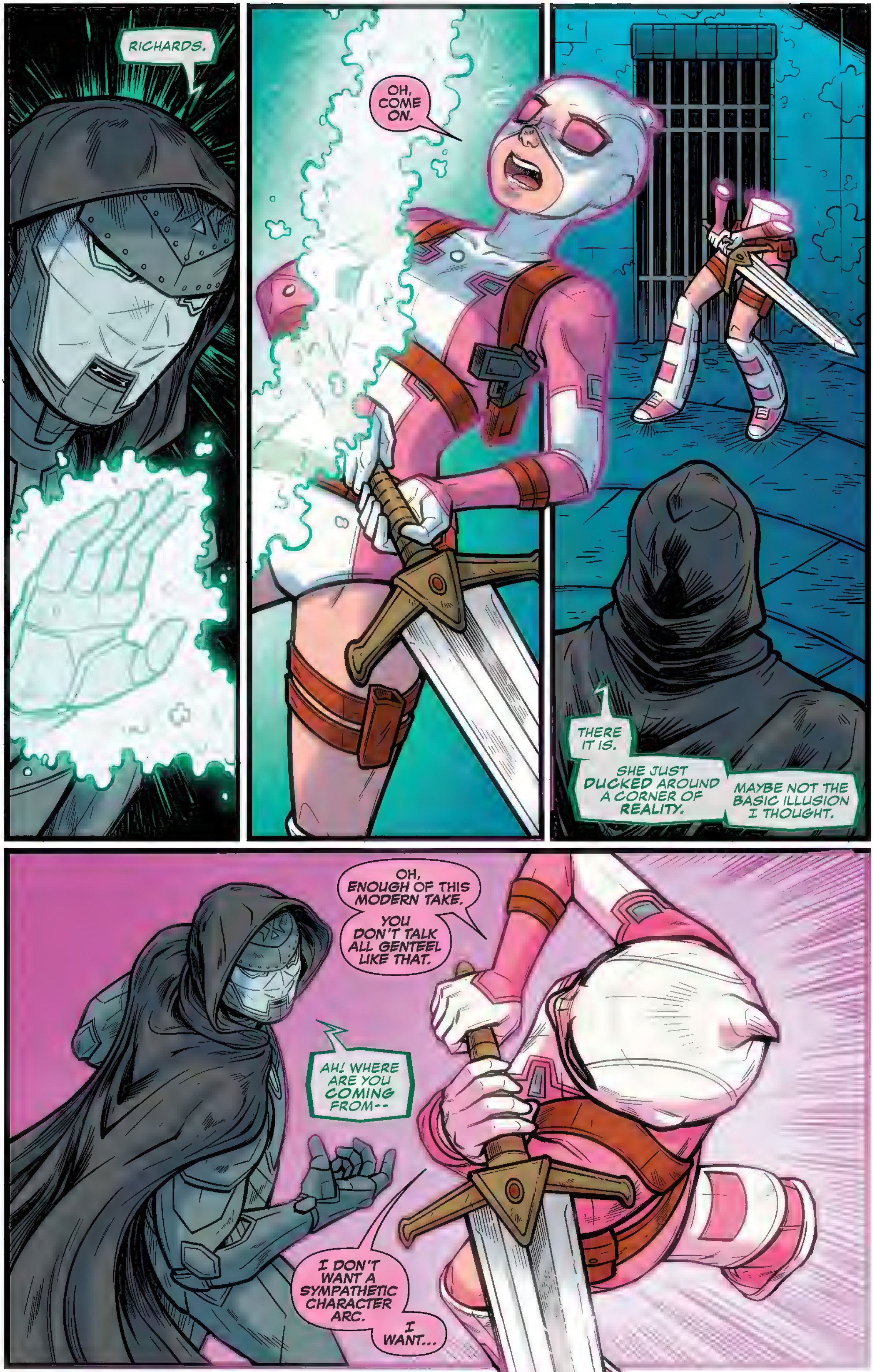

ALTHOUGH...
WHOLE LOTTA OPTIONS IN THE *PAST.*
QUICK CHECK. IF IT WORKS, I'LL COME BACK AND...
...HEY!
FUTURE ME! YOU OUT THERE? WERE YOU ABLE TO--
--JUMP TO AN EARLIER PAGE IN THE COMIC AND FIND A DIFFERENT WAY IN WHILE VINNIE LED OUR PAST SELF THROUGH THE DOOR? *YES! I DID.*
WUHHGHH!
SPOOKY.
OKAY, SO GO DO IT, SO YOU CAN BECOME FUTURE YOU...WHICH IS ME!
FUTURE *US!*
HA HA, SO WEIRD.

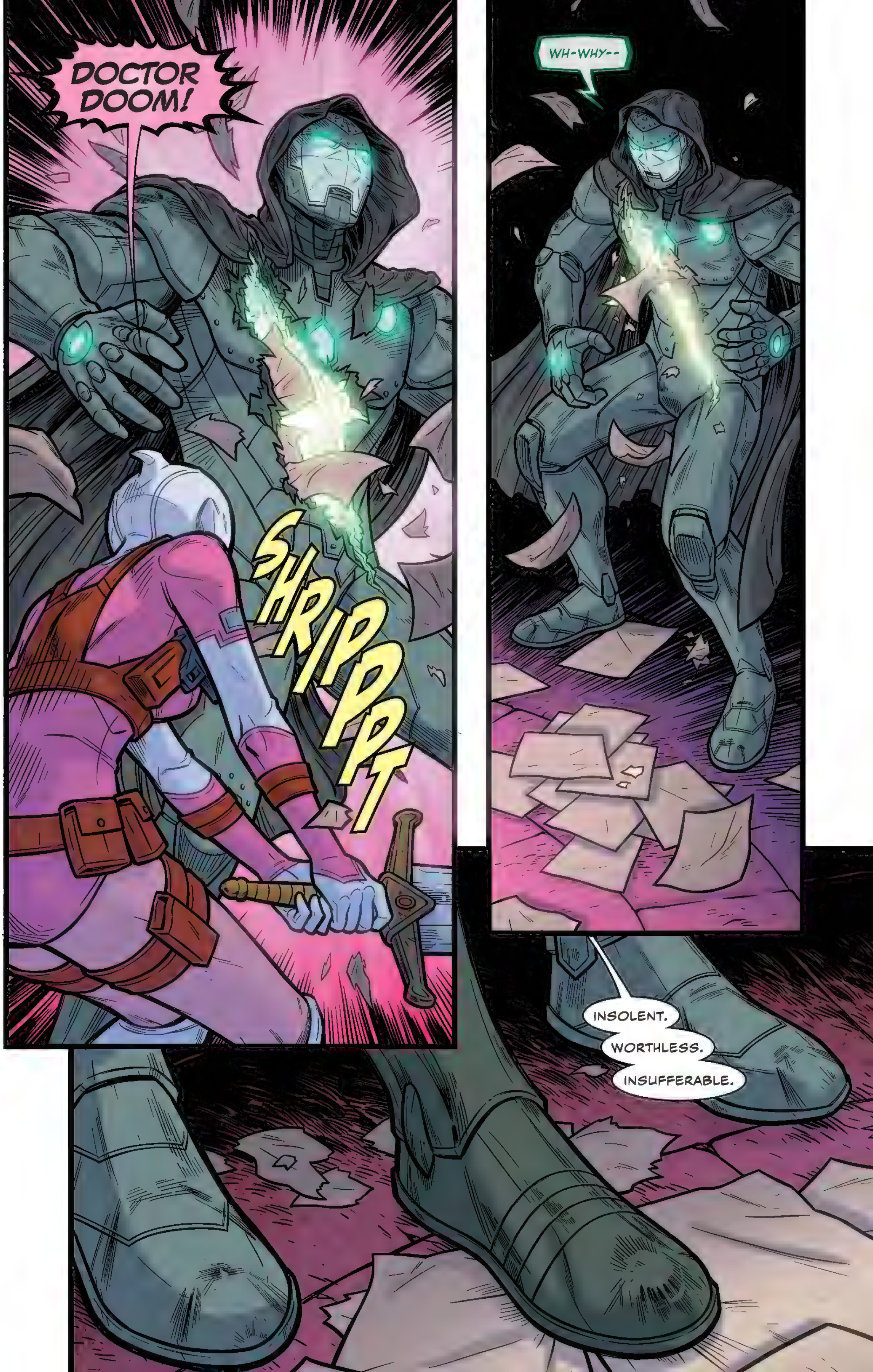

WELL, THIS IS A DANGEROUS NEW ABILITY I'VE JUST DISCOVERED.
HA HA, WHEEEEEE!

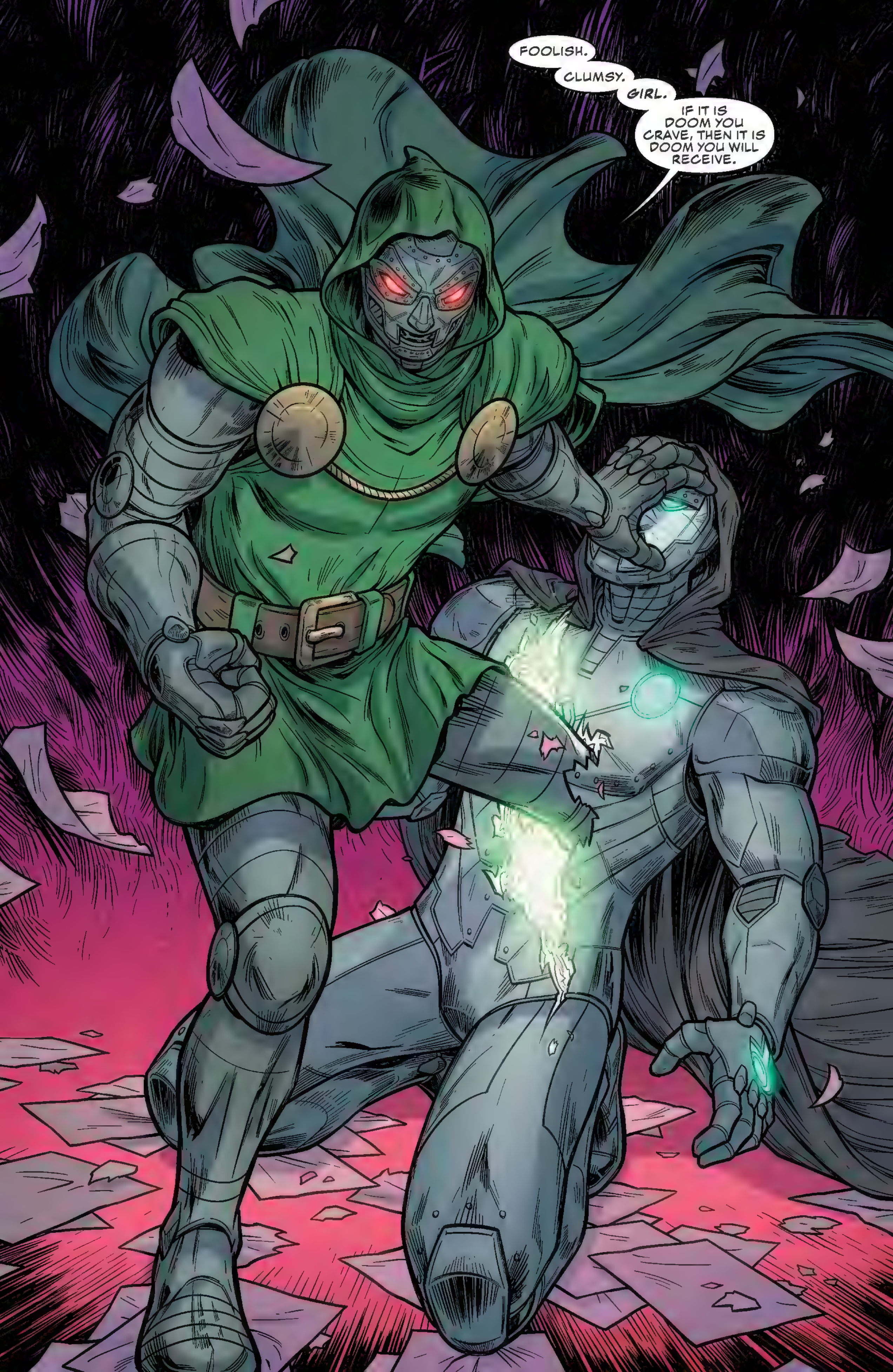

AAAAND... SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S OFF--
I'M OFF.
SHE'S OFF?
WE'RE OFF. YES. NOW WE'RE OFF.
WATCH OUT FOR THE--
OH, WHATEVER, I KNOW IT ALL WORKS OUT.

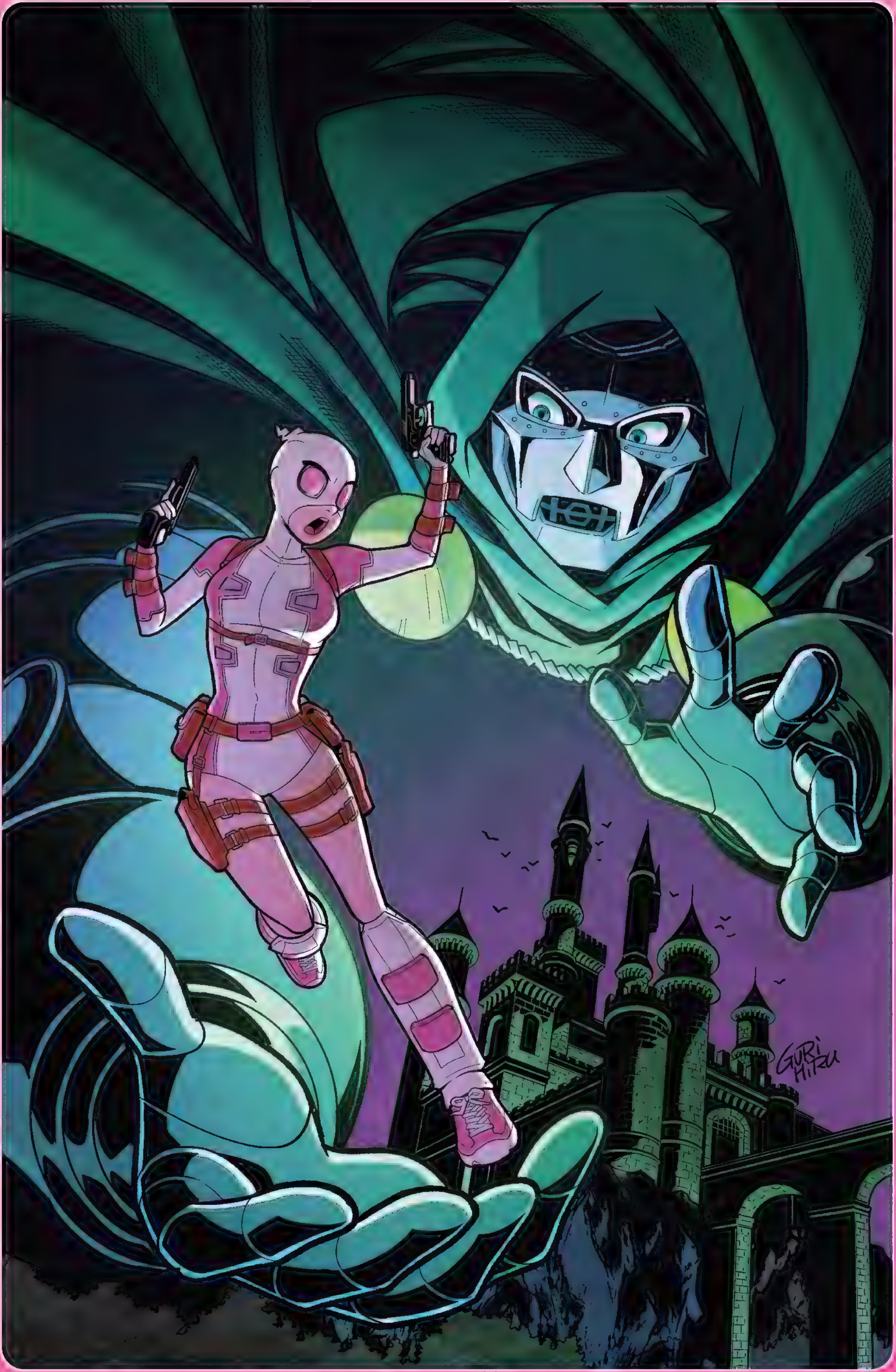

I DON'T NEED TO CONTROL YOU ANYMORE. HERE.
BEEP
GAH-- YOU BASTARD. YOU DISGUST ME. YOU--
OKAY, WE'LL JUST MAKE SURE YOU STAY PUT, THEN.
BOOP
I HAVE A LIFE. I AM NOT YOUR TOY. I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU BUILT ME FOR.
NO. OF COURSE NOT. I APOLOGIZE.
BUT...YOU DO UNDERSTAND YOU BROUGHT THAT GIRL HERE SO THAT SHE COULD...
..."WIPE ME FROM EXISTENCE" OR WHATEVER IT IS THAT SHE CAN DO. I HAVE A RIGHT TO DEFEND MYSELF.
YES. YES, I DID.
WHY? WHY DO YOU SO DESPISE ME?
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'VE CHANGED.
NO ONE DOES. BUT I'LL CONTINUE, AND MAYBE SOMEDAY THEY WILL.
I SEE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING, TOO. I CATCH YOU ON THE NEWS SOMETIMES, STOPPING SOME BLACK-HAT IDIOT OR ANOTHER FROM RUINING A PEACEFUL LIFE IN YOUR CORNER OF BROOKLYN.
I'M PROUD OF YOU.
YOU... WHAT?
I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY DOOMBOTS I'VE CREATED OVER THE YEARS. SOME FOR SECURITY. SOME FOR SUBTERFUGE. DIPLOMATIC UNITS WHO COULD ARGUE AND REASON BETTER THAN MOST PEOPLE.
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT TO MAKE YOU LOOK HUMAN...
...
I CAN FIX THAT GASH...


WHAT IS THIS?!
ARE YOU A GOOD GUY NOW?! WHEN THE FLIP DID THAT HAPPEN?!
GWEN!
HM.
I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED YOU GOT OUT.
THEY ALWAYS GET OUT.
AND YES. I'M... REFORMED.
MUST HAVE HAPPENED AFTER I GOT HERE.
THAT'S A BAD HOLE IN MY MAIN THING HERE.
"THING"?
I USED TO READ A LOT OF COMIC BOOKS. AND THAT GIVES ME AN EDGE BECAUSE YOU LIVE IN A COMIC BOOK. AND YOU'RE KINDA ONE OF THE MAIN BAD GUYS IN THOSE COMIC BOOKS.
AH.
WELL, I'M REALLY DOING MY BEST NOT TO BE ANYMORE SO...
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. DEFEATING YOU GIVES ME A CHANCE OF ACTUALLY MATTERING HERE.
AND...
AND...
NOW I CAN'T?! BECAUSE I SHOWED UP IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME OBVIOUSLY TEMPORARY CONTINUITY BLIP WHERE YOU'RE A GOOD GUY?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL YOU.
JUST SAY "RICHARDS!" OR SOMETHING.
I DON'T CARE.


RICHARDS.
OH, COME ON.
THERE IT IS.
SHE JUST DUCKED AROUND A CORNER OF REALITY.
MAYBE NOT THE BASIC ILLUSION I THOUGHT.
OH, ENOUGH OF THIS MODERN TAKE.
YOU DON'T TALK ALL GENTEEL LIKE THAT.
AH! WHERE ARE YOU COMING FROM--
I DON'T WANT A SYMPATHETIC CHARACTER ARC.
I WANT...

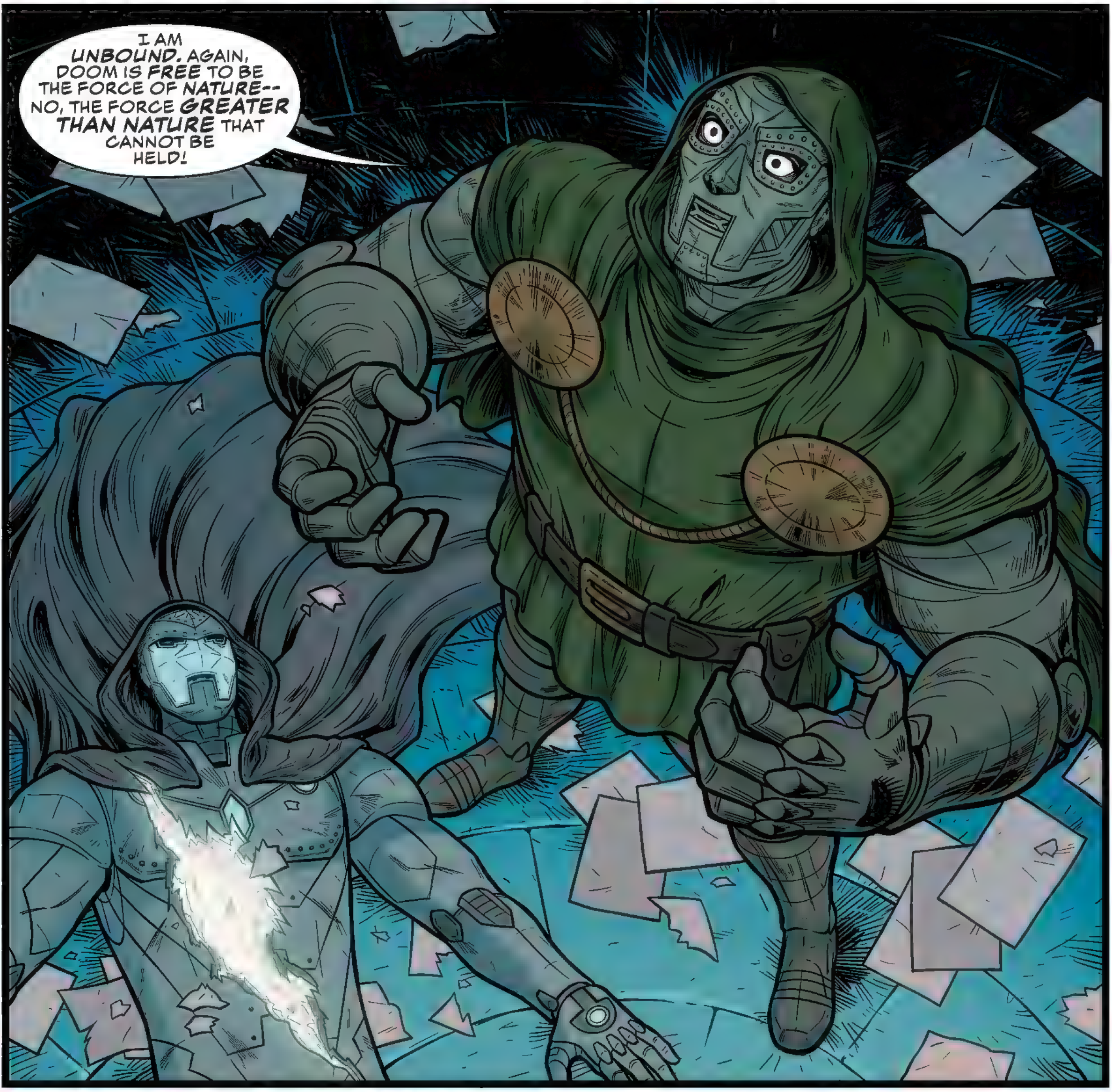

DOCTOR DOOM!
SHRIPPPT
WH-WHY--
INSOLENT.
WORTHLESS.
INSUFFERABLE.

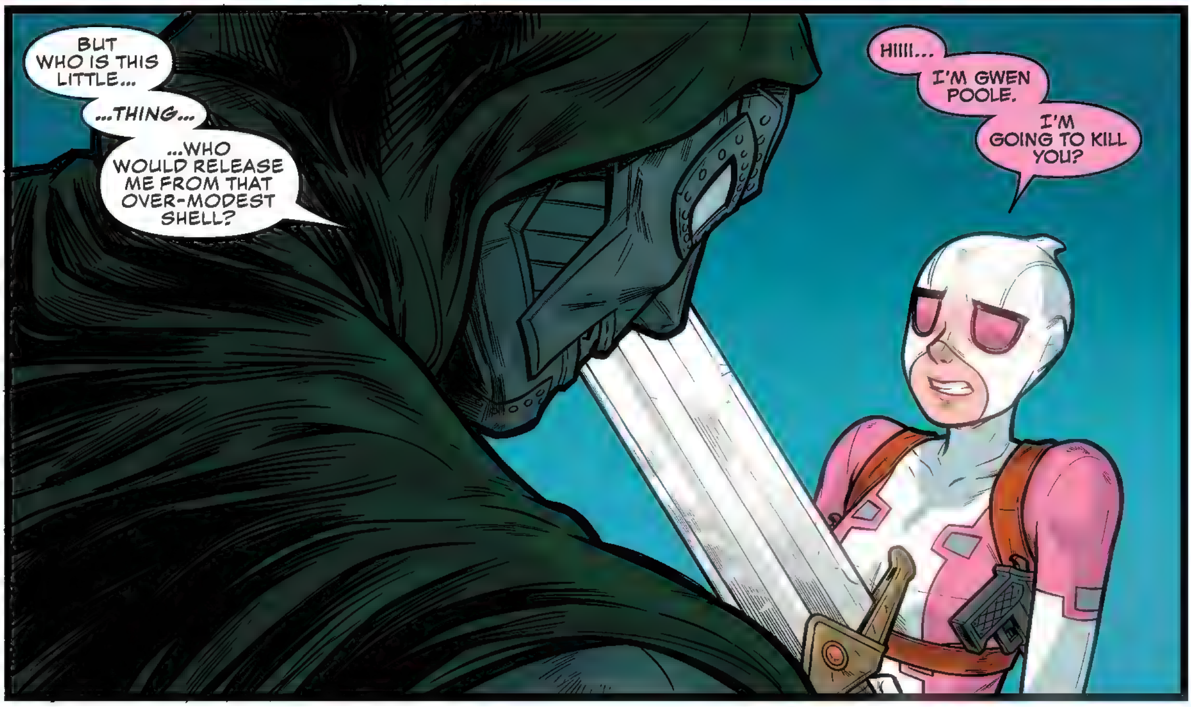

FOOLISH.
CLUMSY.
GIRL.
IF IT IS DOOM YOU CRAVE, THEN IT IS DOOM YOU WILL RECEIVE.

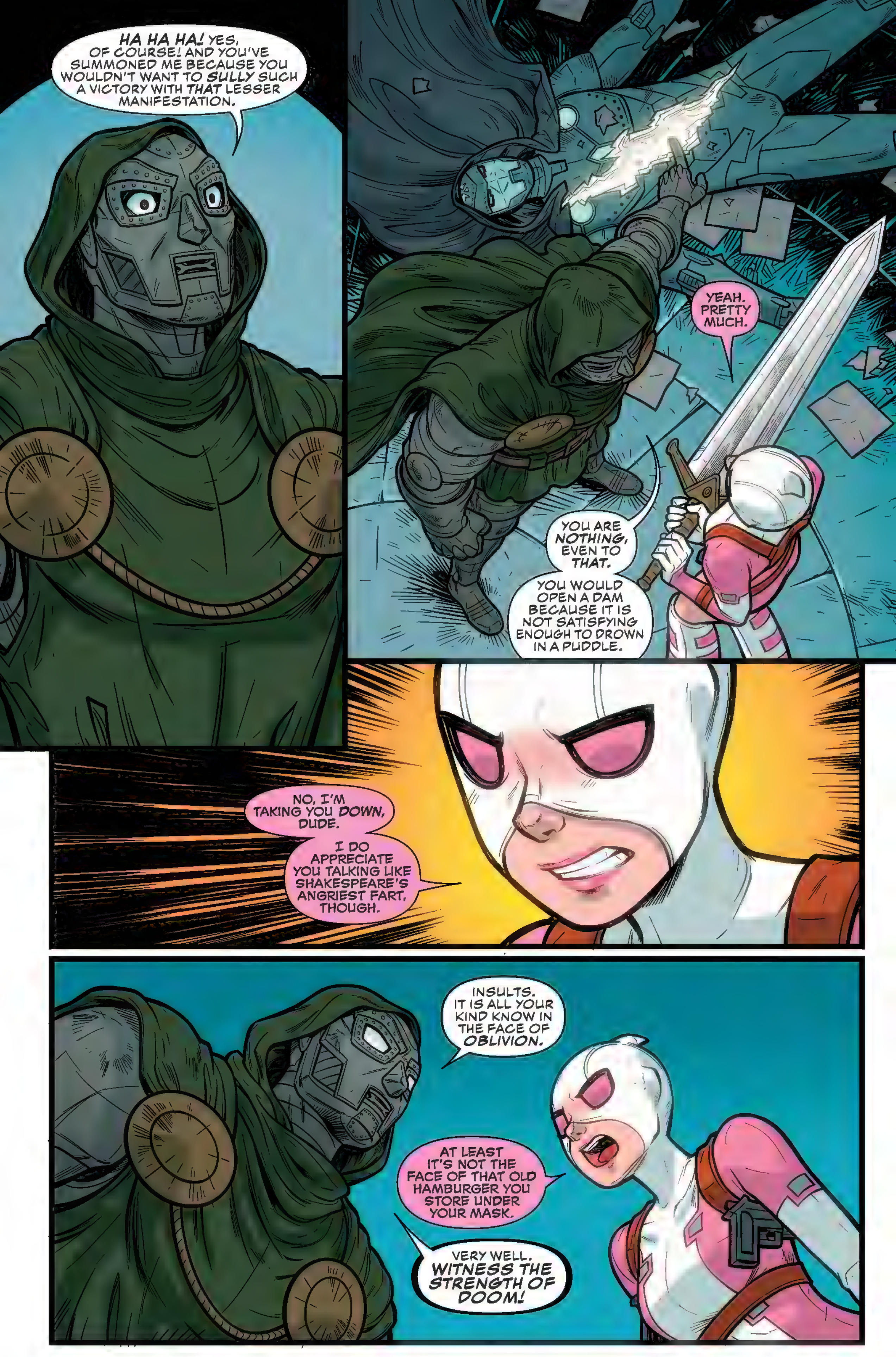


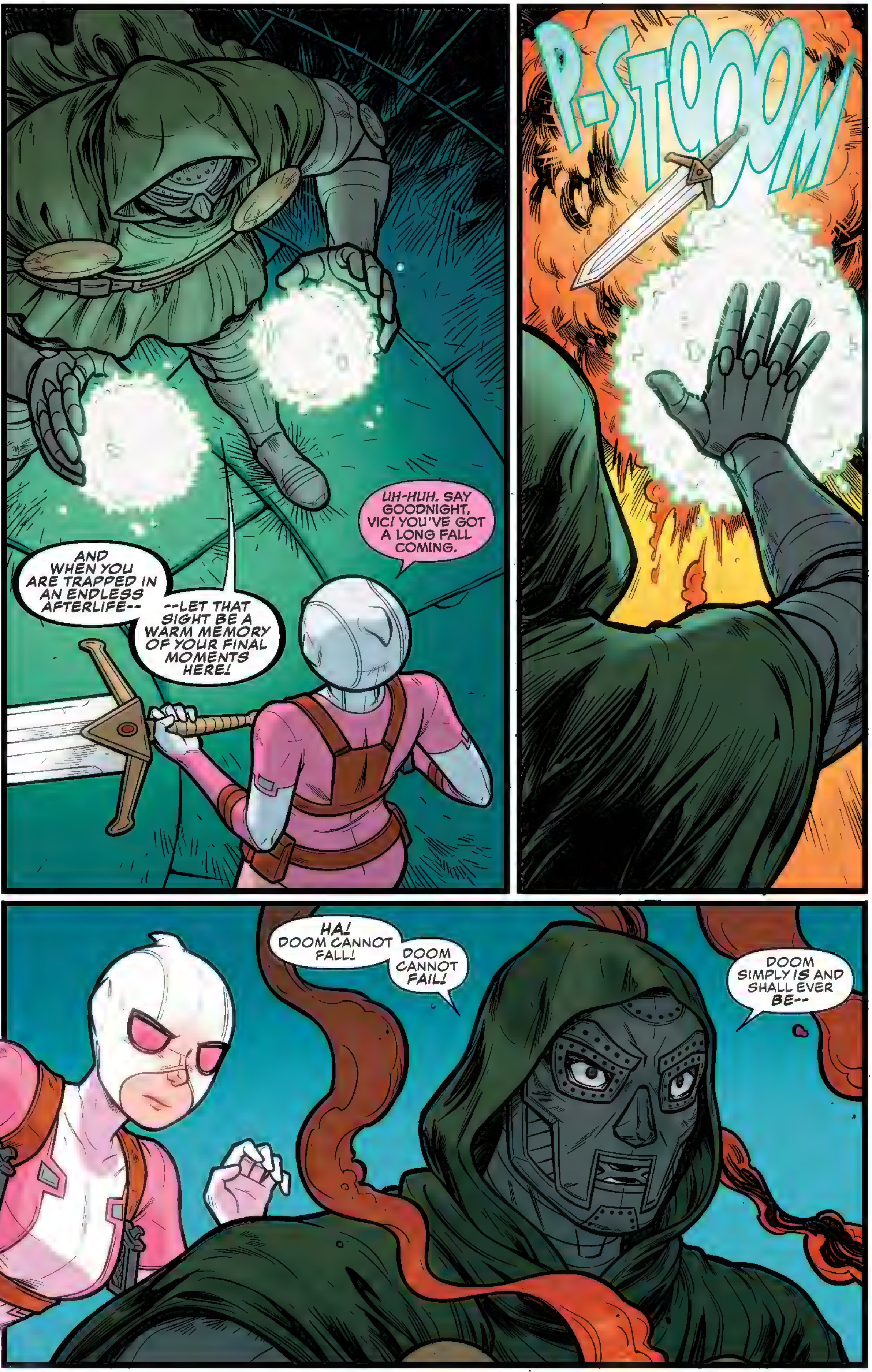
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #23

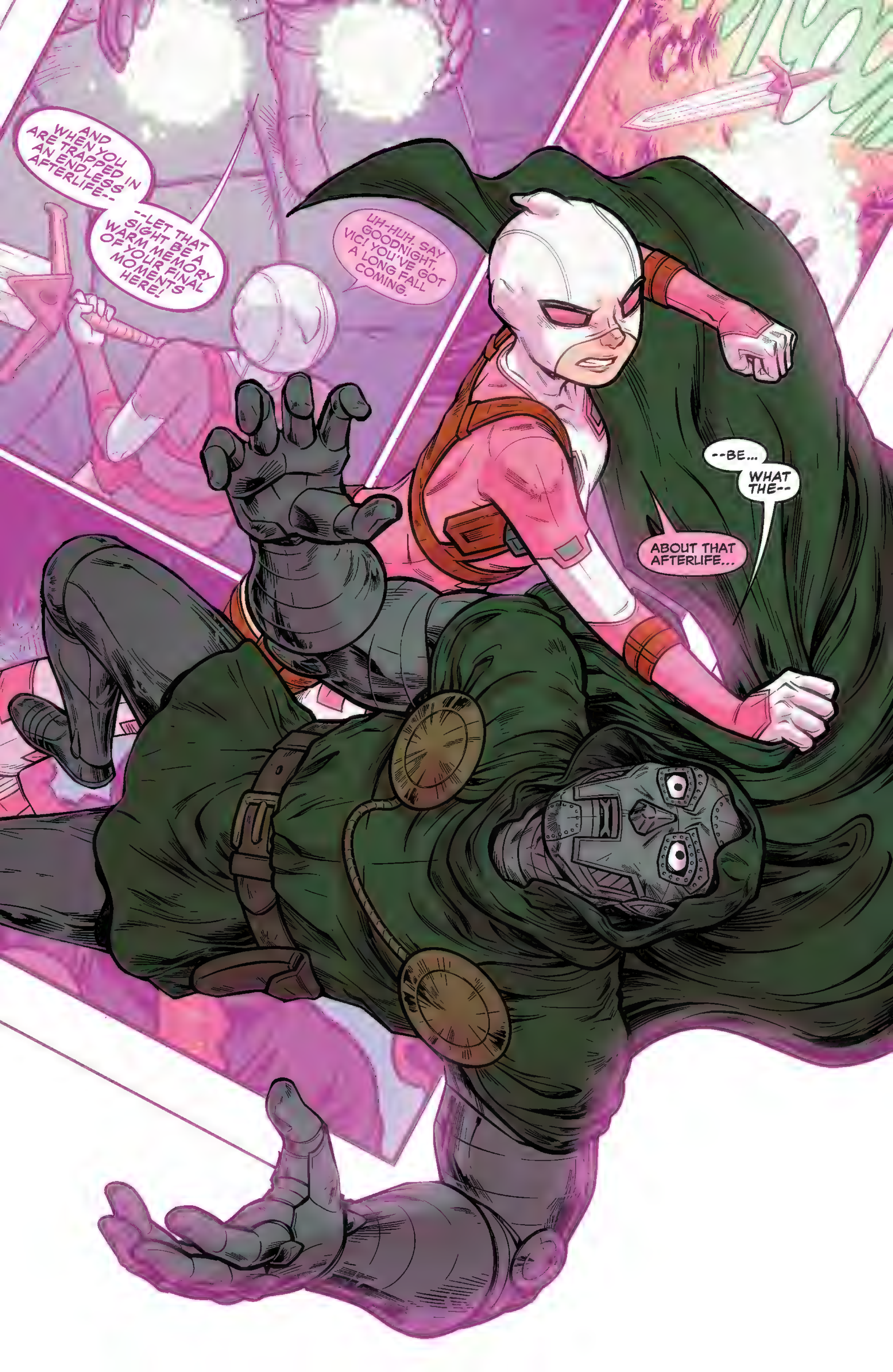
"DOOM SEES YOU PINK THING!"

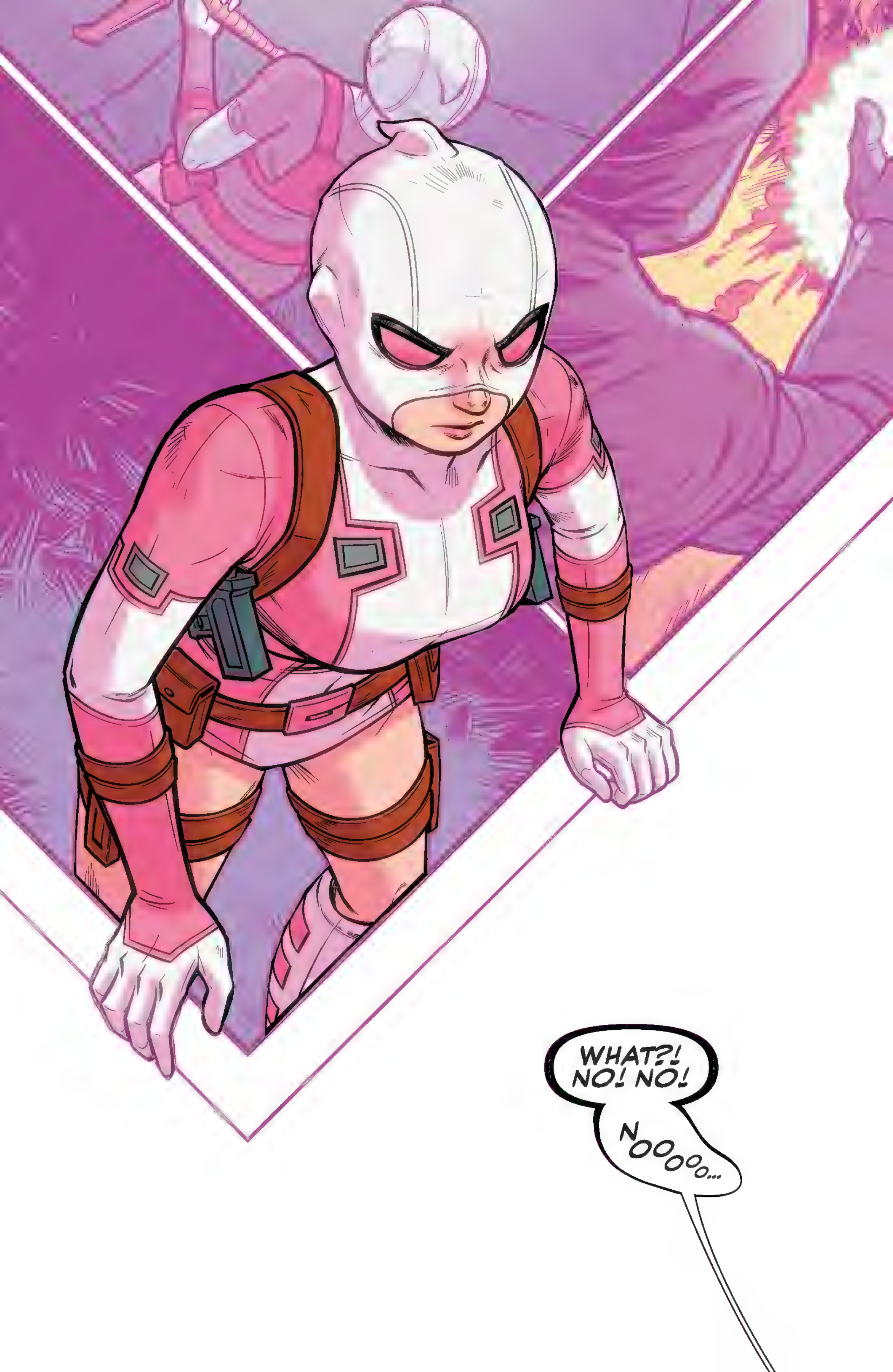

I AM UNBOUND. AGAIN, DOOM IS FREE TO BE THE FORCE OF NATURE-- NO, THE FORCE GREATER THAN NATURE THAT CANNOT BE HELD!

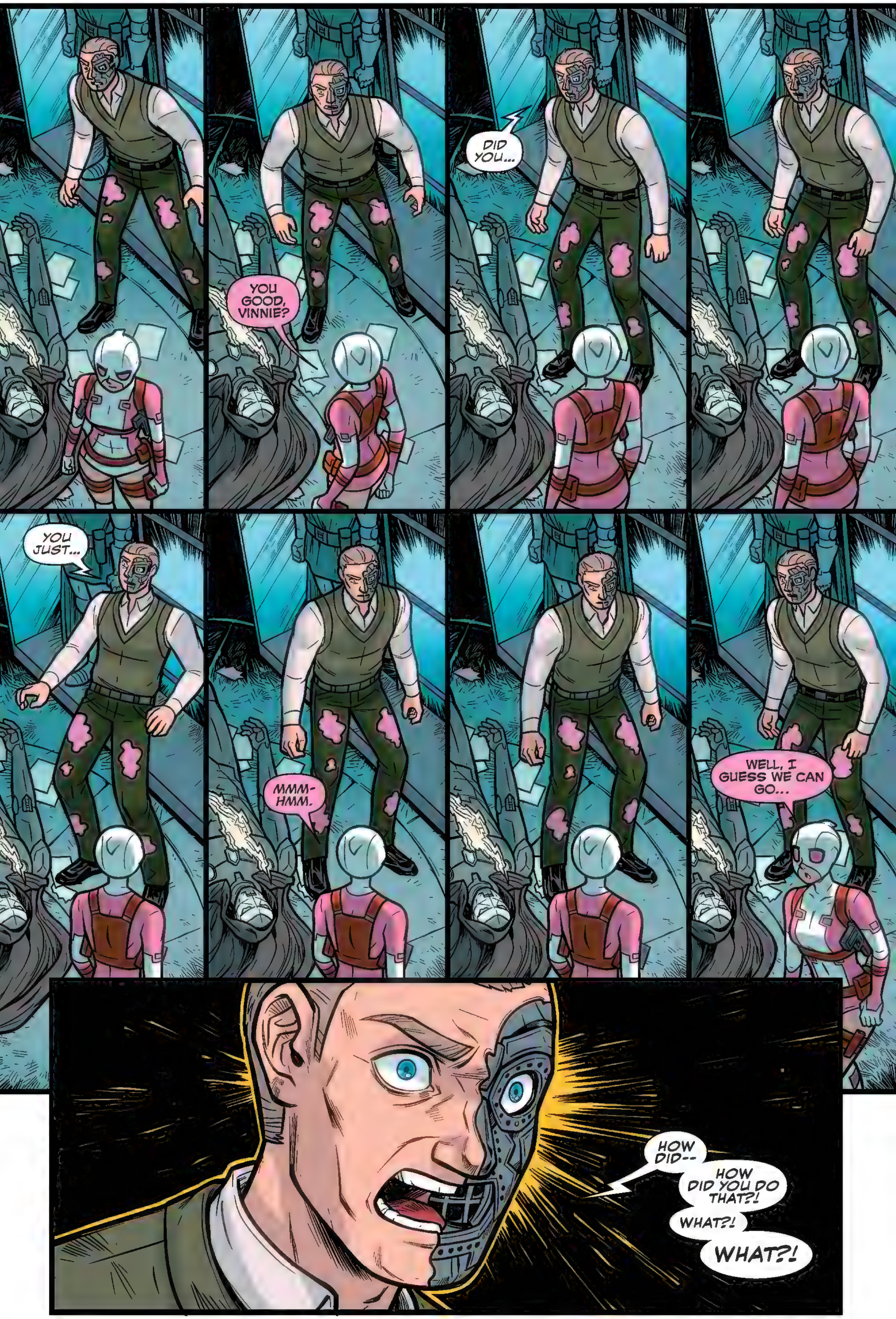

BUT WHO IS THIS LITTLE...
...THING...
...WHO WOULD RELEASE ME FROM THAT OVER-MODEST SHELL?
HIIII...
I'M GWEN POOLE.
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU?

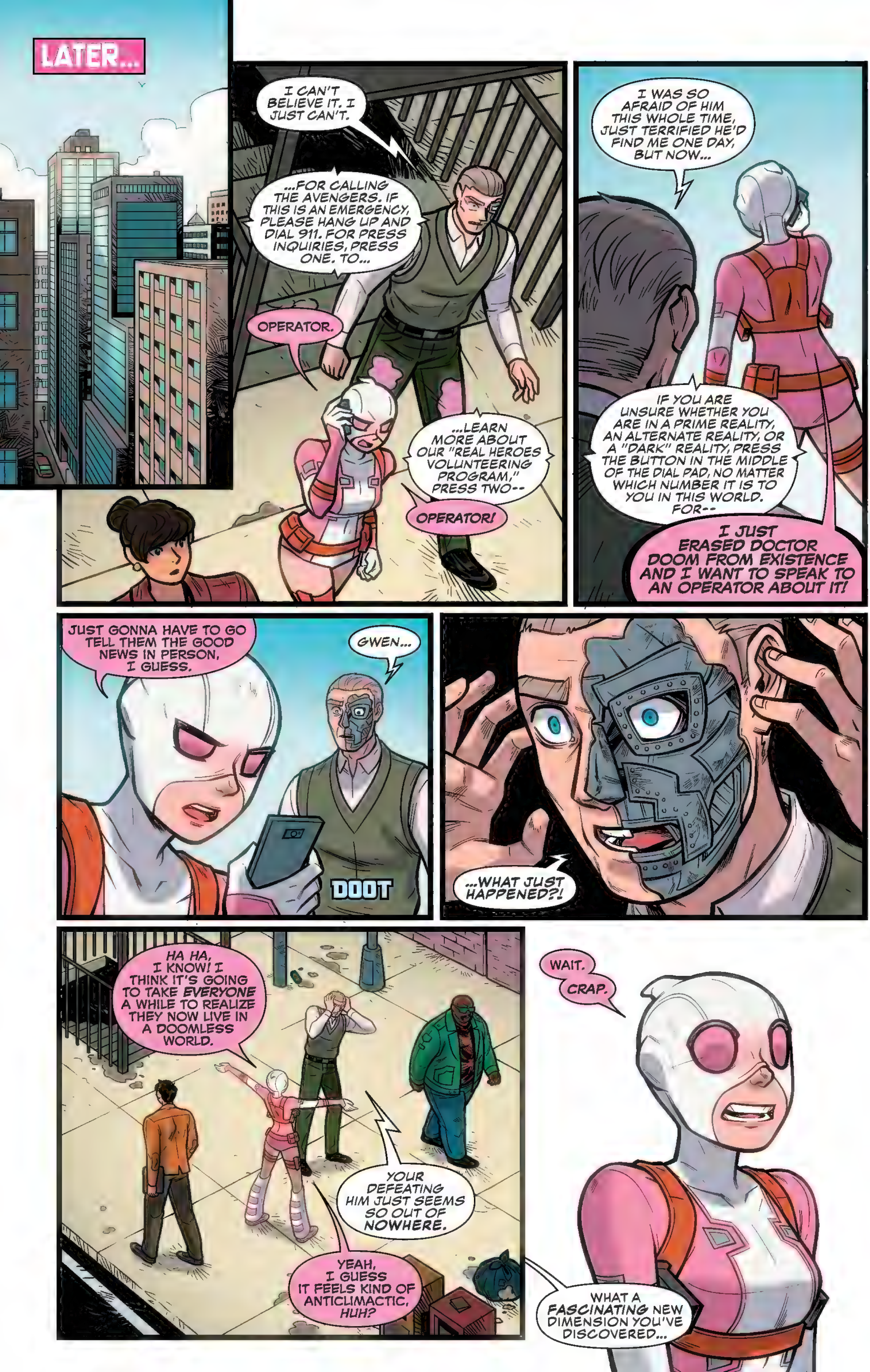

HA HA HA! YES, OF COURSE! AND YOU'VE SUMMONED ME BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SULLY SUCH A VICTORY WITH THAT LESSER MANIFESTATION.
YEAH. PRETTY MUCH.
YOU ARE NOTHING, EVEN TO THAT.
YOU WOULD OPEN A DAM BECAUSE IT IS NOT SATISFYING ENOUGH TO DROWN IN A PUDDLE.
NO, I'M TAKING YOU DOWN, DUDE.
I DO APPRECIATE YOU TALKING LIKE SHAKESPEARE'S ANGRIEST FART, THOUGH.
INSULTS. IT IS ALL YOUR KIND KNOW IN THE FACE OF OBLIVION.
AT LEAST IT'S NOT THE FACE OF THAT OLD HAMBURGER YOU STORE UNDER YOUR MASK.
VERY WELL. WITNESS THE STRENGTH OF DOOM!

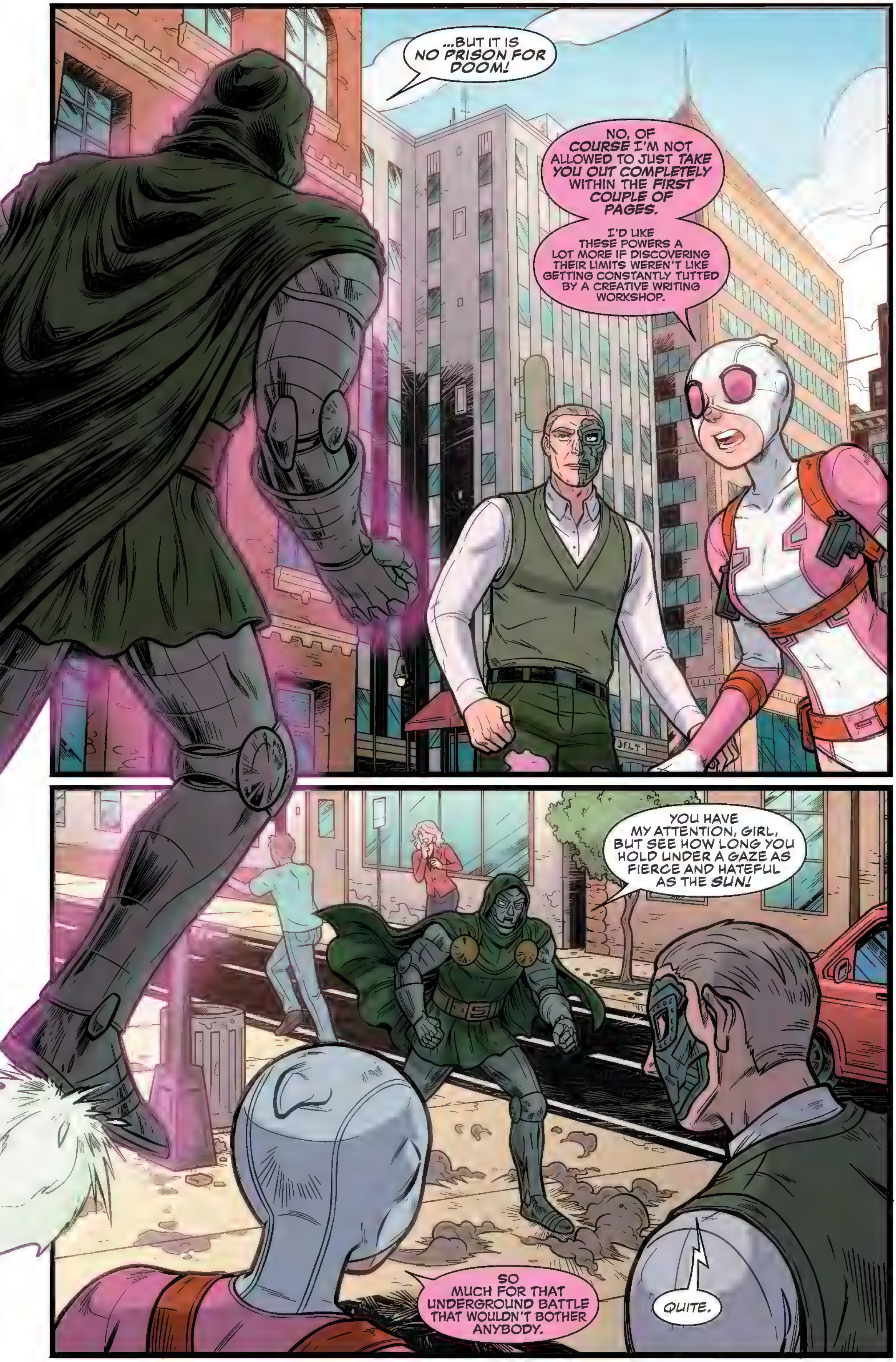

UH-HUH. SAY GOODNIGHT, VIC! YOU'VE GOT A LONG FALL COMING.
AND WHEN YOU ARE TRAPPED IN AN ENDLESS AFTERLIFE--
--LET THAT SIGHT BE A WARM MEMORY OF YOUR FINAL MOMENTS HERE!
P-STOOOM
HA! DOOM CANNOT FALL!
DOOM CANNOT FAIL!
DOOM SIMPLY IS AND SHALL EVER BE--

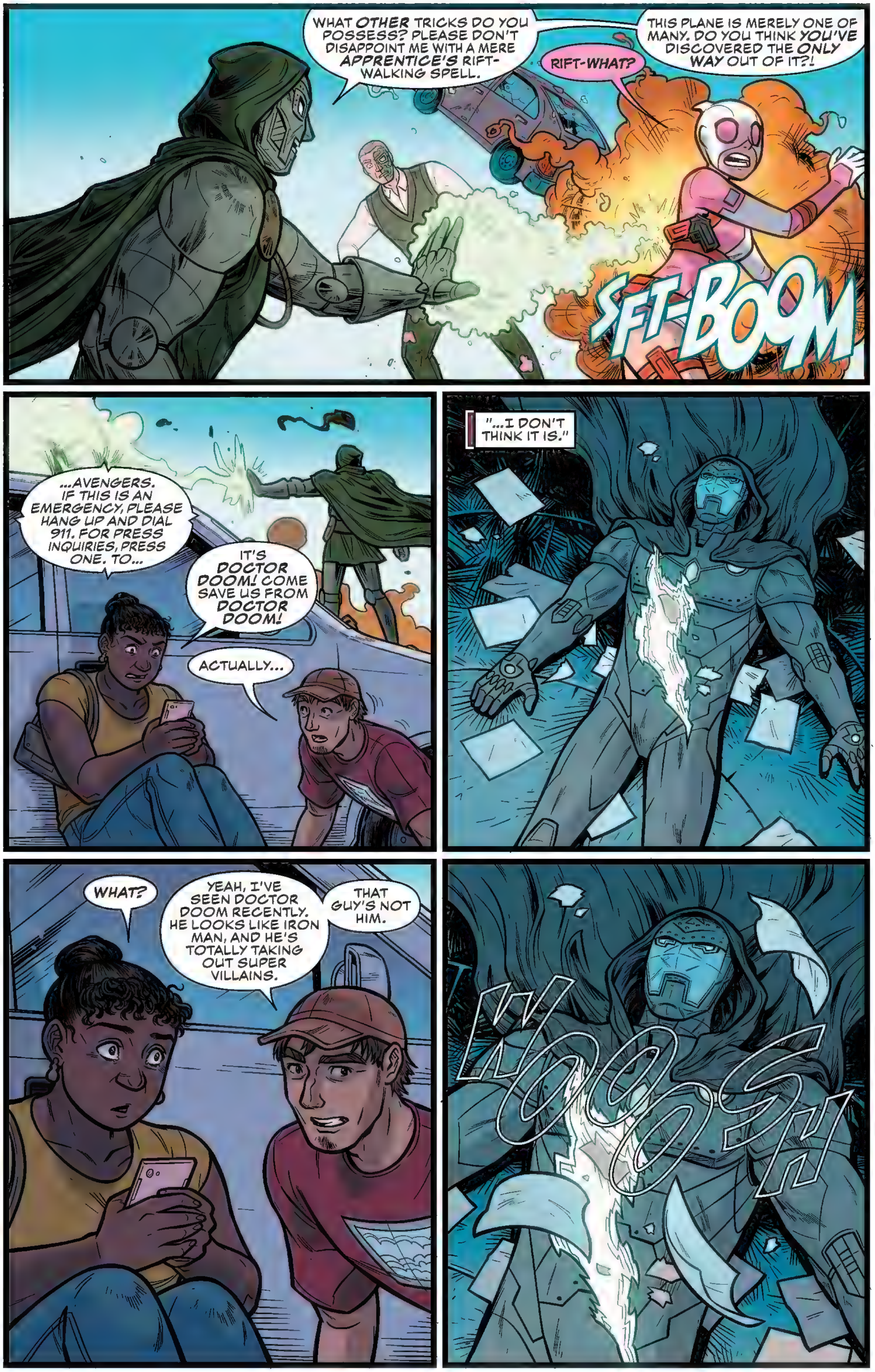

AND WHEN YOU ARE TRAPPED IN AN ENDLESS AFTERLIFE--
--LET THAT SIGHT BE A WARM MEMORY OF YOUR FINAL MOMENTS HERE!
UH-HUH. SAY GOODNIGHT, VIC! YOU'VE GOT A LONG FALL COMING.
--BE... WHAT THE--
ABOUT THAT AFTERLIFE...

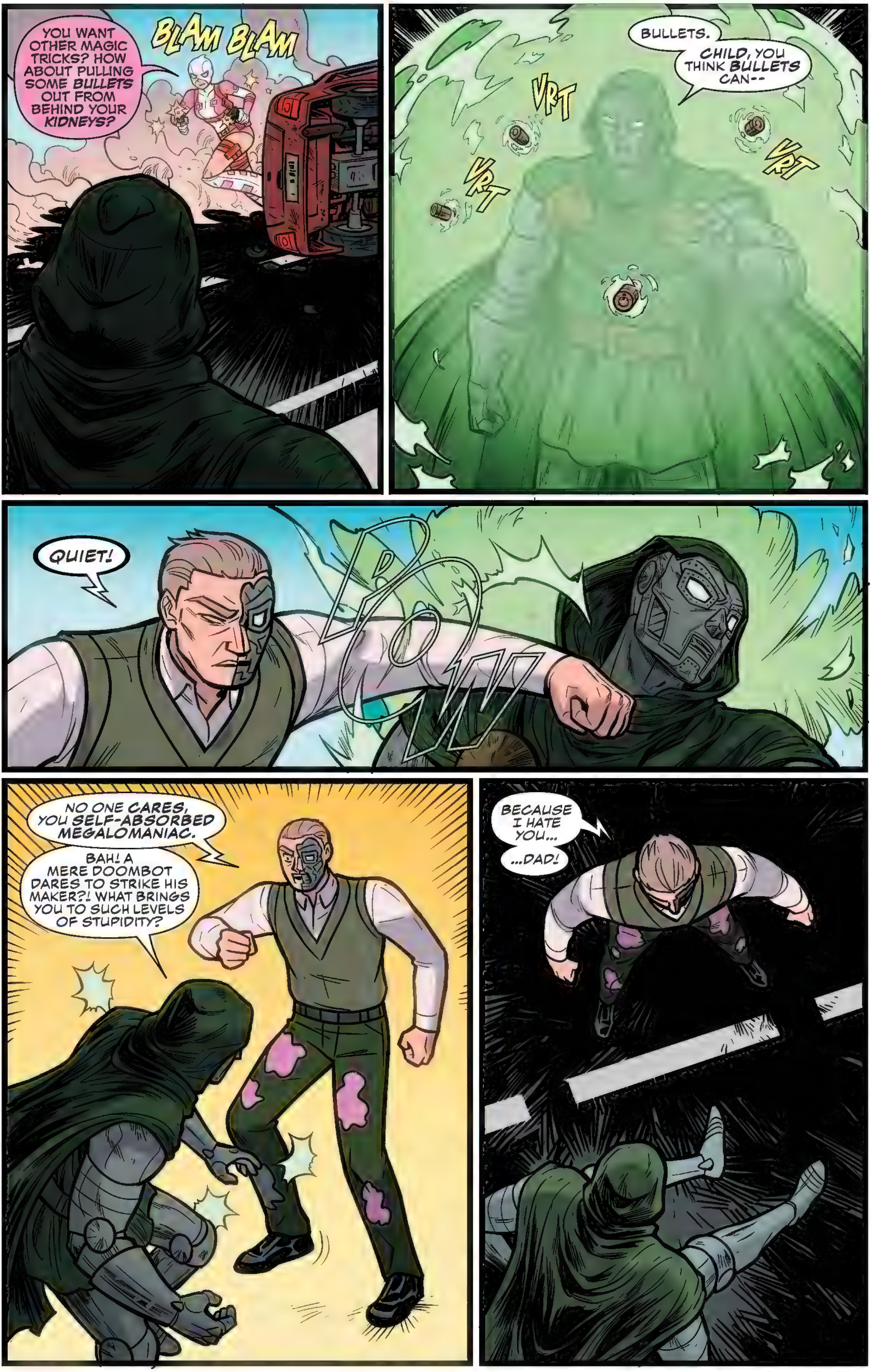

WHAT?! NO! NO!
NOOOOO...

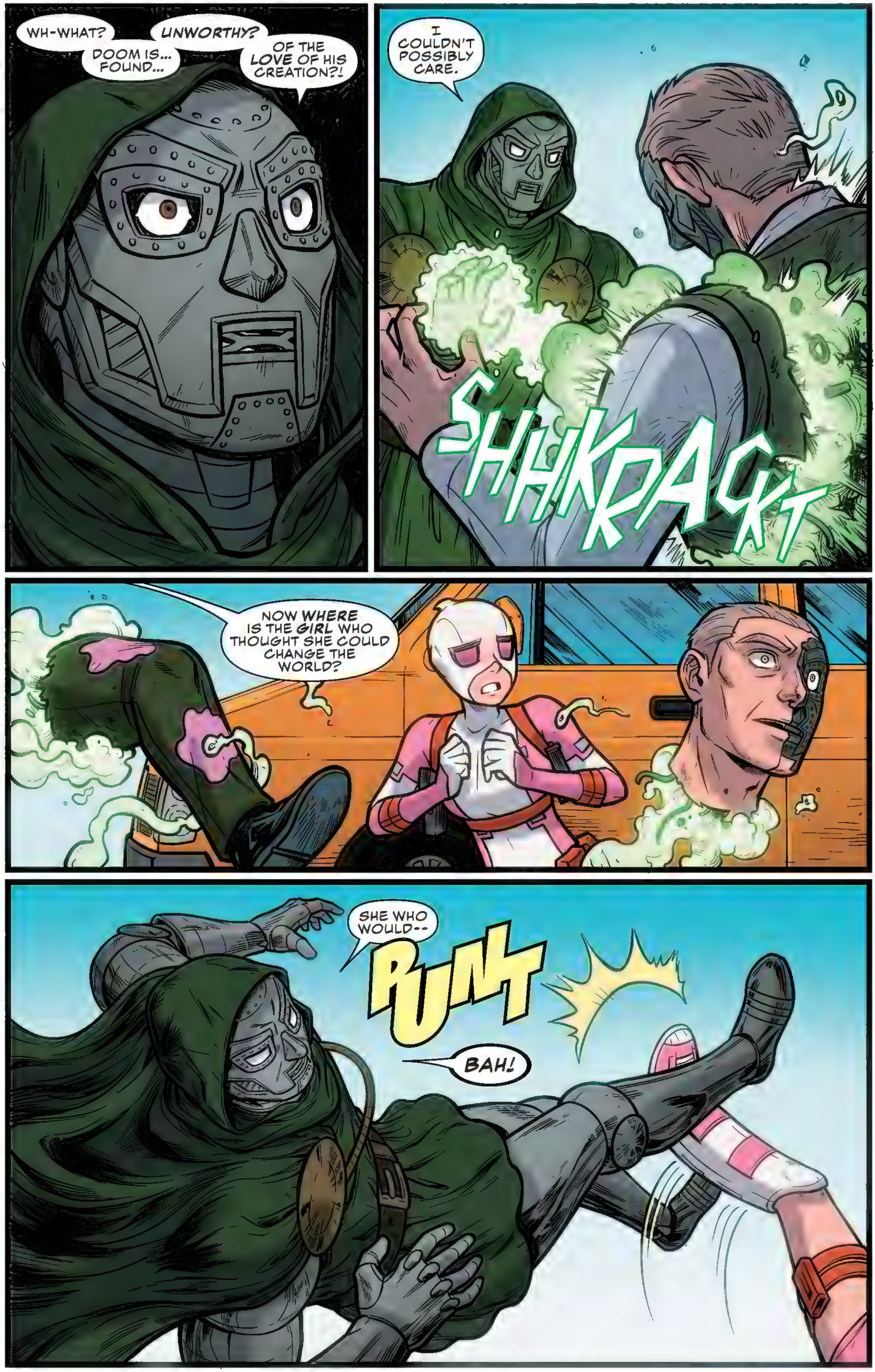

YOU GOOD, VINNIE?
DID YOU...
YOU JUST...
MMM-HMM.
WELL, I GUESS WE CAN GO...
HOW DID--
HOW DID YOU DO THAT?!
WHAT?!
WHAT?!

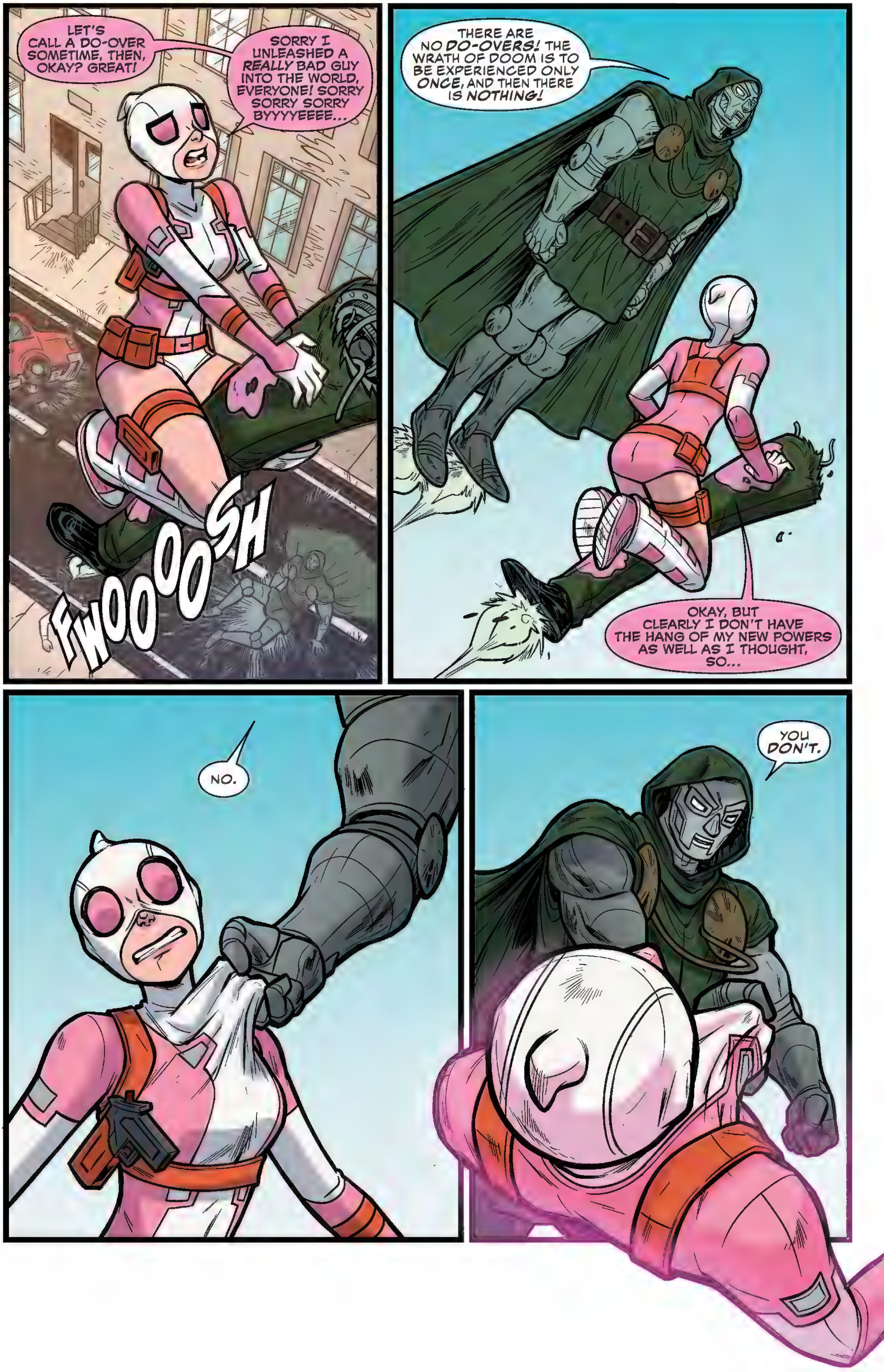

LATER...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. I JUST CAN'T.
...FOR CALLING THE AVENGERS. IF THIS IS AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE HANG UP AND DIAL 911. FOR PRESS INQUIRIES, PRESS ONE. TO...
OPERATOR.
...LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR "REAL HEROES VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM," PRESS TWO--
OPERATOR!
I WAS SO AFRAID OF HIM THIS WHOLE TIME, JUST TERRIFIED HE'D FIND ME ONE DAY, BUT NOW...
IF YOU ARE UNSURE WHETHER YOU ARE IN A PRIME REALITY, AN ALTERNATE REALITY, OR A "DARK" REALITY, PRESS THE BUTTON IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DIAL PAD, NO MATTER WHICH NUMBER IT IS TO YOU IN THIS WORLD. FOR--
I JUST ERASED DOCTOR DOOM FROM EXISTENCE AND I WANT TO SPEAK TO AN OPERATOR ABOUT IT!
JUST GONNA HAVE TO GO TELL THEM THE GOOD NEWS IN PERSON, I GUESS.
GWEN...
DOOT
...WHAT JUST HAPPENED?!
HA HA, I KNOW! I THINK IT'S GOING TO TAKE EVERYONE A WHILE TO REALIZE THEY NOW LIVE IN A DOOMLESS WORLD.
YOUR DEFEATING HIM JUST SEEMS SO OUT OF NOWHERE.
YEAH, I GUESS IT FEELS KIND OF ANTICLIMACTIC, HUH?
WAIT.
CRAP.
WHAT A FASCINATING NEW DIMENSION YOU'VE DISCOVERED...

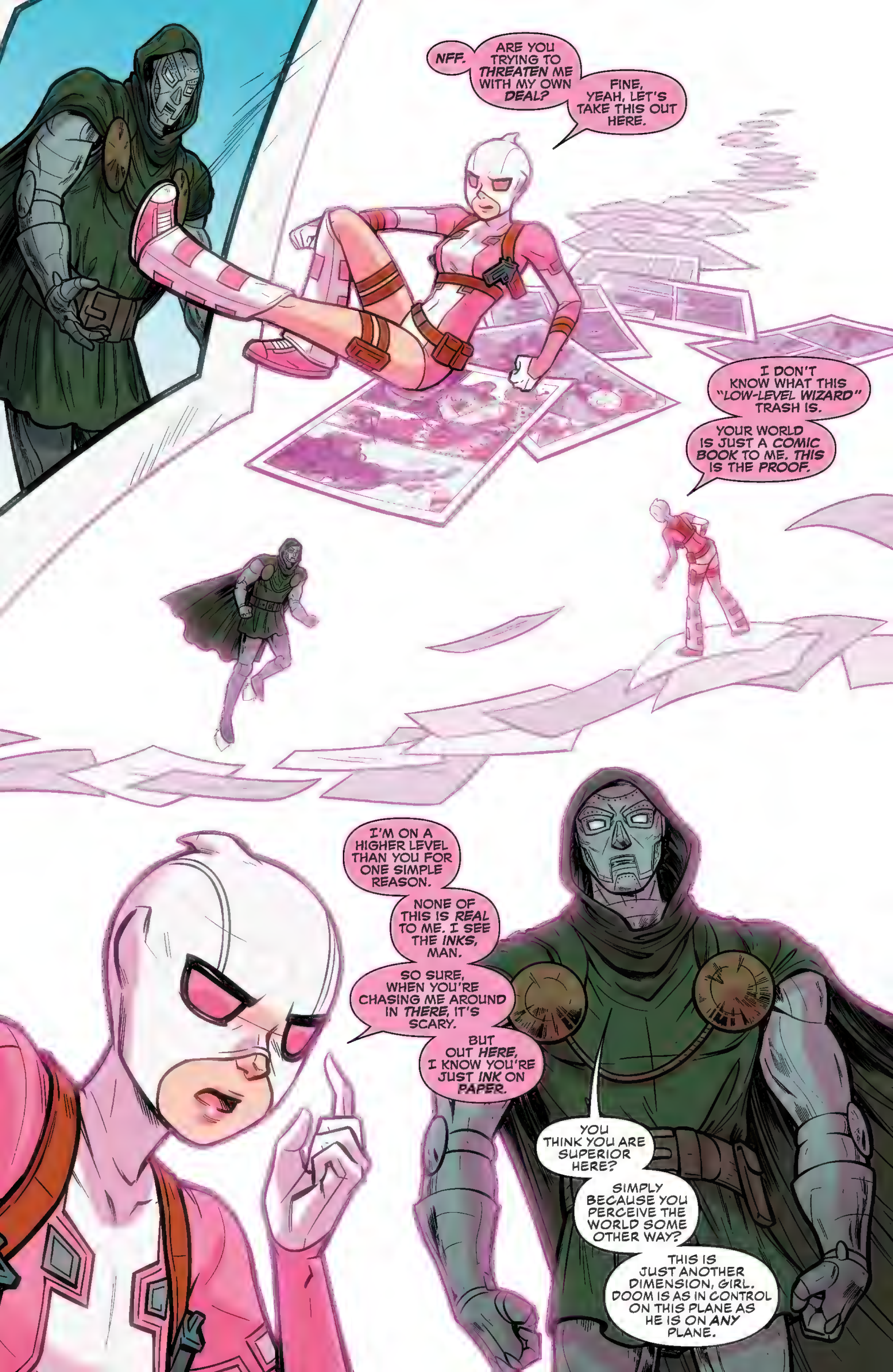

...BUT IT IS NO PRISON FOR DOOM!
NO, OF COURSE I'M NOT ALLOWED TO JUST TAKE YOU OUT COMPLETELY WITHIN THE FIRST COUPLE OF PAGES.
I'D LIKE THESE POWERS A LOT MORE IF DISCOVERING THEIR LIMITS WEREN'T LIKE GETTING CONSTANTLY TUTTED BY A CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP.
YOU HAVE MY ATTENTION, GIRL, BUT SEE HOW LONG YOU HOLD UNDER A GAZE AS FIERCE AND HATEFUL AS THE SUN!
SO MUCH FOR THAT UNDERGROUND BATTLE THAT WOULDN'T BOTHER ANYBODY.
QUITE.

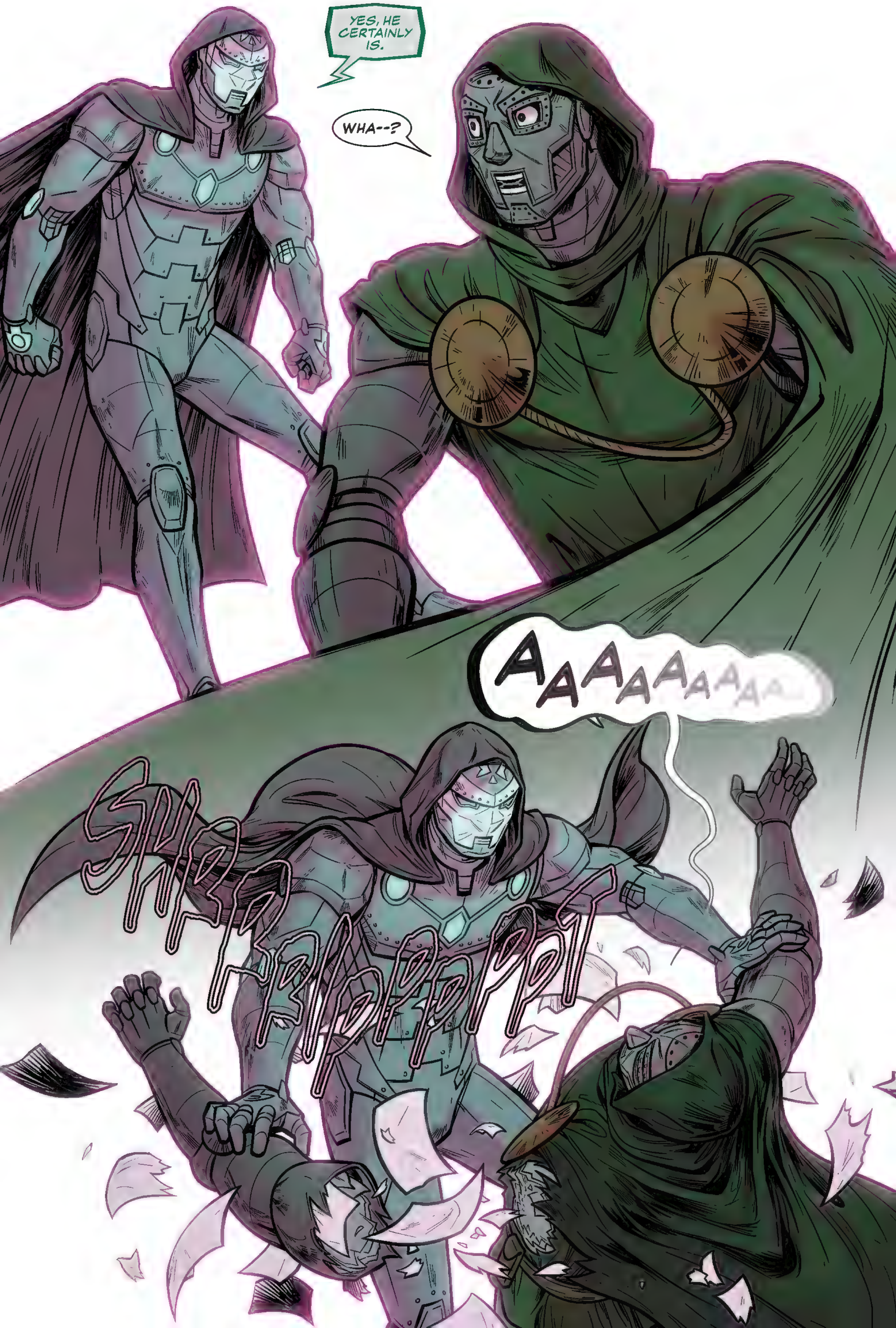

WHAT *OTHER* TRICKS DO YOU POSSESS? PLEASE DON'T DISAPPOINT ME WITH A MERE *APPRENTICE'S* RIFT-WALKING SPELL.
RIFT-WHAT?
THIS PLANE IS MERELY ONE OF MANY. DO YOU THINK *YOU'VE* DISCOVERED THE *ONLY* WAY OUT OF IT?!
SFT-BOOM
...AVENGERS. IF THIS IS AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE HANG UP AND DIAL 911. FOR PRESS INQUIRIES, PRESS ONE. TO...
IT'S *DOCTOR DOOM!* COME SAVE US FROM *DOCTOR DOOM!*
ACTUALLY...
"...I DON'T THINK IT IS."
WHAT?
YEAH, I'VE SEEN DOCTOR DOOM RECENTLY. HE LOOKS LIKE IRON MAN, AND HE'S TOTALLY TAKING OUT SUPER VILLAINS.
THAT GUY'S NOT HIM.
WOOOOSH

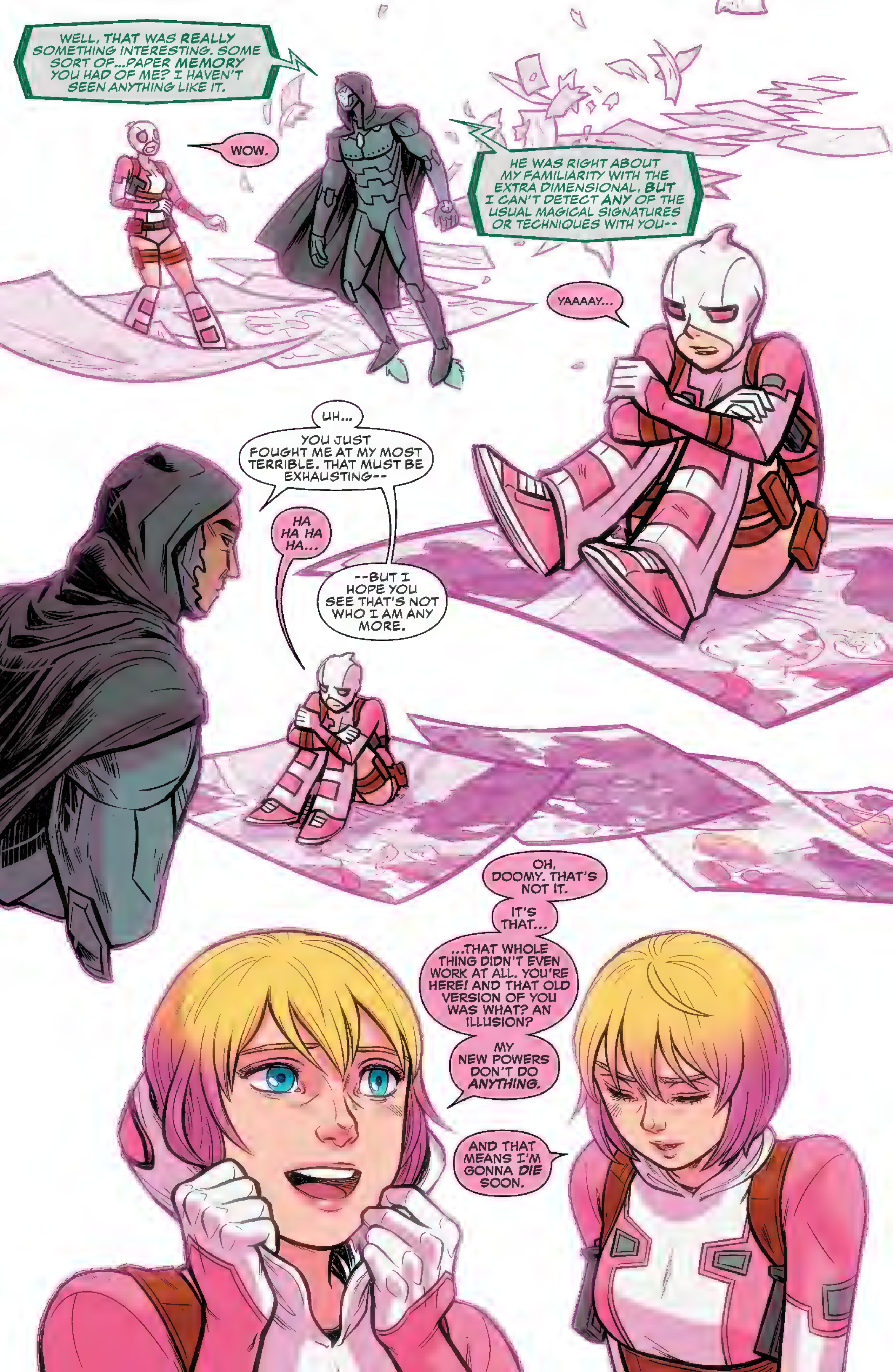

YOU WANT OTHER MAGIC TRICKS? HOW ABOUT PULLING SOME BULLETS OUT FROM BEHIND YOUR KIDNEYS?
BLAM BLAM
BULLETS.
CHILD, YOU THINK BULLETS CAN--
VRT
VRT
VRT
QUIET!
POW
NO ONE CARES, YOU SELF-ABSORBED MEGALOMANIAC.
BAH! A MERE DOOMBOT DARES TO STRIKE HIS MAKER?! WHAT BRINGS YOU TO SUCH LEVELS OF STUPIDITY?
BECAUSE I HATE YOU...
...DAD!

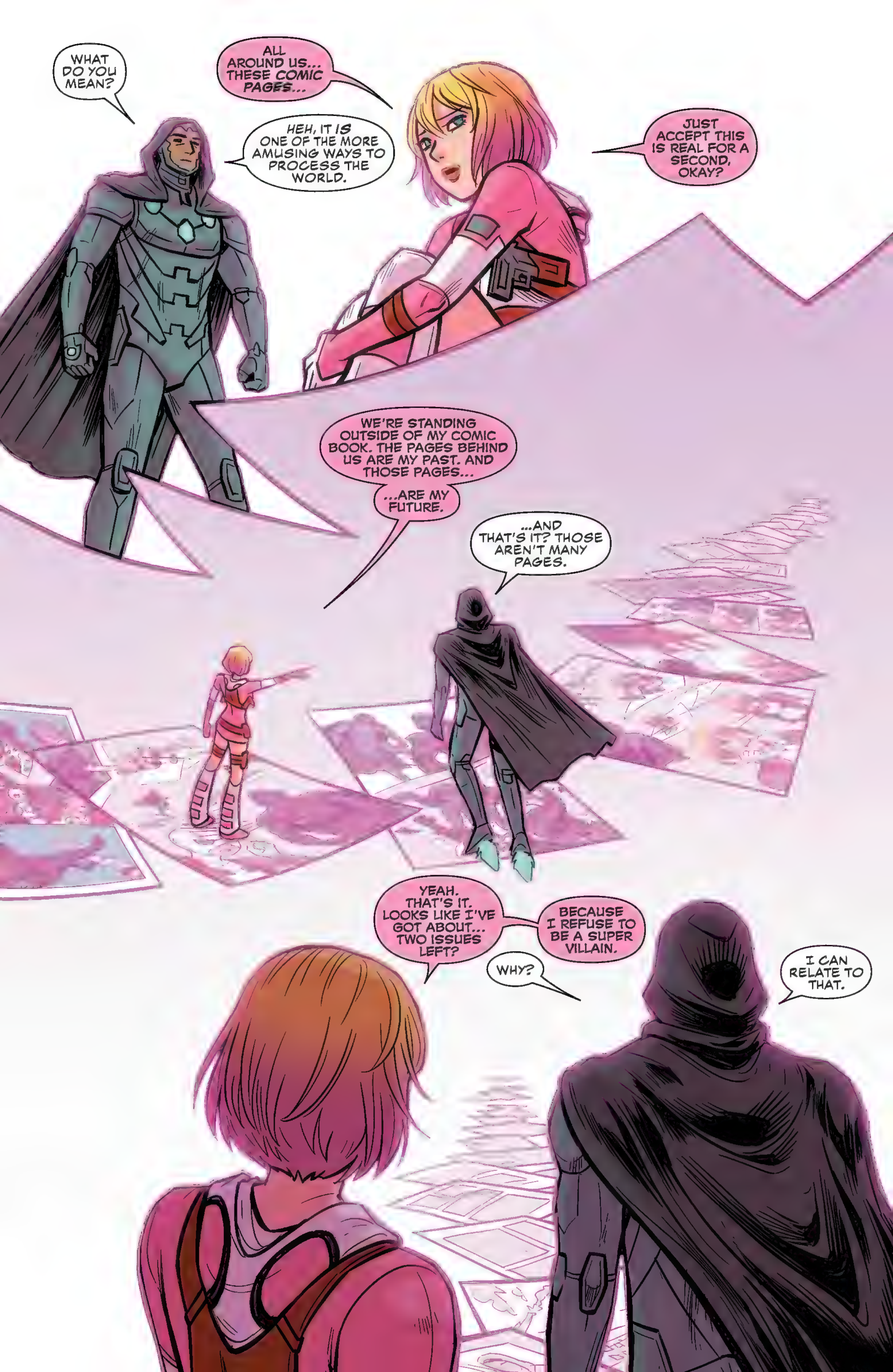

WH-WHAT?
DOOM IS... FOUND...
UNWORTHY?
OF THE LOVE OF HIS CREATION?!
I COULDN'T POSSIBLY CARE.
SHHKRRACKT
NOW WHERE IS THE GIRL WHO THOUGHT SHE COULD CHANGE THE WORLD?
SHE WHO WOULD--
PUNT
BAH!

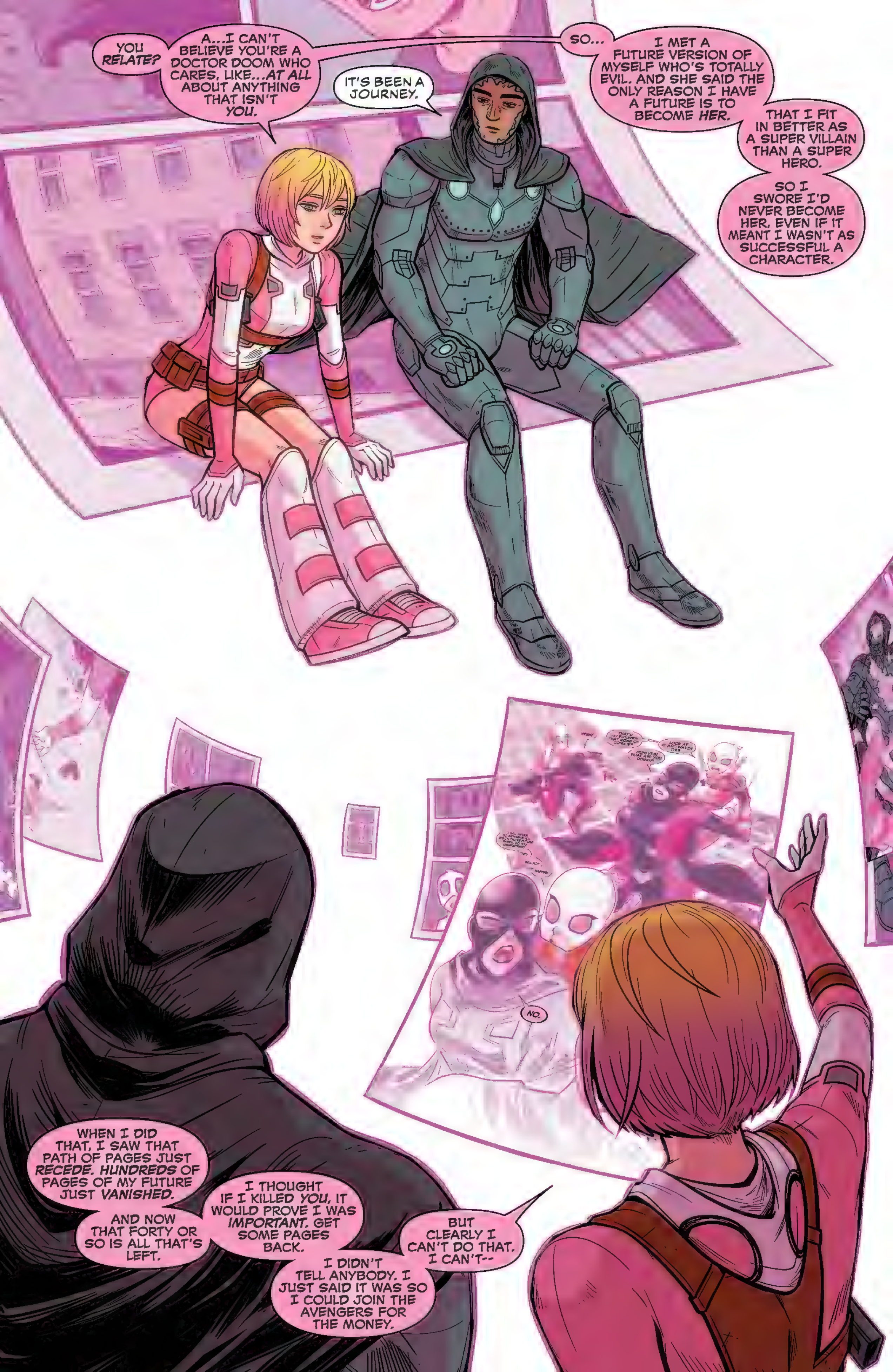

LET'S CALL A DO-OVER SOMETIME, THEN, OKAY? GREAT!
SORRY I UNLEASHED A *REALLY* BAD GUY INTO THE WORLD, EVERYONE! SORRY SORRY SORRY BYYYYEEEE...
FWOOOOSH
THERE ARE NO *DO-OVERS!* THE WRATH OF DOOM IS TO BE EXPERIENCED ONLY *ONCE*, AND THEN THERE IS *NOTHING!*
OKAY, BUT CLEARLY I DON'T HAVE THE HANG OF MY NEW POWERS AS WELL AS I THOUGHT, SO...
NO.
YOU *DON'T.*

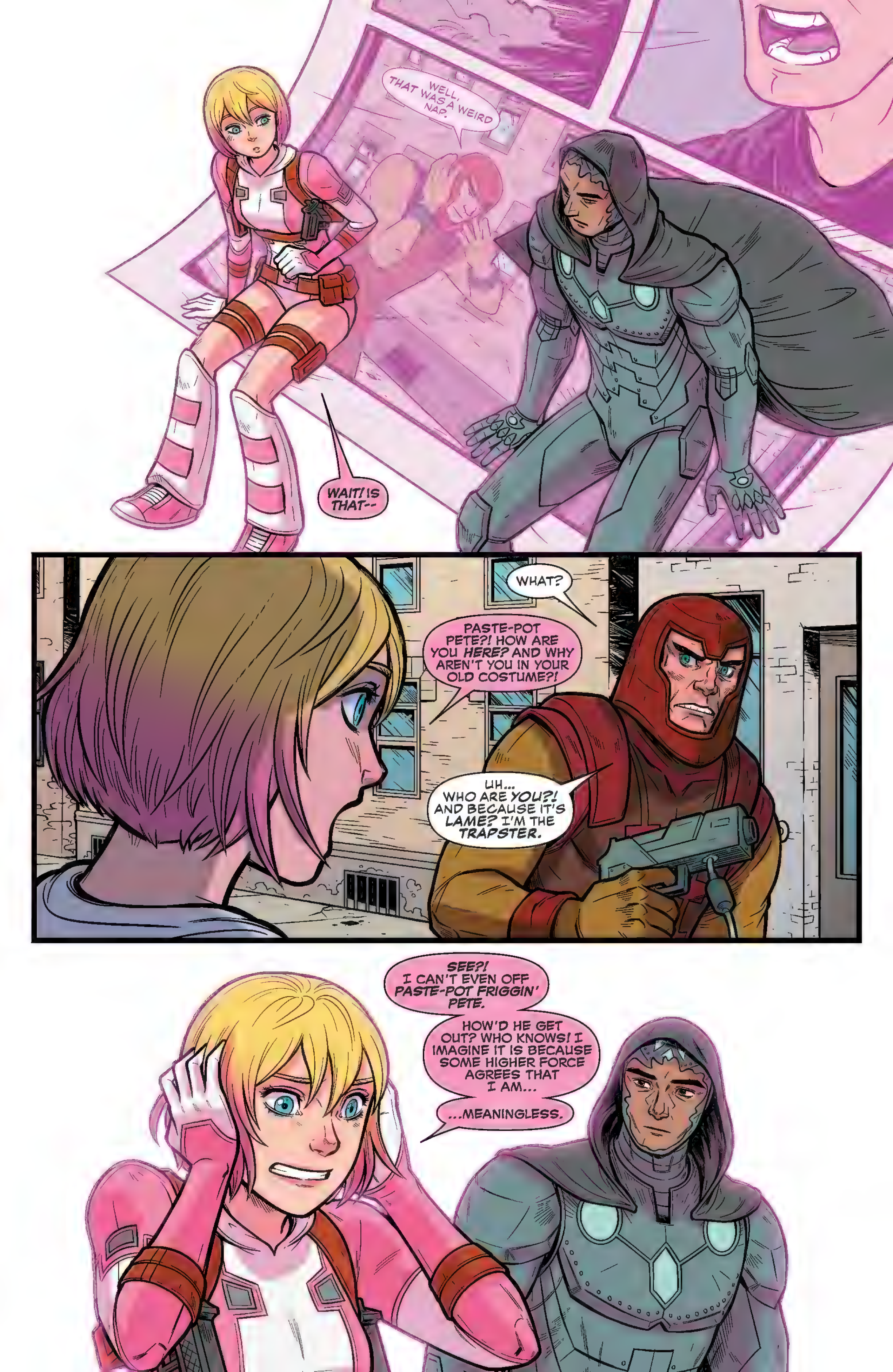

NFF.
ARE YOU TRYING TO *THREATEN* ME WITH MY OWN *DEAL?*
FINE, YEAH, LET'S TAKE THIS OUT HERE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS *"LOW-LEVEL WIZARD"* TRASH IS.
YOUR WORLD IS JUST A *COMIC BOOK* TO ME. *THIS* IS THE *PROOF.*
I'M ON A HIGHER LEVEL THAN YOU FOR ONE SIMPLE REASON.
NONE OF THIS IS *REAL* TO ME. I SEE THE *INKS,* MAN.
SO SURE, WHEN YOU'RE CHASING ME AROUND IN *THERE,* IT'S SCARY.
BUT OUT *HERE,* I KNOW YOU'RE JUST *INK* ON *PAPER.*
YOU THINK YOU ARE SUPERIOR HERE?
SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU PERCEIVE THE WORLD SOME OTHER WAY?
THIS IS JUST ANOTHER DIMENSION, GIRL. DOOM IS AS IN CONTROL ON THIS PLANE AS HE IS ON *ANY* PLANE.

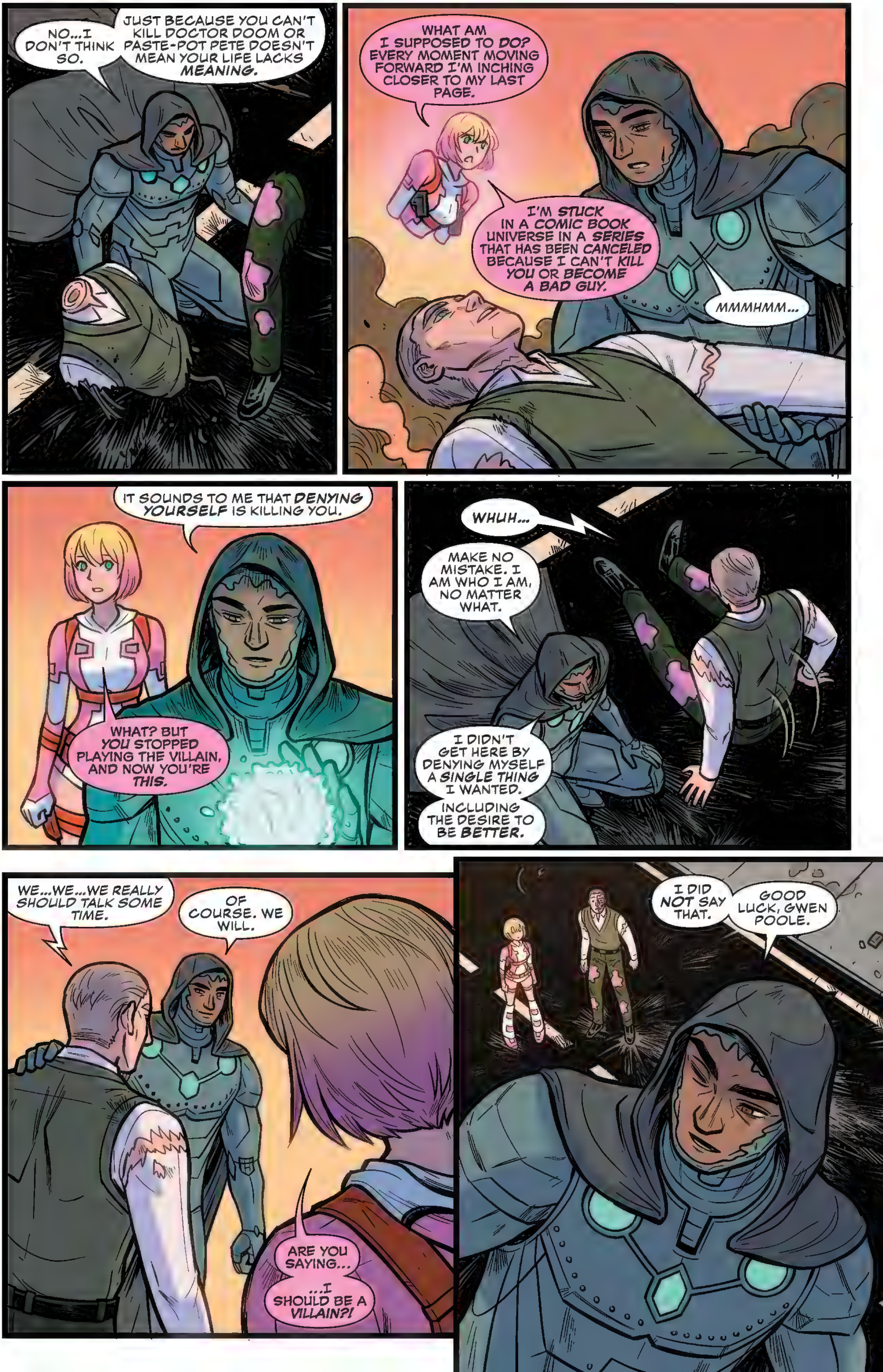

YES, HE CERTAINLY IS.
WHA--?
AAAAAAAAAAAA...
SHRAPPPPPPPPT

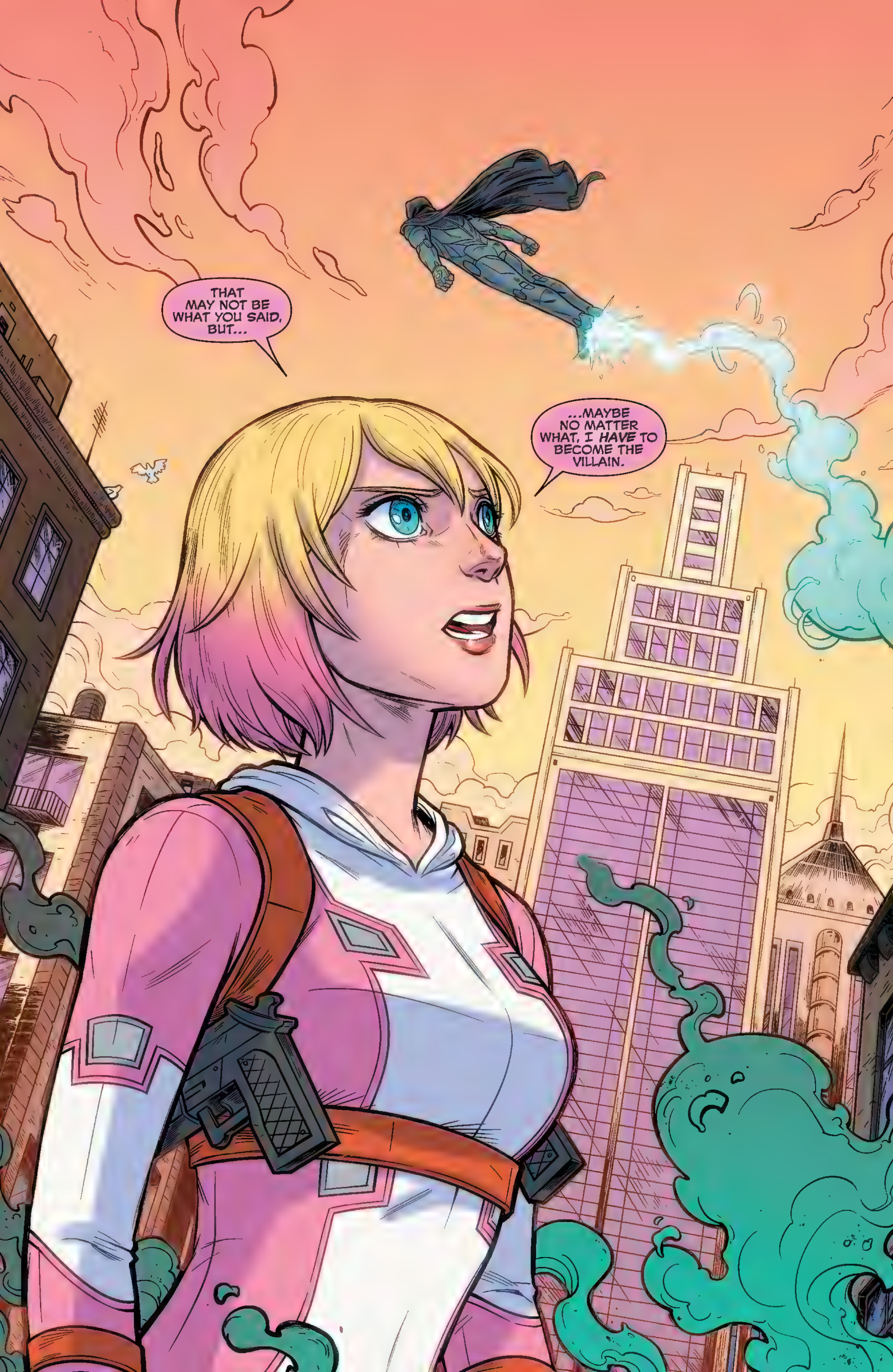

WELL, THAT WAS REALLY SOMETHING INTERESTING. SOME SORT OF...PAPER MEMORY YOU HAD OF ME? I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.
WOW.
HE WAS RIGHT ABOUT MY FAMILIARITY WITH THE EXTRA DIMENSIONAL, BUT I CAN'T DETECT ANY OF THE USUAL MAGICAL SIGNATURES OR TECHNIQUES WITH YOU--
YAAAAY...
UH...
YOU JUST FOUGHT ME AT MY MOST TERRIBLE. THAT MUST BE EXHAUSTING--
HA HA HA HA...
--BUT I HOPE YOU SEE THAT'S NOT WHO I AM ANY MORE.
OH, DOOMY. THAT'S NOT IT.
IT'S THAT...
...THAT WHOLE THING DIDN'T EVEN WORK AT ALL. YOU'RE HERE! AND THAT OLD VERSION OF YOU WAS WHAT? AN ILLUSION?
MY NEW POWERS DON'T DO ANYTHING.
AND THAT MEANS I'M GONNA DIE SOON.

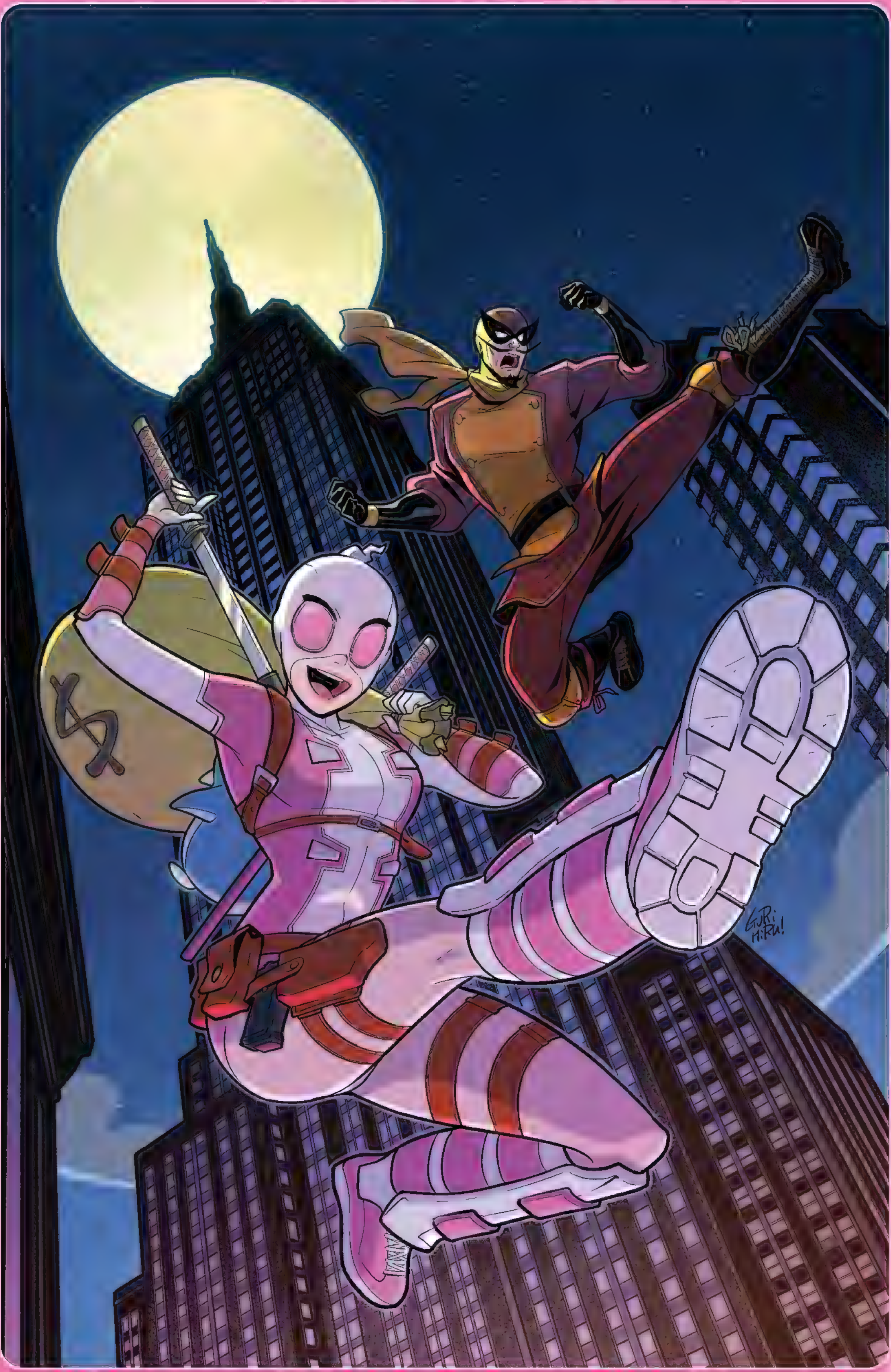

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
ALL AROUND US... THESE *COMIC PAGES...*
HEH, IT *IS* ONE OF THE MORE AMUSING WAYS TO PROCESS THE WORLD.
JUST ACCEPT THIS IS REAL FOR A SECOND, OKAY?
WE'RE STANDING OUTSIDE OF MY COMIC BOOK. THE PAGES BEHIND US ARE MY PAST. AND THOSE PAGES...
...ARE MY FUTURE.
...AND THAT'S IT? THOSE AREN'T MANY PAGES.
YEAH. THAT'S IT. LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT ABOUT... TWO ISSUES LEFT?
BECAUSE I REFUSE TO BE A SUPER VILLAIN.
WHY?
I CAN RELATE TO THAT.


YOU *RELATE?*
A...I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE A DOCTOR DOOM WHO CARES, LIKE...*AT ALL* ABOUT ANYTHING THAT ISN'T *YOU.*
IT'S BEEN A JOURNEY.
SO...
I MET A FUTURE VERSION OF MYSELF WHO'S TOTALLY EVIL. AND SHE SAID THE ONLY REASON I HAVE A FUTURE IS TO BECOME *HER.*
THAT I FIT IN BETTER AS A SUPER VILLAIN THAN A SUPER HERO.
SO I SWORE I'D NEVER BECOME HER, EVEN IF IT MEANT I WASN'T AS SUCCESSFUL A CHARACTER.
HERK!
THAT'S MY FUTURE?! THAT ROAD OF COMICS?
BUH! YES! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
LOOK AT IT. AND WATCH THIS
NO.
WHEN I DID THAT, I SAW THAT PATH OF PAGES JUST *RECEDE. HUNDREDS* OF PAGES OF MY FUTURE JUST *VANISHED.*
AND NOW THAT FORTY OR SO IS ALL THAT'S LEFT.
I THOUGHT IF I KILLED *YOU,* IT WOULD PROVE I WAS *IMPORTANT.* GET SOME PAGES BACK.
BUT CLEARLY I CAN'T DO THAT. I CAN'T--
I DIDN'T TELL ANYBODY. I JUST SAID IT WAS SO I COULD JOIN THE AVENGERS FOR THE MONEY.


WELL, THAT WAS A WEIRD NAP.
WAIT! IS THAT--
WHAT?
PASTE-POT PETE?! HOW ARE YOU *HERE?* AND WHY AREN'T YOU IN YOUR OLD COSTUME?!
UH... WHO ARE *YOU?!* AND BECAUSE IT'S *LAME?* I'M THE *TRAPSTER.*
SEE?! I CAN'T EVEN OFF *PASTE-POT FRIGGIN'* *PETE.*
HOW'D HE GET OUT? WHO KNOWS! I IMAGINE IT IS BECAUSE SOME HIGHER FORCE AGREES THAT I AM...
...MEANINGLESS.


NO...I DON'T THINK SO.
JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN'T KILL DOCTOR DOOM OR PASTE-POT PETE DOESN'T MEAN YOUR LIFE LACKS *MEANING.*
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO *DO?* EVERY MOMENT MOVING FORWARD I'M INCHING CLOSER TO MY LAST PAGE.
I'M *STUCK* IN A *COMIC BOOK* UNIVERSE IN A *SERIES* THAT HAS BEEN *CANCELED* BECAUSE I CAN'T *KILL YOU* OR BECOME *A BAD GUY.*
MMMHMM...
IT SOUNDS TO ME THAT *DENYING YOURSELF* IS KILLING YOU.
WHAT? BUT *YOU* STOPPED PLAYING THE VILLAIN, AND NOW YOU'RE *THIS.*
WHUH...
MAKE NO MISTAKE. I AM WHO I AM, NO MATTER WHAT.
I DIDN'T GET HERE BY DENYING MYSELF A *SINGLE THING* I WANTED.
INCLUDING THE DESIRE TO BE *BETTER.*
WE...WE...WE REALLY SHOULD TALK SOME TIME.
OF COURSE. WE WILL.
ARE YOU SAYING...
...I SHOULD BE A *VILLAIN?!*
I DID *NOT* SAY THAT.
GOOD LUCK, GWEN POOLE.


THAT MAY NOT BE WHAT YOU SAID, BUT...
...MAYBE NO MATTER WHAT, I *HAVE* TO BECOME THE VILLAIN.



THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #25

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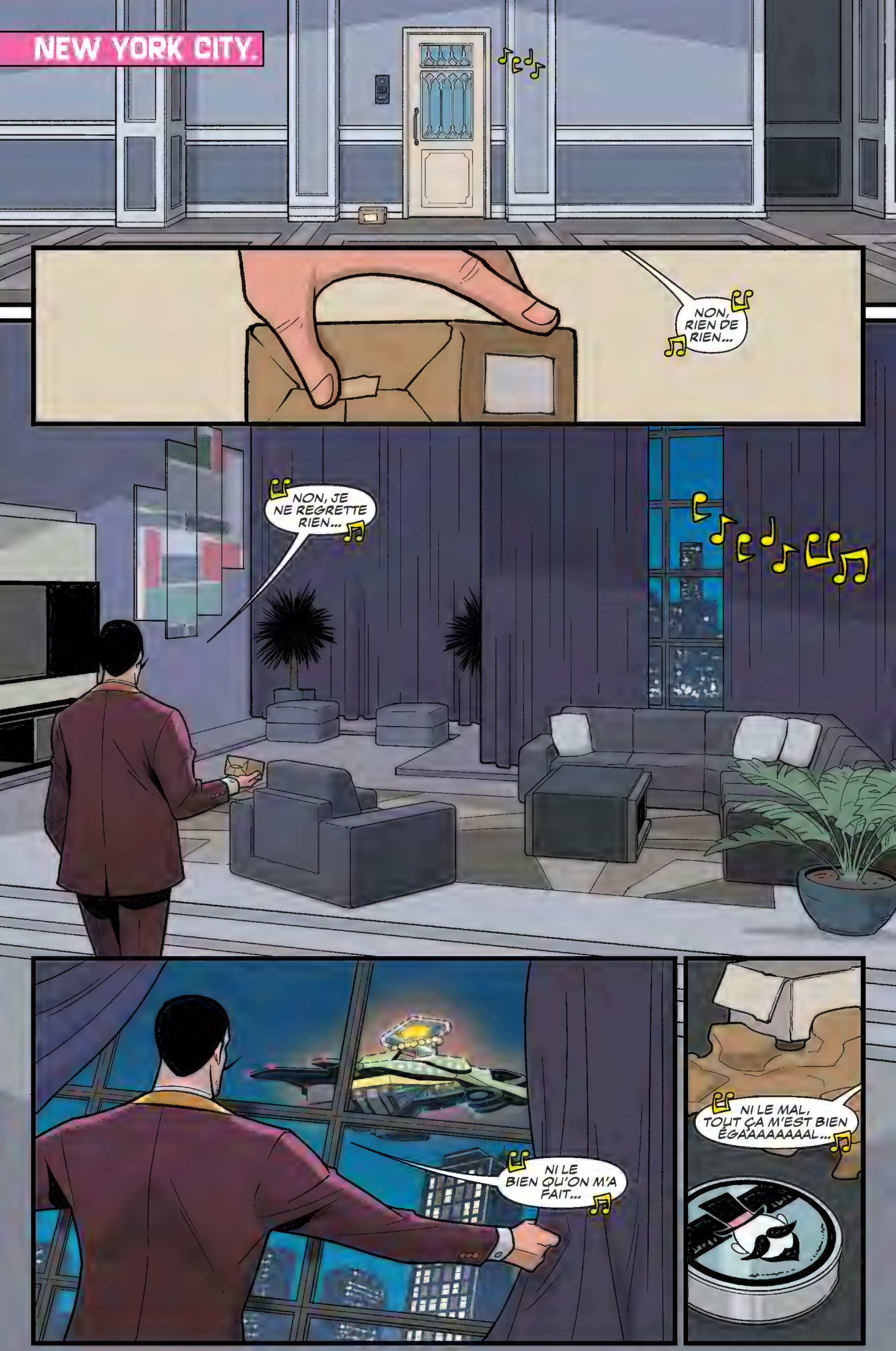
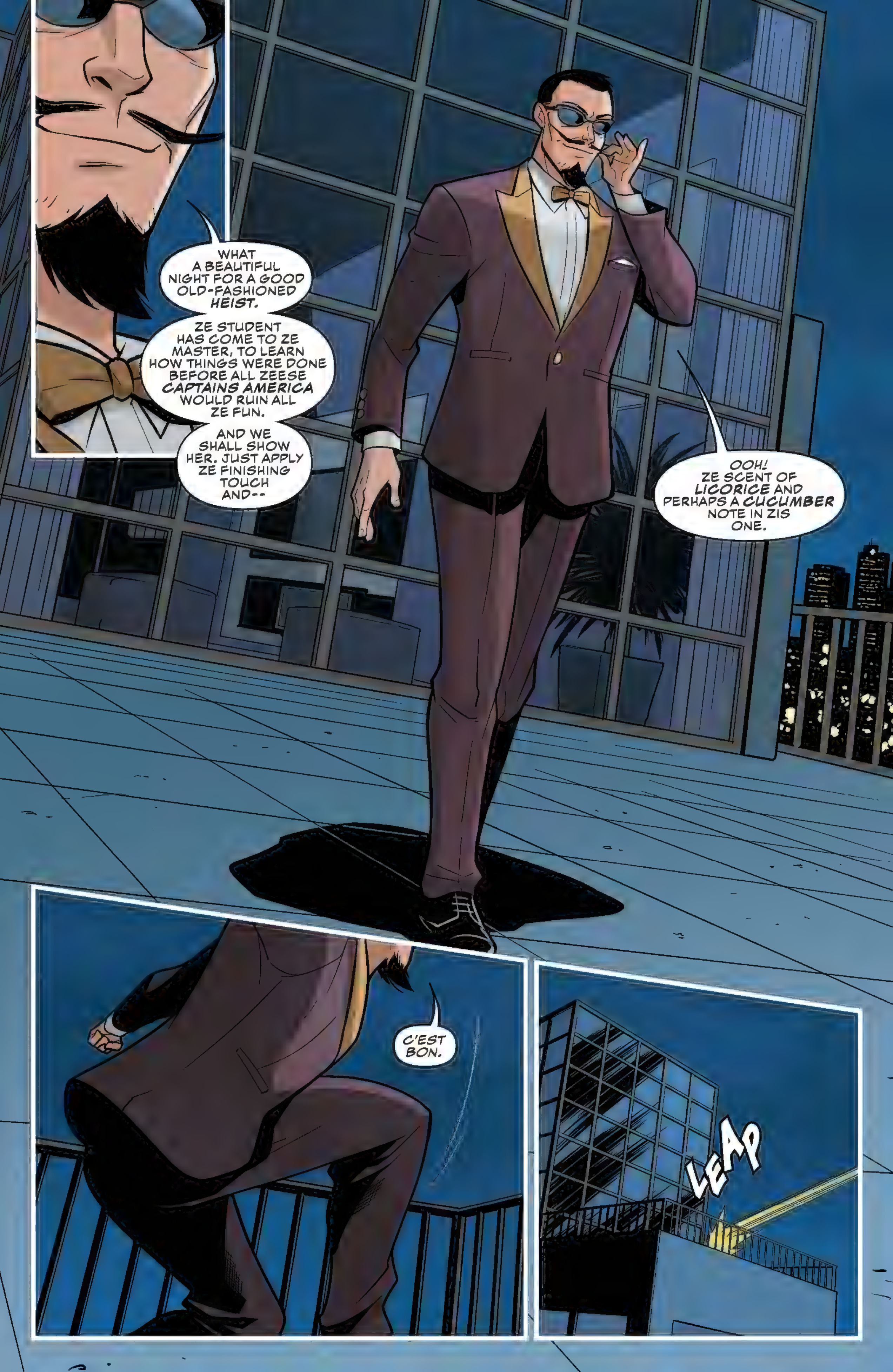
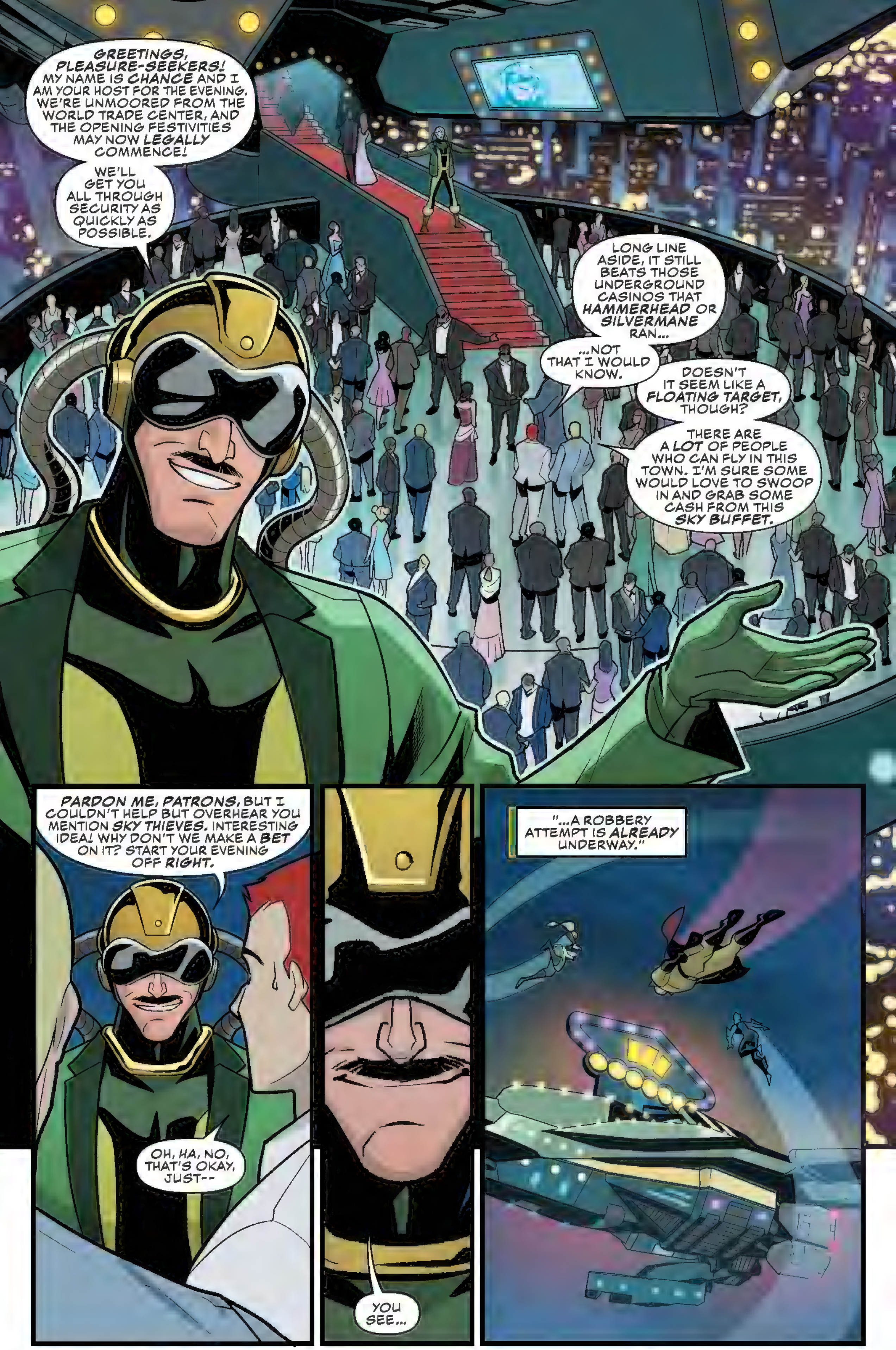
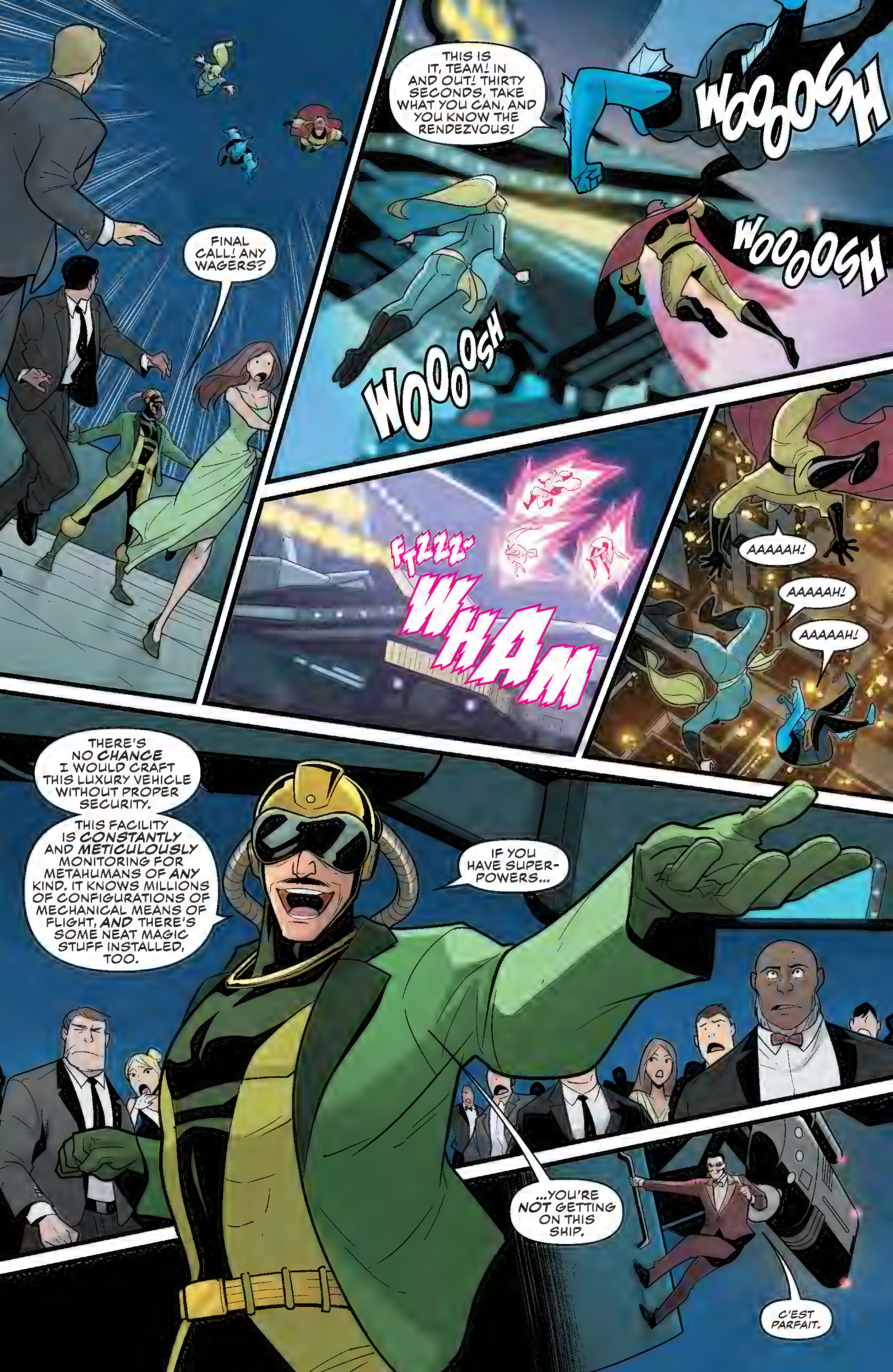
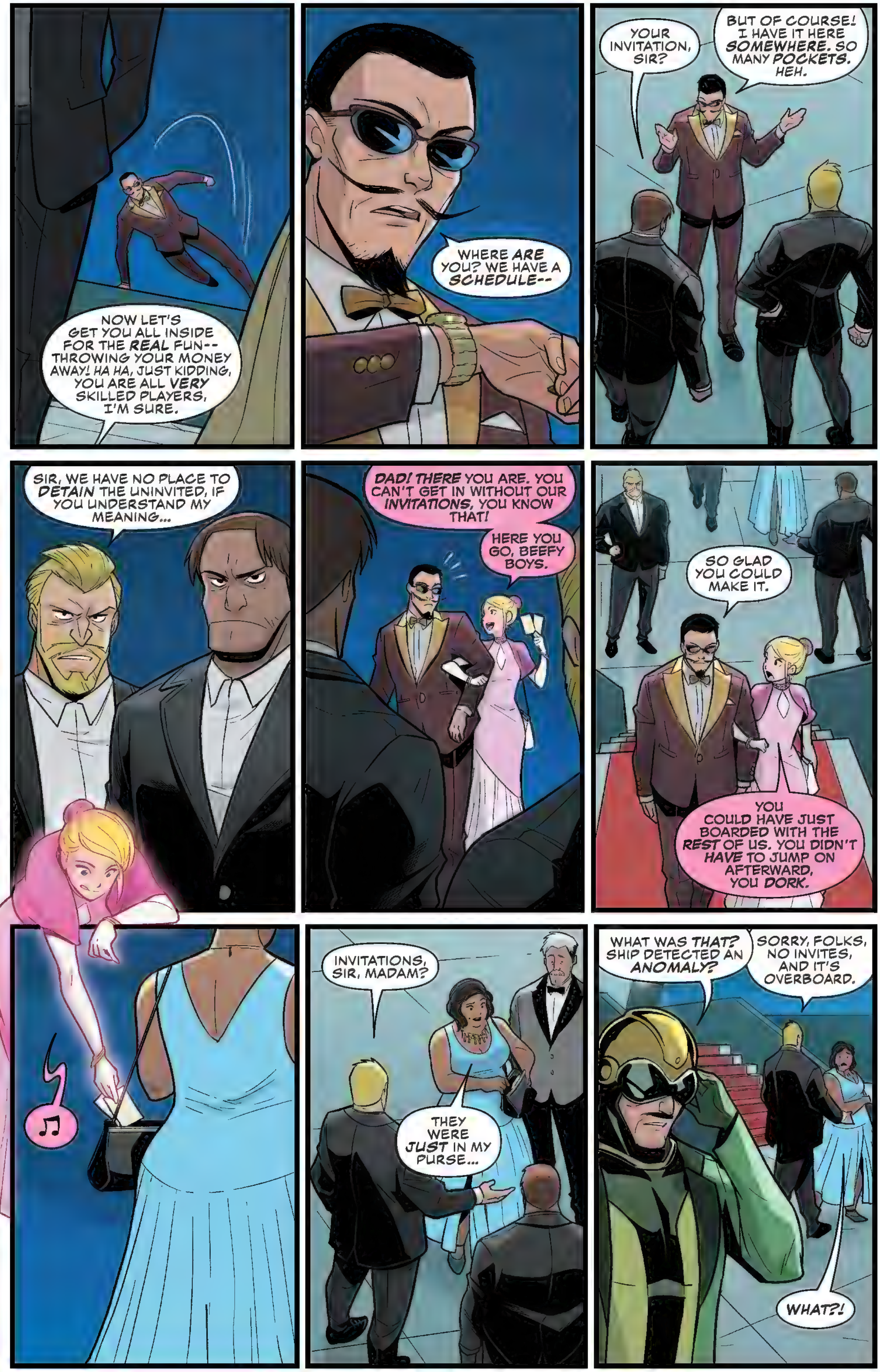
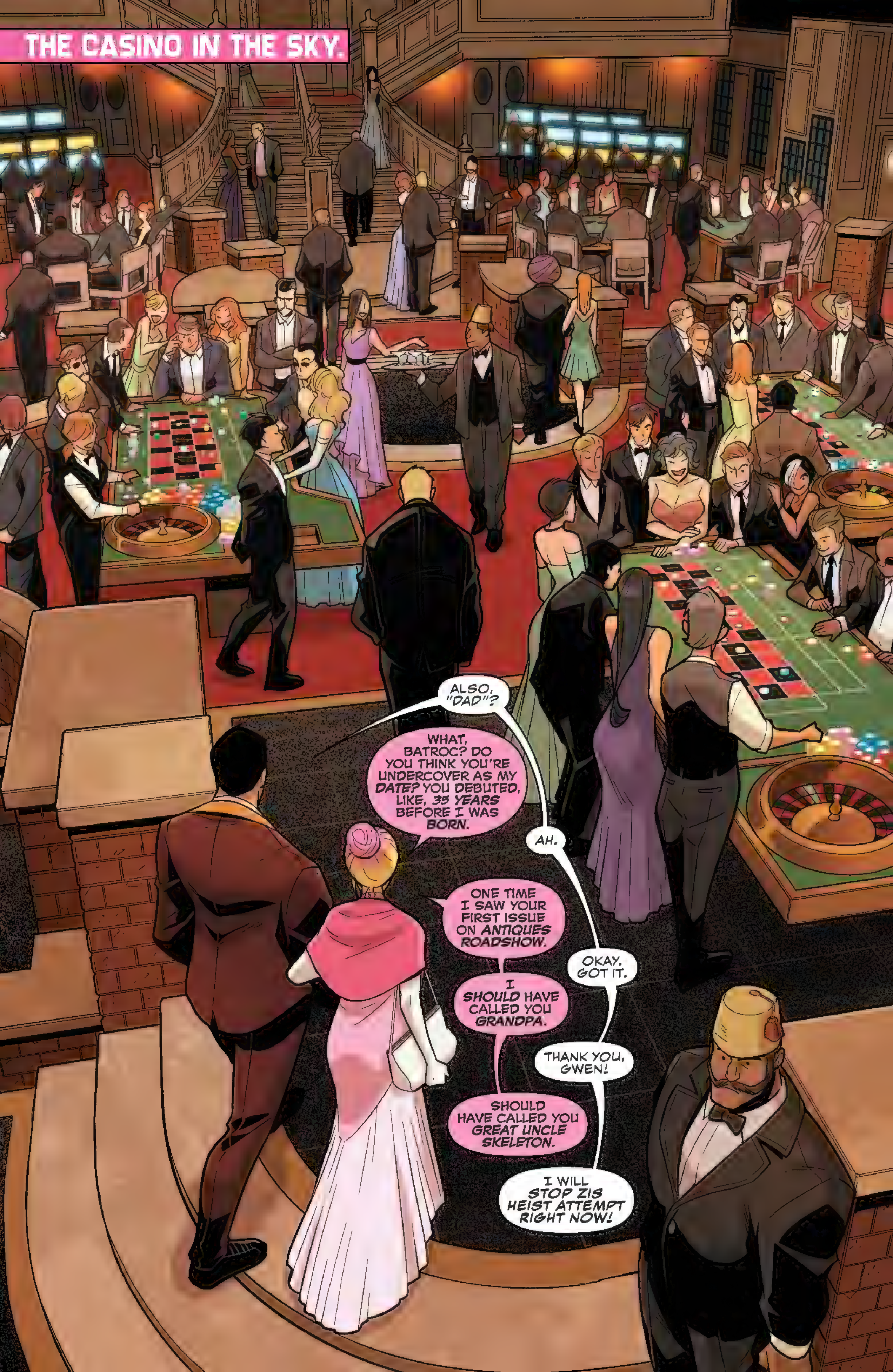

NEW YORK CITY.
NON, RIEN DE RIEN...
NON, JE NE REGRETTE RIEN...
NI LE BIEN QU'ON M'A FAIT...
NI LE MAL, TOUT ÇA M'EST BIEN ÉGAAAAAAAAL...

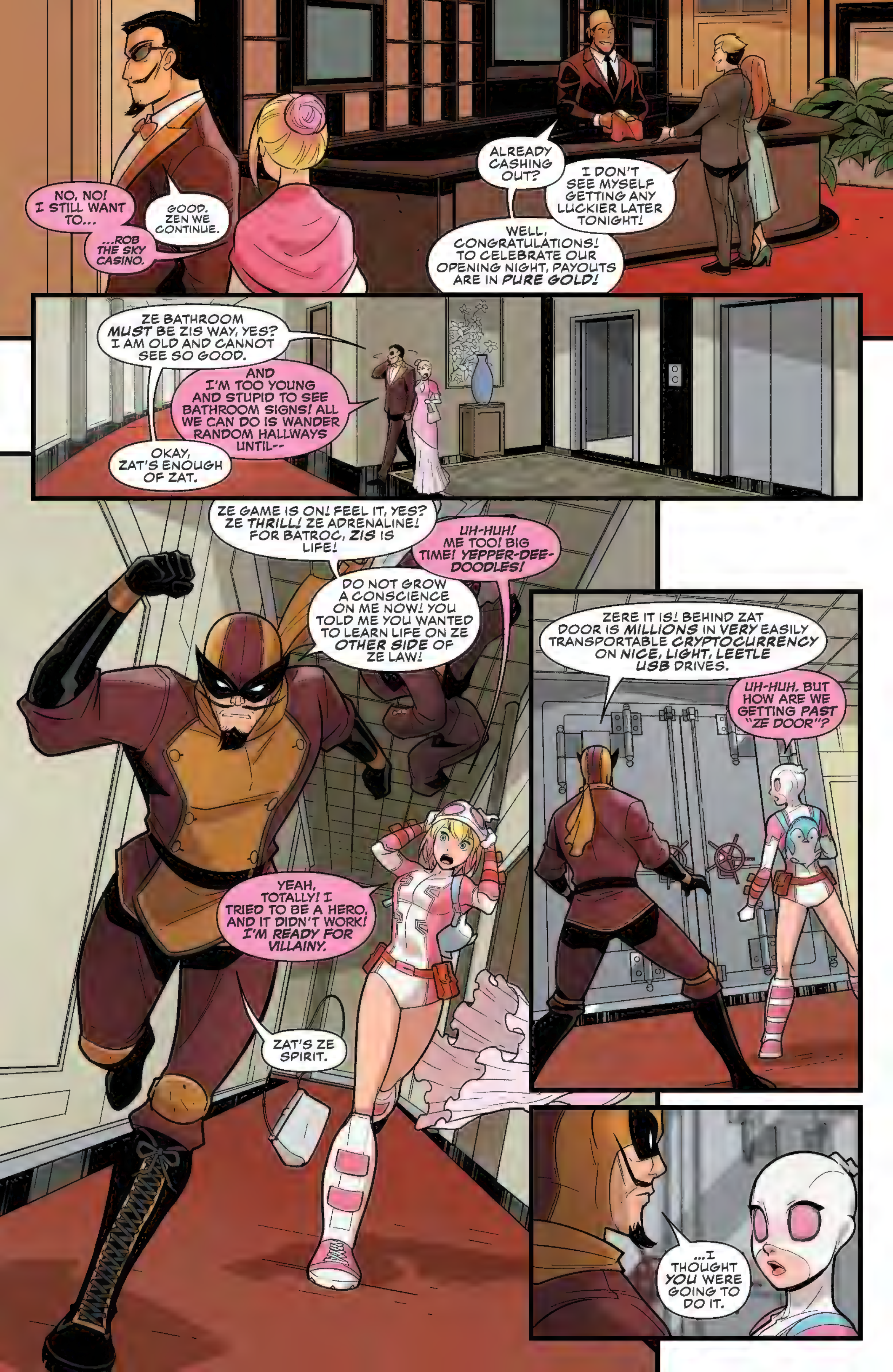

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT FOR A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED *HEIST.*
ZE STUDENT HAS COME TO ZE MASTER, TO LEARN HOW THINGS WERE DONE BEFORE ALL ZEESE *CAPTAINS AMERICA* WOULD RUIN ALL ZE FUN.
AND WE SHALL SHOW HER. JUST APPLY ZE FINISHING TOUCH AND--
OOH! ZE SCENT OF *LICORICE* AND PERHAPS A *CUCUMBER* NOTE IN ZIS ONE.
C'EST BON.
LEAP

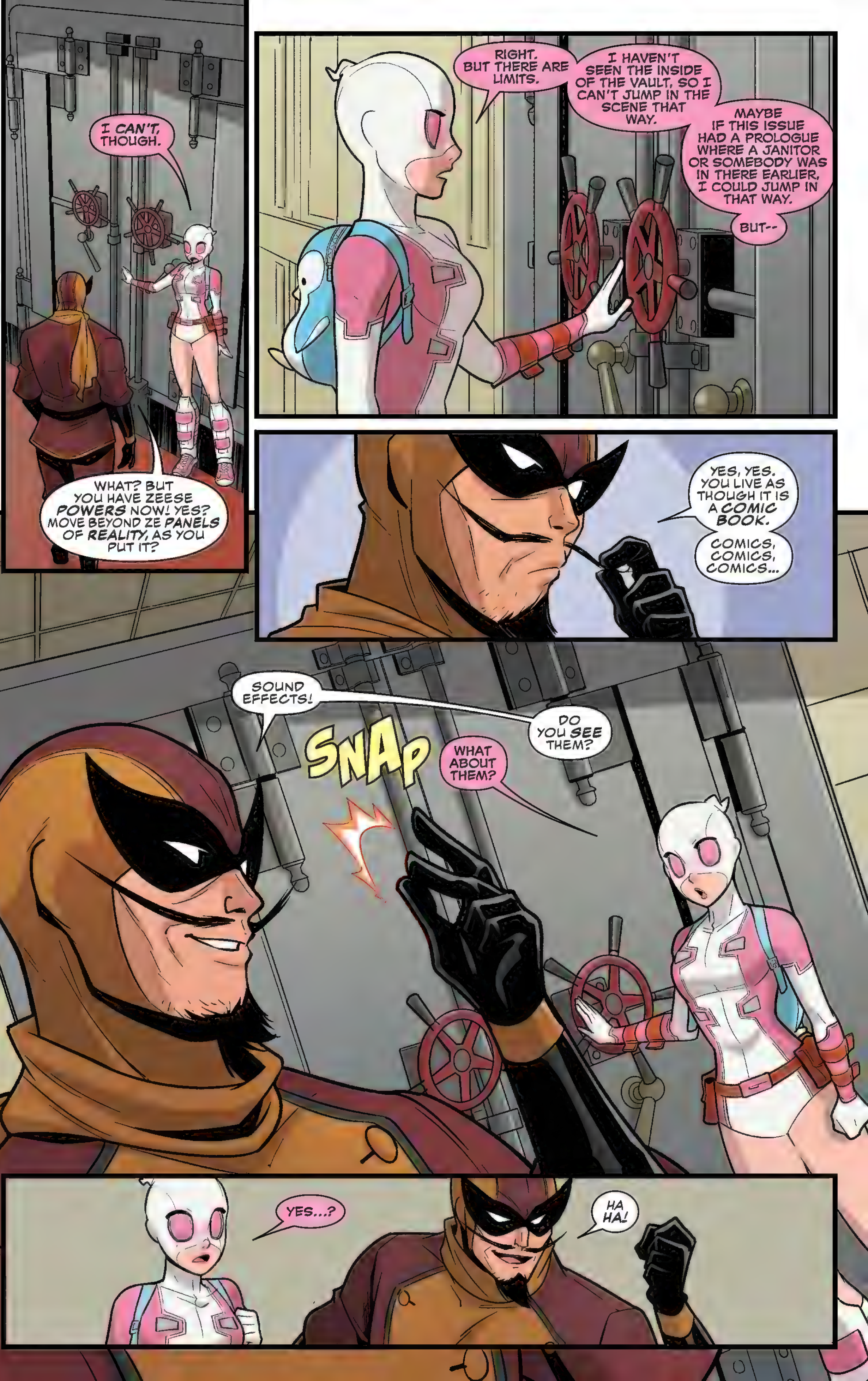

GREETINGS, PLEASURE-SEEKERS! MY NAME IS CHANCE AND I AM YOUR HOST FOR THE EVENING. WE'RE UNMOORED FROM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER, AND THE OPENING FESTIVITIES MAY NOW LEGALLY COMMENCE!
WE'LL GET YOU ALL THROUGH SECURITY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
LONG LINE ASIDE, IT STILL BEATS THOSE UNDERGROUND CASINOS THAT HAMMERHEAD OR SILVERMANE RAN...
...NOT THAT I WOULD KNOW.
DOESN'T IT SEEM LIKE A FLOATING TARGET, THOUGH?
THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO CAN FLY IN THIS TOWN. I'M SURE SOME WOULD LOVE TO SWOOP IN AND GRAB SOME CASH FROM THIS SKY BUFFET.
PARDON ME, PATRONS, BUT I COULDN'T HELP BUT OVERHEAR YOU MENTION SKY THIEVES. INTERESTING IDEA! WHY DON'T WE MAKE A BET ON IT? START YOUR EVENING OFF RIGHT.
OH, HA, NO, THAT'S OKAY, JUST--
YOU SEE...
"...A ROBBERY ATTEMPT IS ALREADY UNDERWAY."

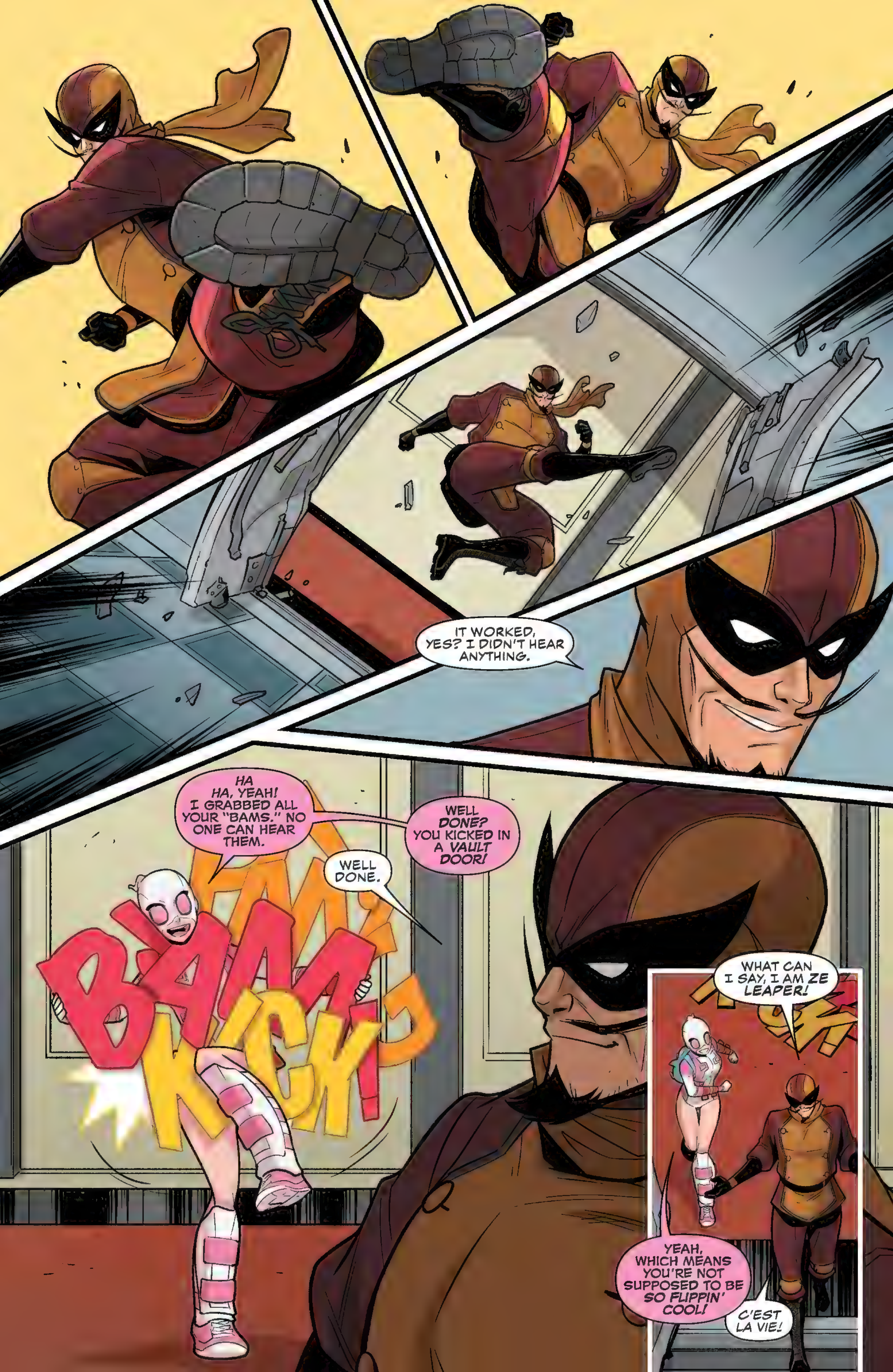

FINAL CALL! ANY WAGERS?
THIS IS IT, TEAM! IN AND OUT! THIRTY SECONDS, TAKE WHAT YOU CAN, AND YOU KNOW THE RENDEZVOUS!
WOOOOSH
WOOOOSH
WOOOOSH
FTZZZ-
WHAM
AAAAAH!
AAAAAH!
AAAAAH!
THERE'S NO CHANCE I WOULD CRAFT THIS LUXURY VEHICLE WITHOUT PROPER SECURITY.
THIS FACILITY IS CONSTANTLY AND METICULOUSLY MONITORING FOR METAHUMANS OF ANY KIND. IT KNOWS MILLIONS OF CONFIGURATIONS OF MECHANICAL MEANS OF FLIGHT, AND THERE'S SOME NEAT MAGIC STUFF INSTALLED, TOO.
IF YOU HAVE SUPER-POWERS...
...YOU'RE NOT GETTING ON THIS SHIP.
C'EST PARFAIT.

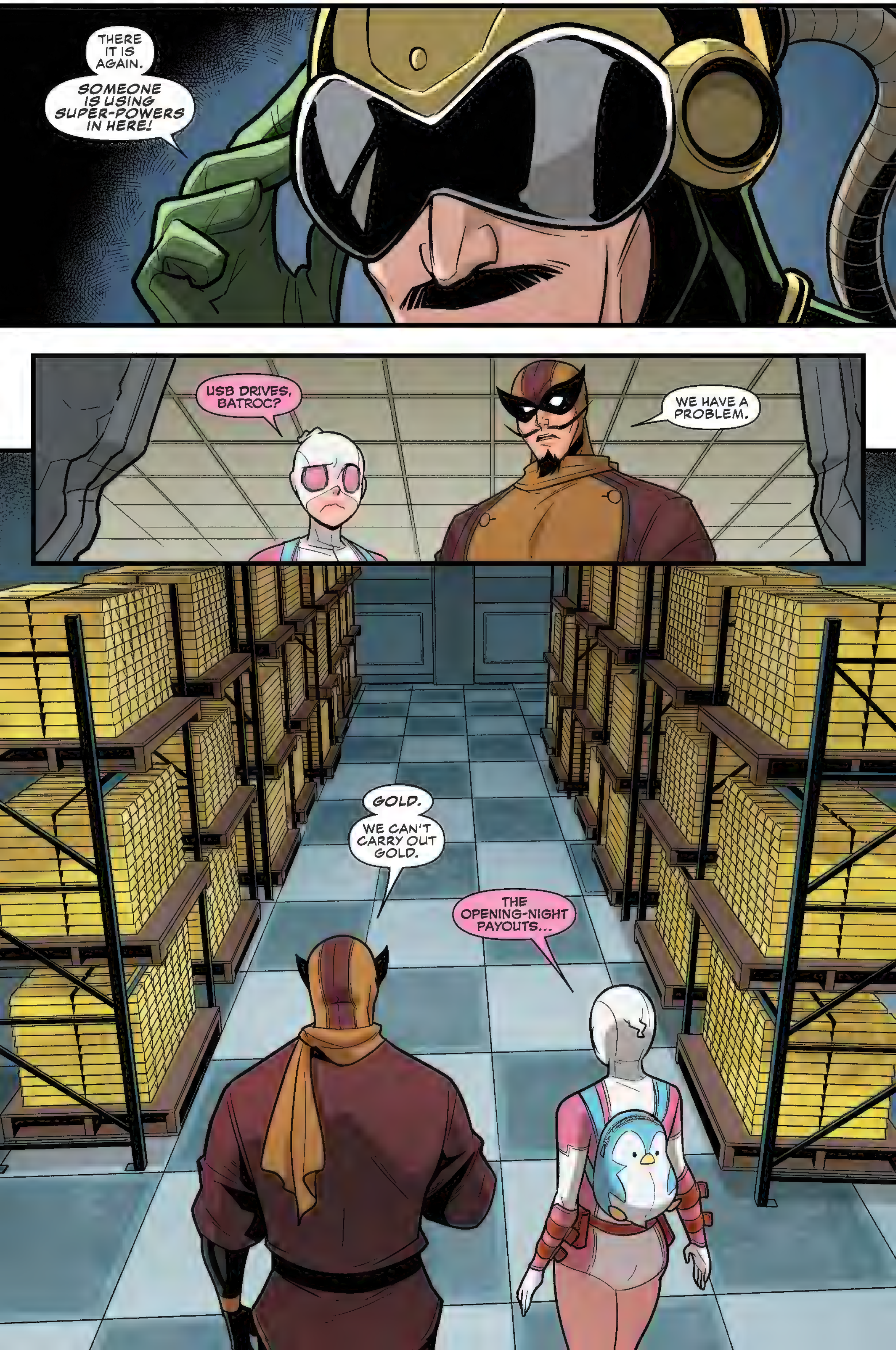

NOW LET'S GET YOU ALL INSIDE FOR THE **REAL** FUN-- THROWING YOUR MONEY AWAY! *HA HA,* JUST KIDDING. YOU ARE ALL **VERY** SKILLED PLAYERS, I'M SURE.
WHERE **ARE** YOU? WE HAVE A ***SCHEDULE--***
YOUR INVITATION, SIR?
BUT OF COURSE! I HAVE IT HERE ***SOMEWHERE.*** SO MANY ***POCKETS.*** HEH.
SIR, WE HAVE NO PLACE TO ***DETAIN*** THE UNINVITED, IF YOU UNDERSTAND MY MEANING...
DAD! THERE YOU ARE. YOU CAN'T GET IN WITHOUT OUR ***INVITATIONS,*** YOU KNOW THAT!
HERE YOU GO, BEEFY BOYS.
SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT.
YOU COULD HAVE JUST BOARDED WITH THE ***REST*** OF US. YOU DIDN'T ***HAVE*** TO JUMP ON AFTERWARD, YOU ***DORK.***
♫
INVITATIONS, SIR, MADAM?
THEY WERE ***JUST*** IN MY PURSE...
WHAT WAS ***THAT?*** SHIP DETECTED AN ***ANOMALY?***
SORRY, FOLKS, NO INVITES, AND IT'S OVERBOARD.
WHAT?!

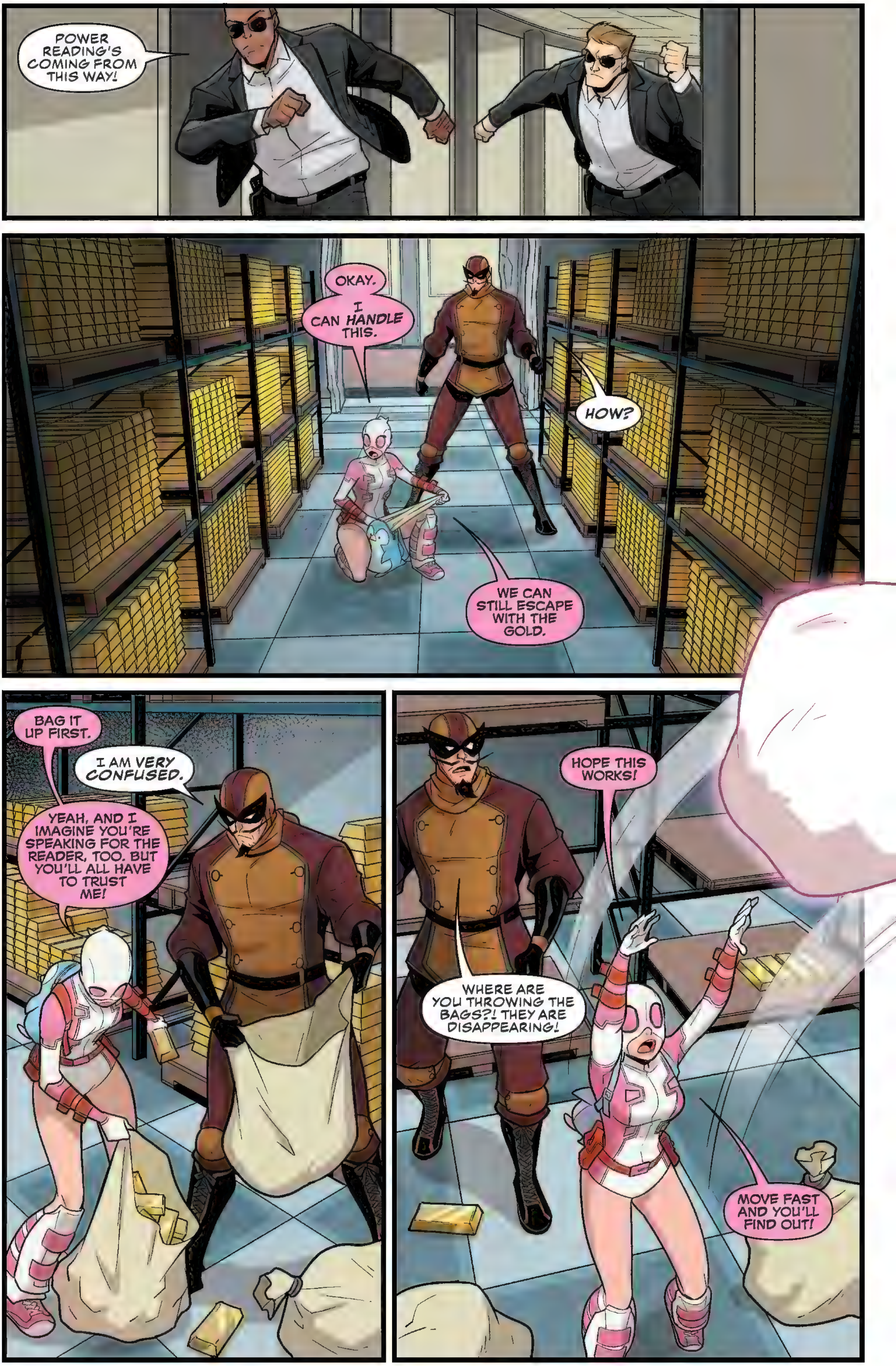

THE CASINO IN THE SKY.
ALSO, "DAD"?
WHAT, BATROC? DO YOU THINK YOU'RE UNDERCOVER AS MY DATE? YOU DEBUTED, LIKE, 35 YEARS BEFORE I WAS BORN.
AH.
ONE TIME I SAW YOUR FIRST ISSUE ON ANTIQUES ROADSHOW.
OKAY. GOT IT.
I SHOULD HAVE CALLED YOU GRANDPA.
THANK YOU, GWEN!
SHOULD HAVE CALLED YOU GREAT UNCLE SKELETON.
I WILL STOP ZIS HEIST ATTEMPT RIGHT NOW!

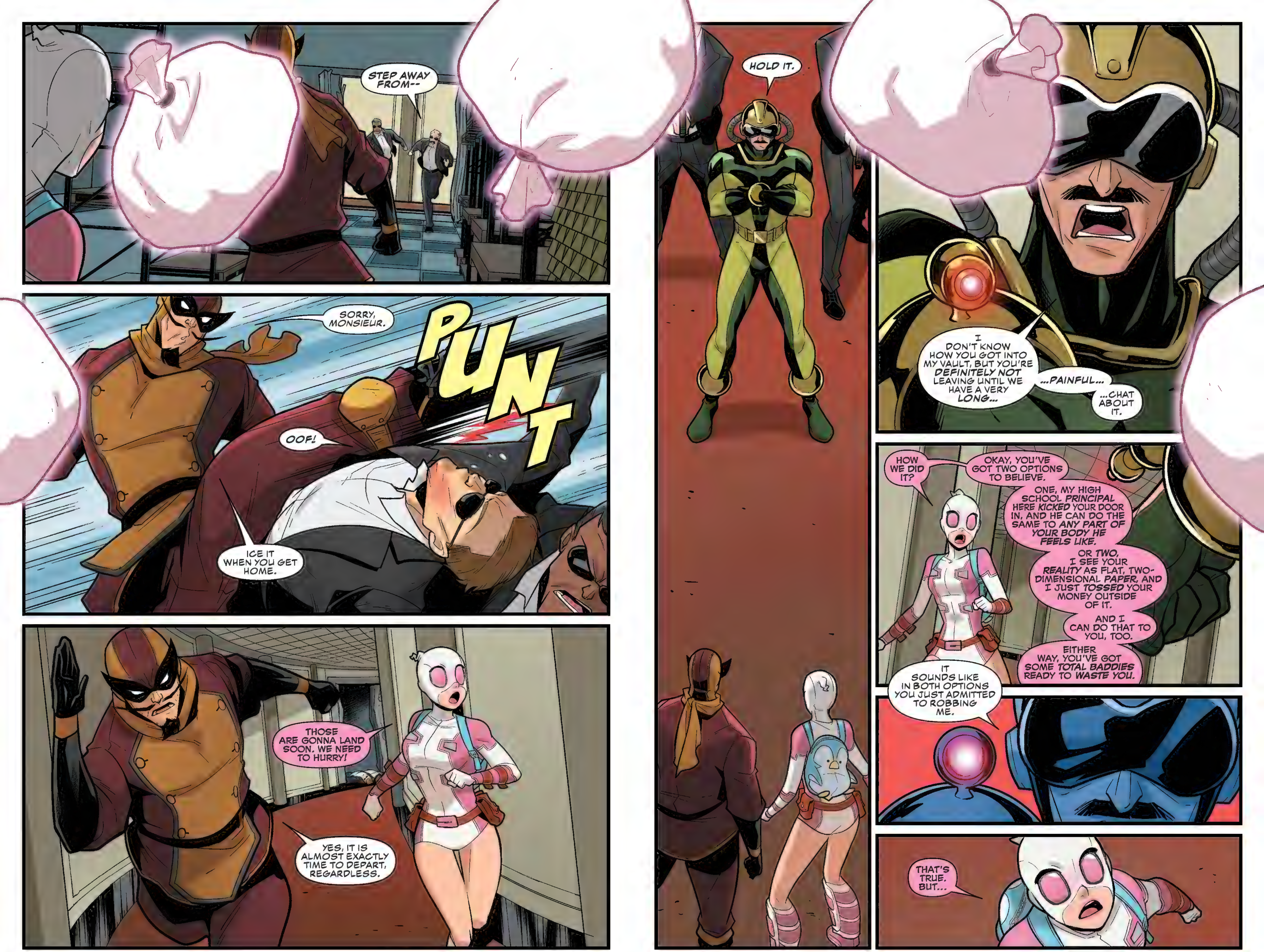

NO, NO! I STILL WANT TO...
GOOD. ZEN WE CONTINUE.
...ROB THE SKY CASINO.
ALREADY CASHING OUT?
I DON'T SEE MYSELF GETTING ANY LUCKIER LATER TONIGHT!
WELL, CONGRATULATIONS! TO CELEBRATE OUR OPENING NIGHT, PAYOUTS ARE IN *PURE GOLD!*
ZE BATHROOM *MUST* BE ZIS WAY, YES? I AM OLD AND CANNOT SEE SO GOOD.
AND I'M TOO YOUNG AND STUPID TO SEE BATHROOM SIGNS! ALL WE CAN DO IS WANDER RANDOM HALLWAYS UNTIL--
OKAY, ZAT'S ENOUGH OF ZAT.
ZE GAME IS ON! FEEL IT, YES? ZE *THRILL!* ZE ADRENALINE! FOR BATROC, *ZIS* IS LIFE!
UH-HUH! ME TOO! BIG TIME! *YEPPER-DEE-DOODLES!*
DO NOT GROW A CONSCIENCE ON ME NOW! YOU TOLD ME YOU WANTED TO LEARN LIFE ON ZE *OTHER SIDE* OF ZE LAW!
YEAH, TOTALLY! I TRIED TO BE A HERO, AND IT DIDN'T WORK! *I'M READY FOR VILLAINY.*
ZAT'S ZE SPIRIT.
ZERE IT IS! BEHIND ZAT DOOR IS *MILLIONS* IN *VERY* EASILY TRANSPORTABLE *CRYPTOCURRENCY* ON *NICE, LIGHT, LEETLE USB* DRIVES.
UH-HUH. BUT HOW ARE WE GETTING *PAST "ZE DOOR"?*
...I THOUGHT *YOU* WERE GOING TO DO IT.

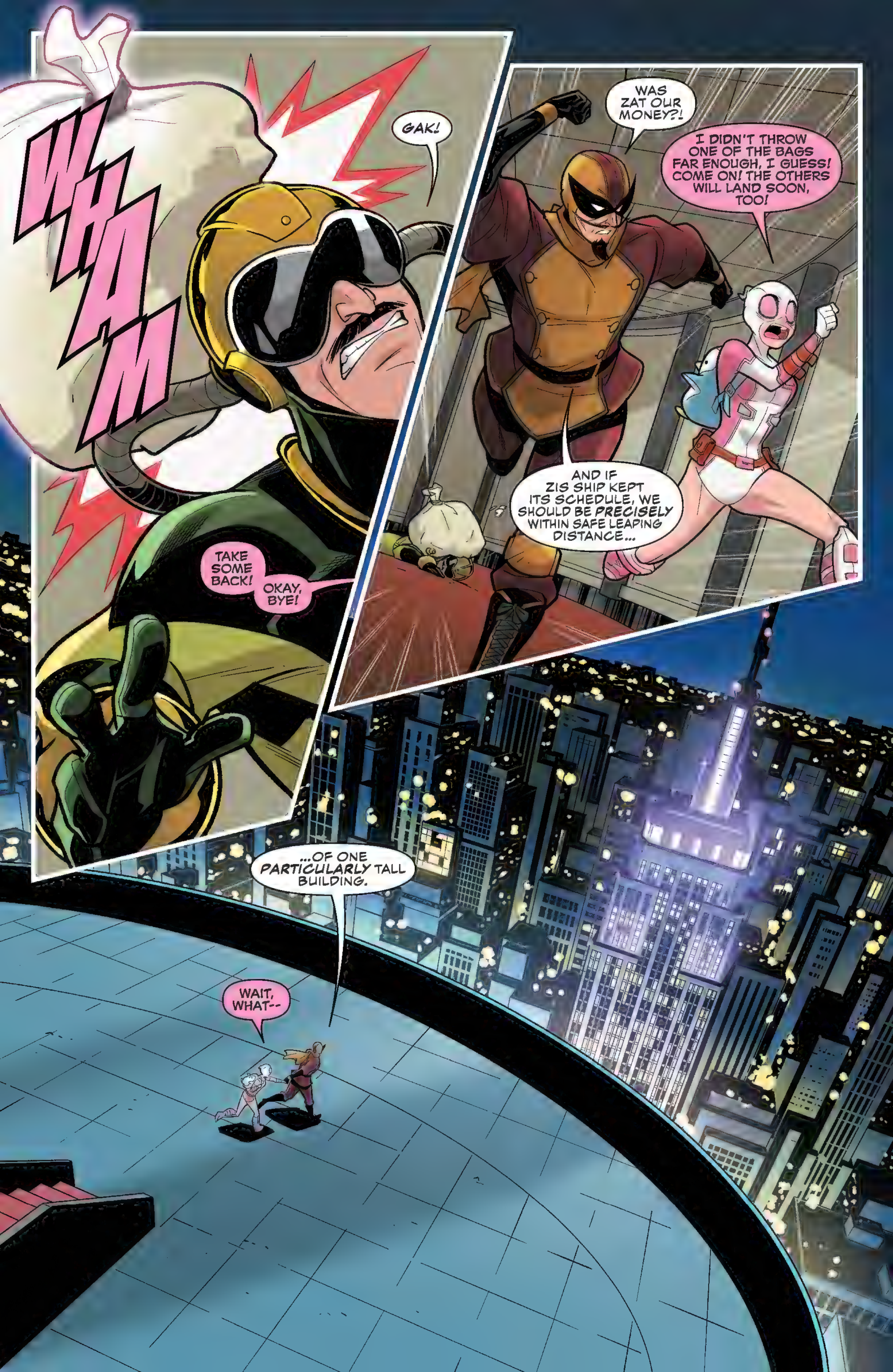

I CAN'T, THOUGH.
WHAT? BUT YOU HAVE ZEESE POWERS NOW! YES? MOVE BEYOND ZE PANELS OF REALITY, AS YOU PUT IT?
RIGHT. BUT THERE ARE LIMITS.
I HAVEN'T SEEN THE INSIDE OF THE VAULT, SO I CAN'T JUMP IN THE SCENE THAT WAY.
MAYBE IF THIS ISSUE HAD A PROLOGUE WHERE A JANITOR OR SOMEBODY WAS IN THERE EARLIER, I COULD JUMP IN THAT WAY.
BUT--
YES, YES. YOU LIVE AS THOUGH IT IS A COMIC BOOK.
COMICS, COMICS, COMICS...
SOUND EFFECTS!
DO YOU SEE THEM?
SNAP
WHAT ABOUT THEM?
YES...?
HA HA!

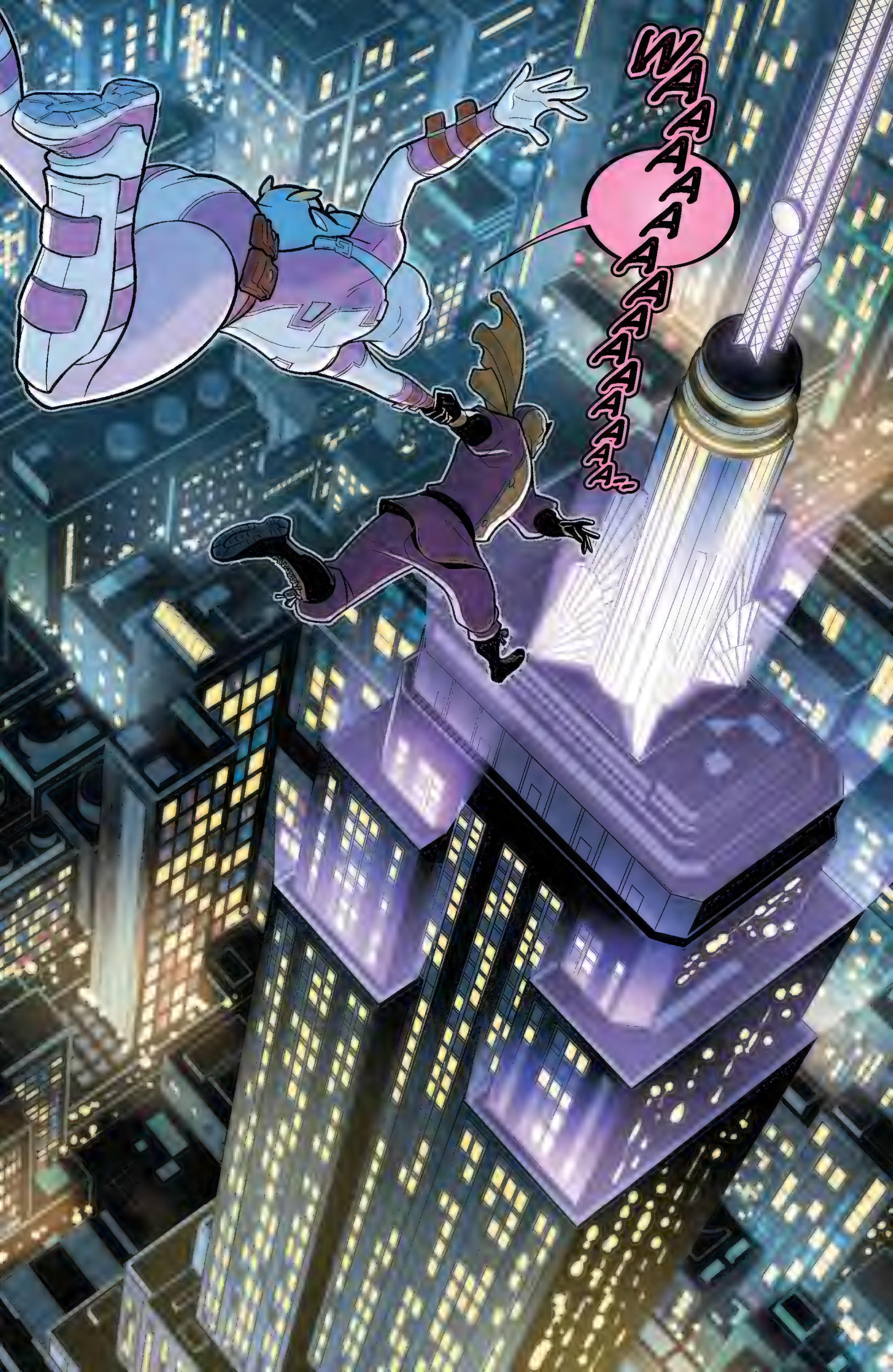

IT WORKED, YES? I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.
HA HA, YEAH! I GRABBED ALL YOUR "BAMS." NO ONE CAN HEAR THEM.
BAM
KICK!
WELL DONE.
WELL *DONE?* YOU KICKED IN A *VAULT DOOR!*
WHAT CAN I SAY, I AM ZE *LEAPER!*
YEAH, WHICH MEANS YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE *SO FLIPPIN' COOL!*
C'EST LA VIE!

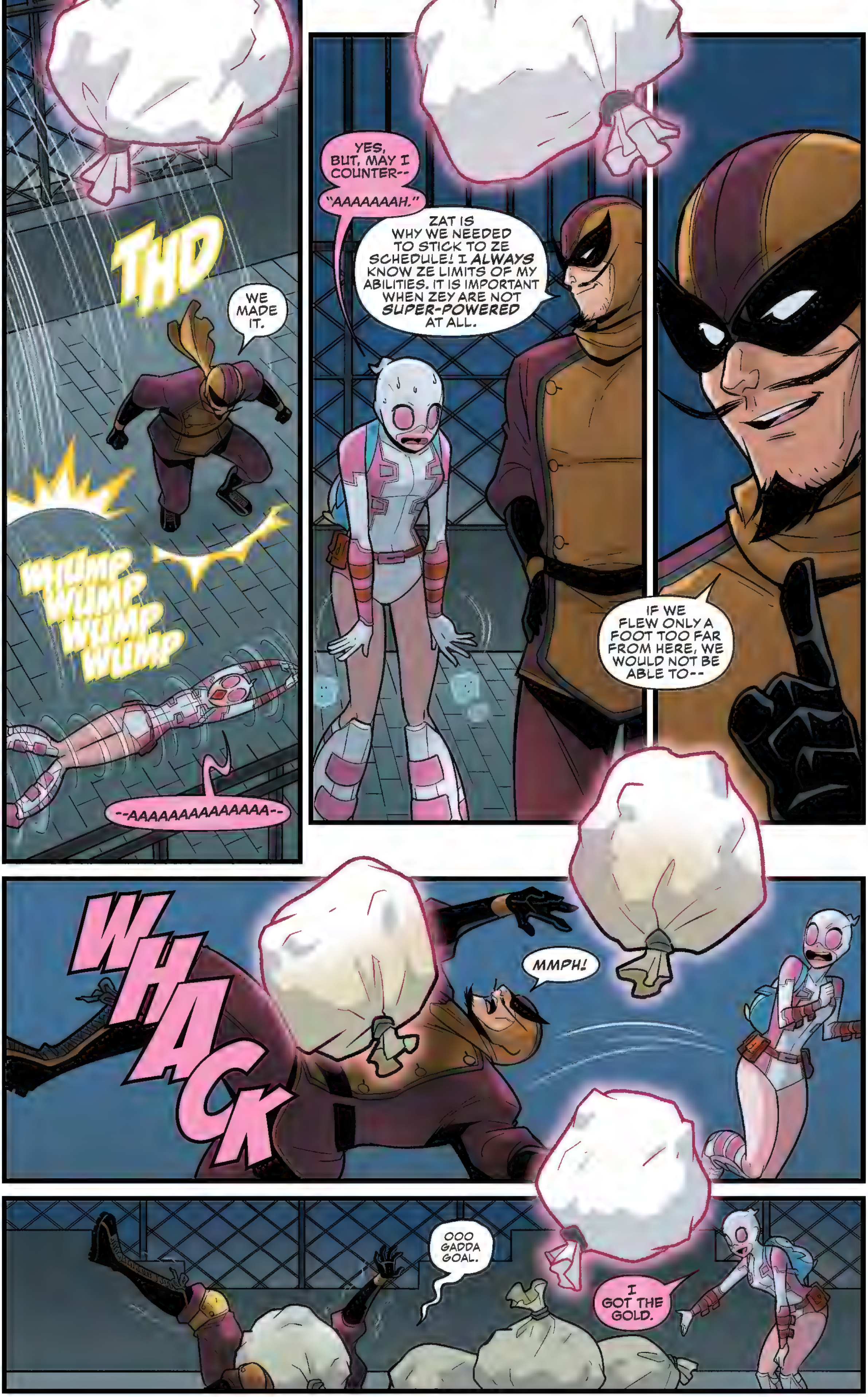

THERE IT IS AGAIN.
SOMEONE IS USING SUPER-POWERS IN HERE!
USB DRIVES, BATROC?
WE HAVE A PROBLEM.
GOLD.
WE CAN'T CARRY OUT GOLD.
THE OPENING-NIGHT PAYOUTS...

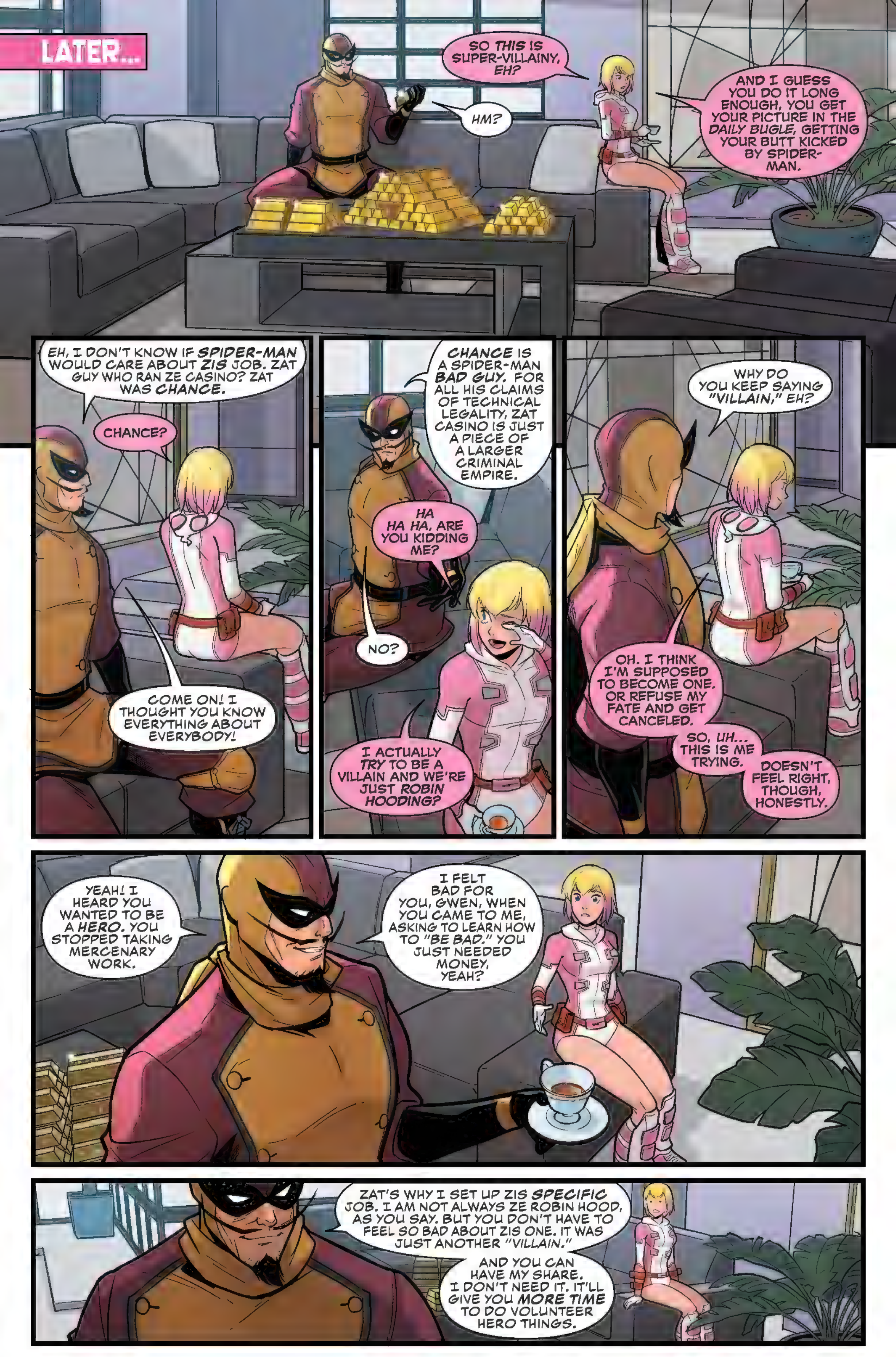

POWER READING'S COMING FROM THIS WAY!
OKAY.
I CAN *HANDLE* THIS.
HOW?
WE CAN STILL ESCAPE WITH THE GOLD.
BAG IT UP FIRST.
I AM VERY *CONFUSED.*
YEAH, AND I IMAGINE YOU'RE SPEAKING FOR THE READER, TOO. BUT YOU'LL ALL HAVE TO TRUST ME!
HOPE THIS WORKS!
WHERE ARE YOU THROWING THE BAGS?! THEY ARE DISAPPEARING!
MOVE FAST AND YOU'LL FIND OUT!

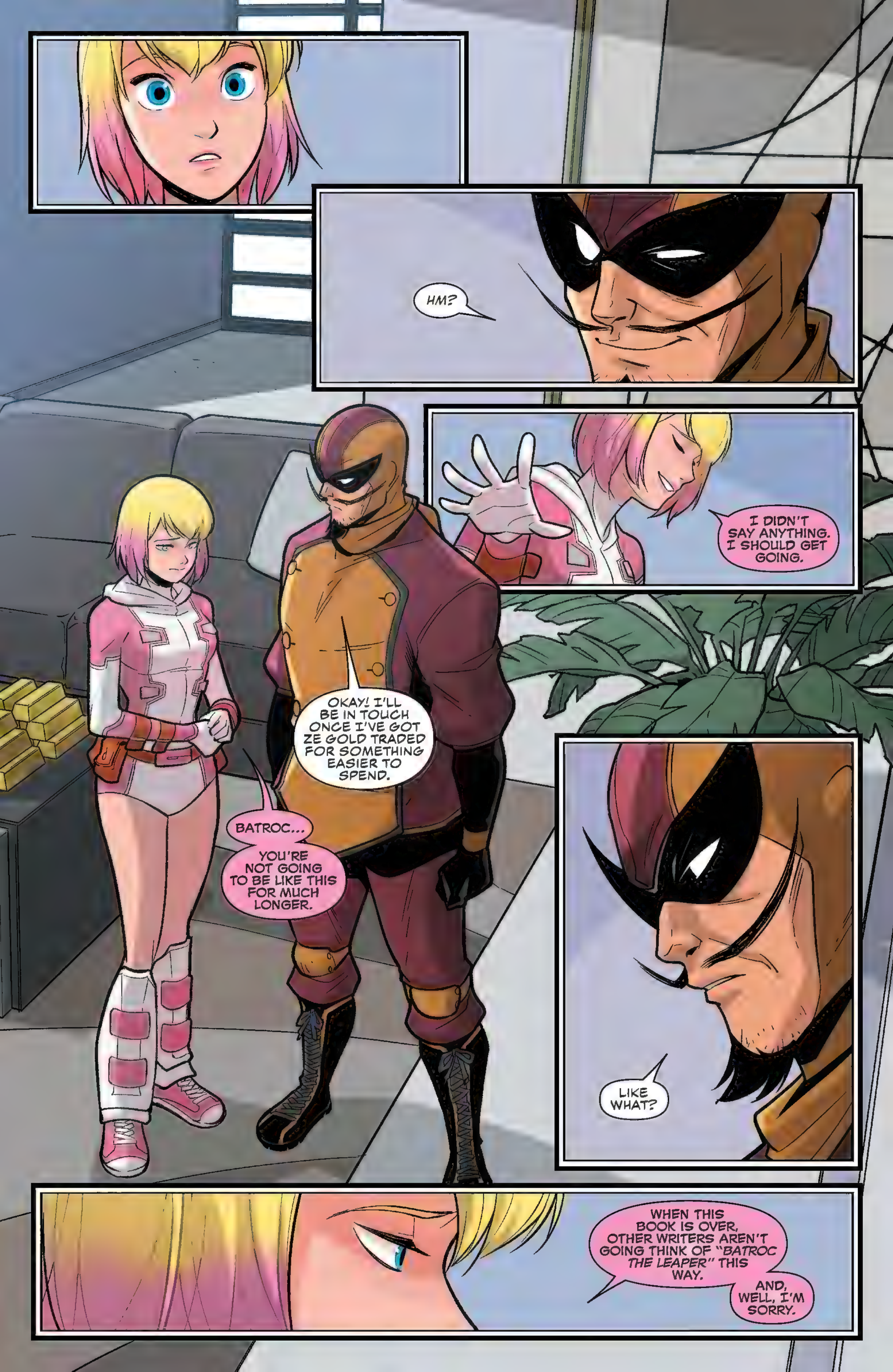

STEP AWAY FROM--
SORRY, MONSIEUR.
PUNT
OOF!
ICE IT WHEN YOU GET HOME.
THOSE ARE GONNA LAND SOON. WE NEED TO HURRY!
YES, IT IS ALMOST EXACTLY TIME TO DEPART, REGARDLESS.
HOLD IT.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT INTO MY VAULT, BUT YOU'RE *DEFINITELY NOT* LEAVING UNTIL WE HAVE A VERY *LONG*...
...PAINFUL...
...CHAT ABOUT IT.
HOW WE DID IT?
OKAY, YOU'VE GOT TWO OPTIONS TO BELIEVE.
ONE, MY HIGH SCHOOL *PRINCIPAL* HERE *KICKED* YOUR DOOR IN, AND HE CAN DO THE SAME TO *ANY PART OF YOUR BODY HE FEELS LIKE.*
OR *TWO,* I SEE YOUR *REALITY* AS FLAT, TWO-DIMENSIONAL *PAPER,* AND I JUST *TOSSED* YOUR MONEY OUTSIDE OF IT.
AND I CAN DO THAT TO YOU, TOO.
EITHER WAY, YOU'VE GOT SOME *TOTAL BADDIES* READY TO *WASTE YOU.*
IT SOUNDS LIKE IN BOTH OPTIONS YOU JUST ADMITTED TO ROBBING ME.
THAT'S TRUE. BUT...

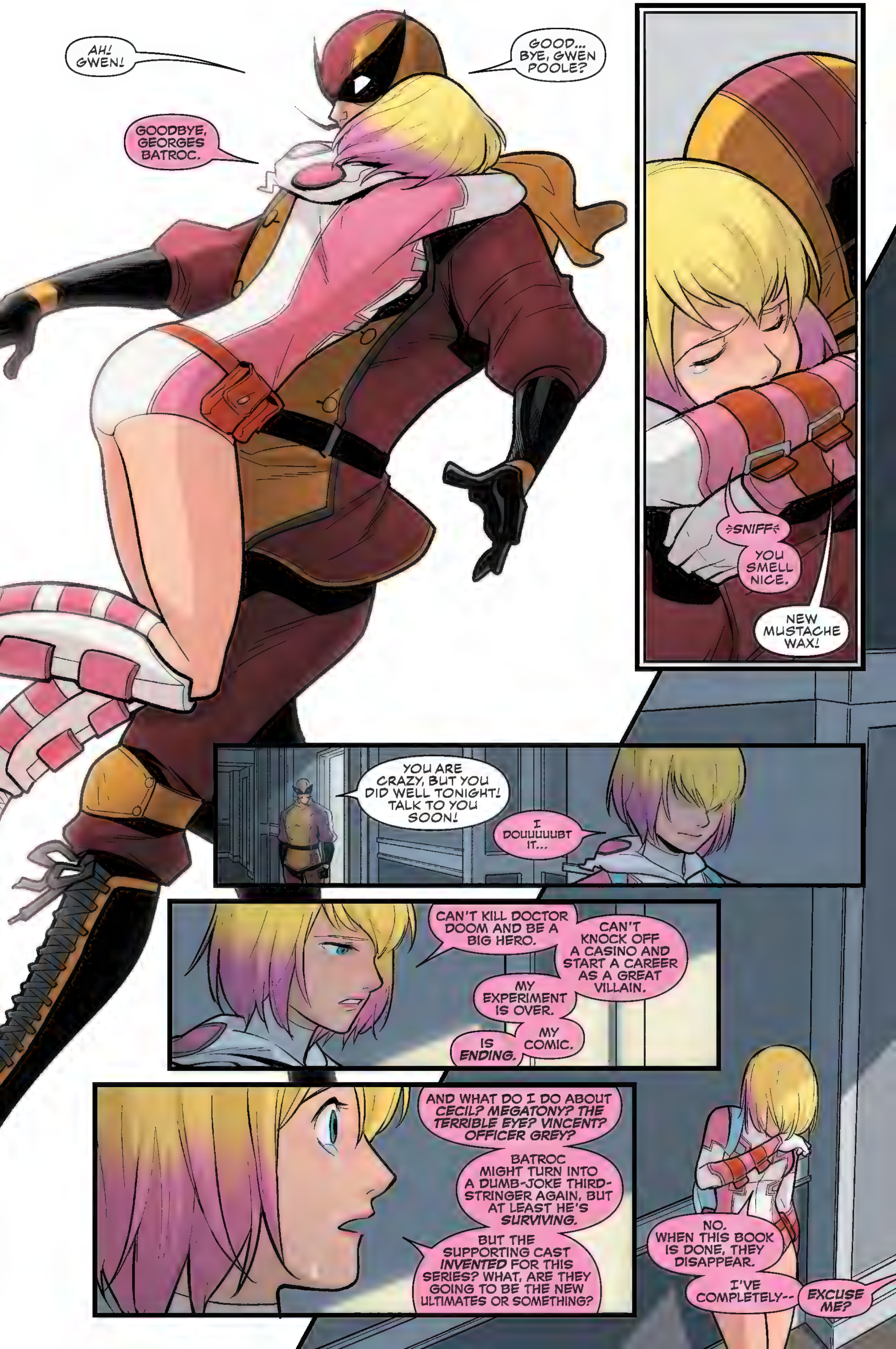

WHAM
GAK!
TAKE SOME BACK!
OKAY, BYE!
WAS ZAT OUR MONEY?!
I DIDN'T THROW ONE OF THE BAGS FAR ENOUGH, I GUESS! COME ON! THE OTHERS WILL LAND SOON, TOO!
AND IF ZIS SHIP KEPT ITS SCHEDULE, WE SHOULD BE *PRECISELY* WITHIN SAFE LEAPING DISTANCE...
...OF ONE *PARTICULARLY* TALL BUILDING.
WAIT, WHAT--

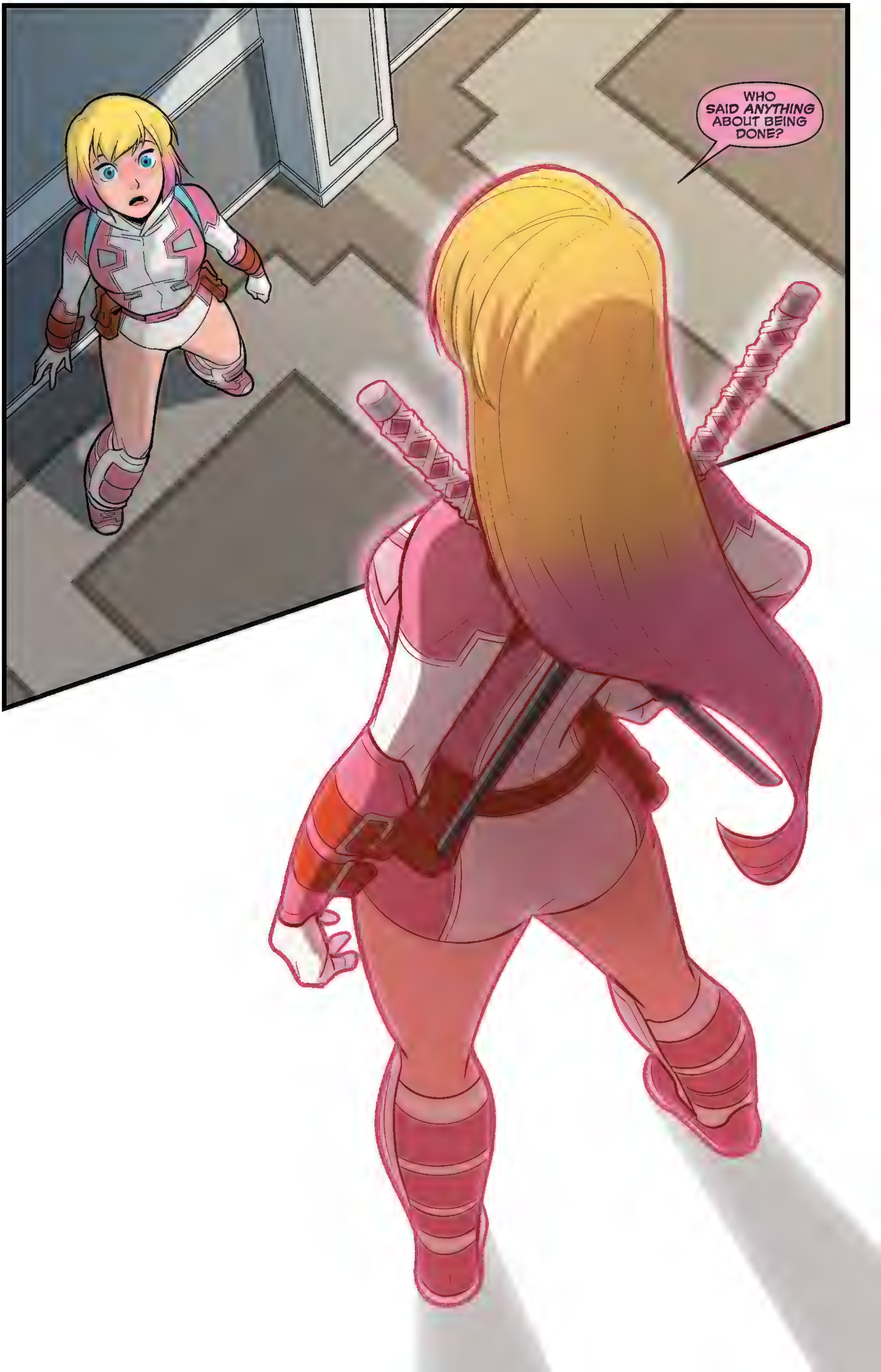

WAAAAAAAAAAAA--

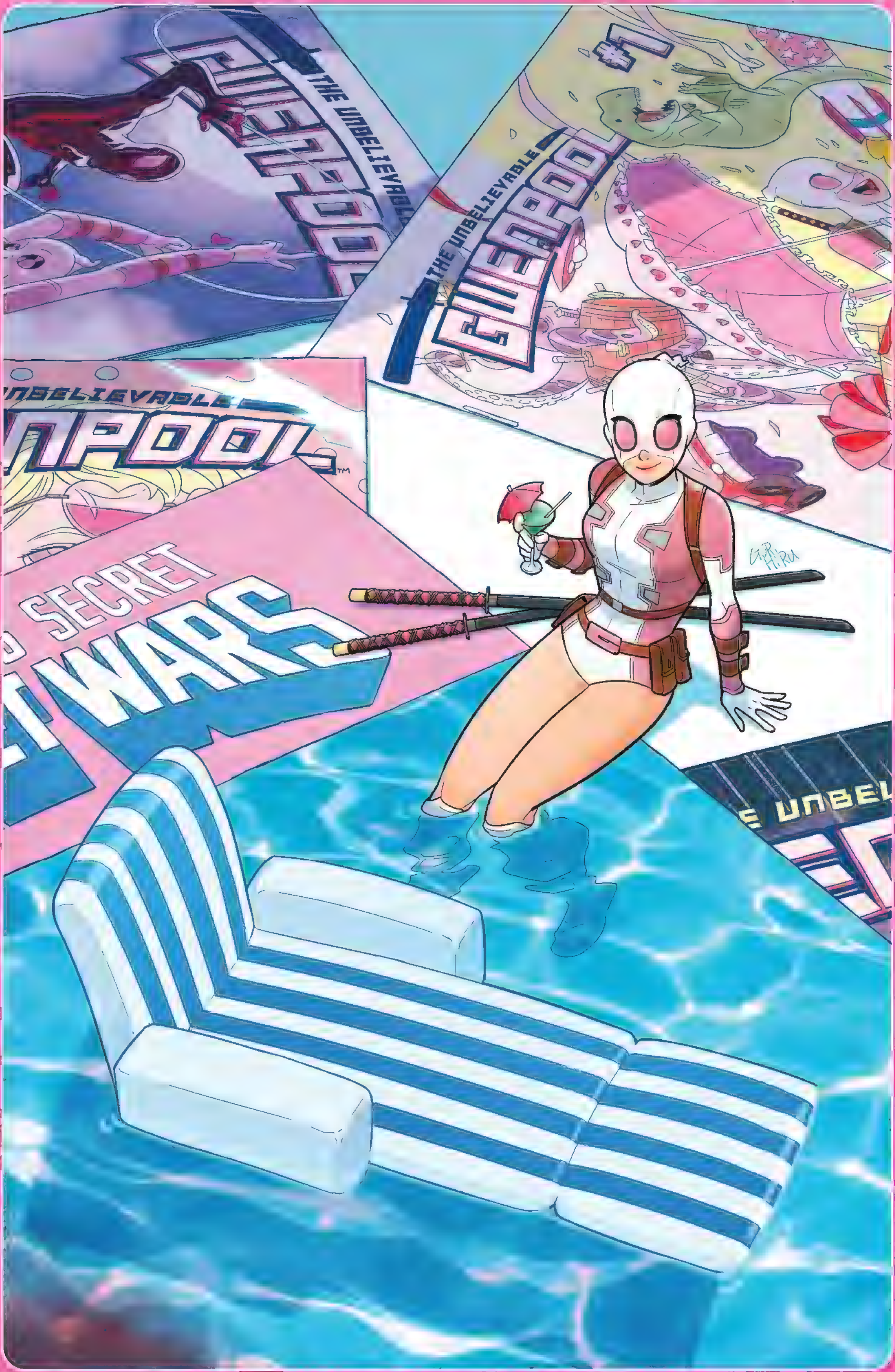

THD
WE MADE IT.
WUMP WUMP WUMP WUMP
--AAAAAAAAAAAAAA--
YES, BUT, MAY I COUNTER--
"AAAAAAAH."
ZAT IS WHY WE NEEDED TO STICK TO ZE SCHEDULE! I *ALWAYS* KNOW ZE LIMITS OF MY ABILITIES. IT IS IMPORTANT WHEN ZEY ARE NOT *SUPER-POWERED* AT ALL.
IF WE FLEW ONLY A FOOT TOO FAR FROM HERE, WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO--
WHACK
MMPH!
OOO GADDA GOAL.
I GOT THE GOLD.


LATER...
SO *THIS* IS SUPER-VILLAINY, EH?
HM?
AND I GUESS YOU DO IT LONG ENOUGH, YOU GET YOUR PICTURE IN THE *DAILY BUGLE*, GETTING YOUR BUTT KICKED BY SPIDER-MAN.
EH, I DON'T KNOW IF *SPIDER-MAN* WOULD CARE ABOUT *ZIS* JOB. ZAT GUY WHO RAN ZE CASINO? ZAT WAS *CHANCE*.
CHANCE?
COME ON! I THOUGHT YOU KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT EVERYBODY!
CHANCE IS A SPIDER-MAN *BAD GUY*. FOR ALL HIS CLAIMS OF TECHNICAL LEGALITY, ZAT CASINO IS JUST A PIECE OF A LARGER CRIMINAL EMPIRE.
HA HA HA, ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
NO?
I ACTUALLY *TRY* TO BE A VILLAIN AND WE'RE JUST *ROBIN HOODING*?
WHY DO YOU KEEP SAYING *"VILLAIN,"* EH?
OH. I THINK I'M SUPPOSED TO BECOME ONE. OR REFUSE MY FATE AND GET CANCELED.
SO, UH... THIS IS ME TRYING.
DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT, THOUGH, HONESTLY.
YEAH! I HEARD YOU WANTED TO BE A *HERO*. YOU STOPPED TAKING MERCENARY WORK.
I FELT BAD FOR YOU, GWEN, WHEN YOU CAME TO ME, ASKING TO LEARN HOW TO "BE BAD." YOU JUST NEEDED MONEY, YEAH?
ZAT'S WHY I SET UP ZIS *SPECIFIC* JOB. I AM NOT ALWAYS ZE ROBIN HOOD, AS YOU SAY. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL SO BAD ABOUT ZIS ONE. IT WAS JUST ANOTHER "VILLAIN."
AND YOU CAN HAVE MY SHARE. I DON'T NEED IT. IT'LL GIVE YOU *MORE TIME* TO DO VOLUNTEER HERO THINGS.


HM?
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING. I SHOULD GET GOING.
OKAY! I'LL BE IN TOUCH ONCE I'VE GOT ZE GOLD TRADED FOR SOMETHING EASIER TO SPEND.
BATROC...
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE LIKE THIS FOR MUCH LONGER.
LIKE WHAT?
WHEN THIS BOOK IS OVER, OTHER WRITERS AREN'T GOING THINK OF "*BATROC THE LEAPER*" THIS WAY.
AND, WELL, I'M SORRY.


AH! GWEN!
GOODBYE, GEORGES BATROC.
GOOD... BYE, GWEN POOLE?
SNIFF
YOU SMELL NICE.
NEW MUSTACHE WAX!
YOU ARE CRAZY, BUT YOU DID WELL TONIGHT! TALK TO YOU SOON!
I DOUUUUUBT IT...
CAN'T KILL DOCTOR DOOM AND BE A BIG HERO.
CAN'T KNOCK OFF A CASINO AND START A CAREER AS A GREAT VILLAIN.
MY EXPERIMENT IS OVER.
MY COMIC.
IS *ENDING.*
AND WHAT DO I DO ABOUT *CECIL? MEGATONY? THE TERRIBLE EYE? VINCENT? OFFICER GREY?*
BATROC MIGHT TURN INTO A DUMB-JOKE THIRD-STRINGER AGAIN, BUT AT LEAST HE'S *SURVIVING.*
BUT THE SUPPORTING CAST *INVENTED* FOR THIS SERIES? WHAT, ARE THEY GOING TO BE THE NEW ULTIMATES OR SOMETHING?
NO. WHEN THIS BOOK IS DONE, THEY DISAPPEAR.
I'VE COMPLETELY--
EXCUSE ME?


WHO SAID *ANYTHING* ABOUT BEING DONE?


THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
#1
UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
SECRET WARS
UNBEL
Gurihiru

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #25

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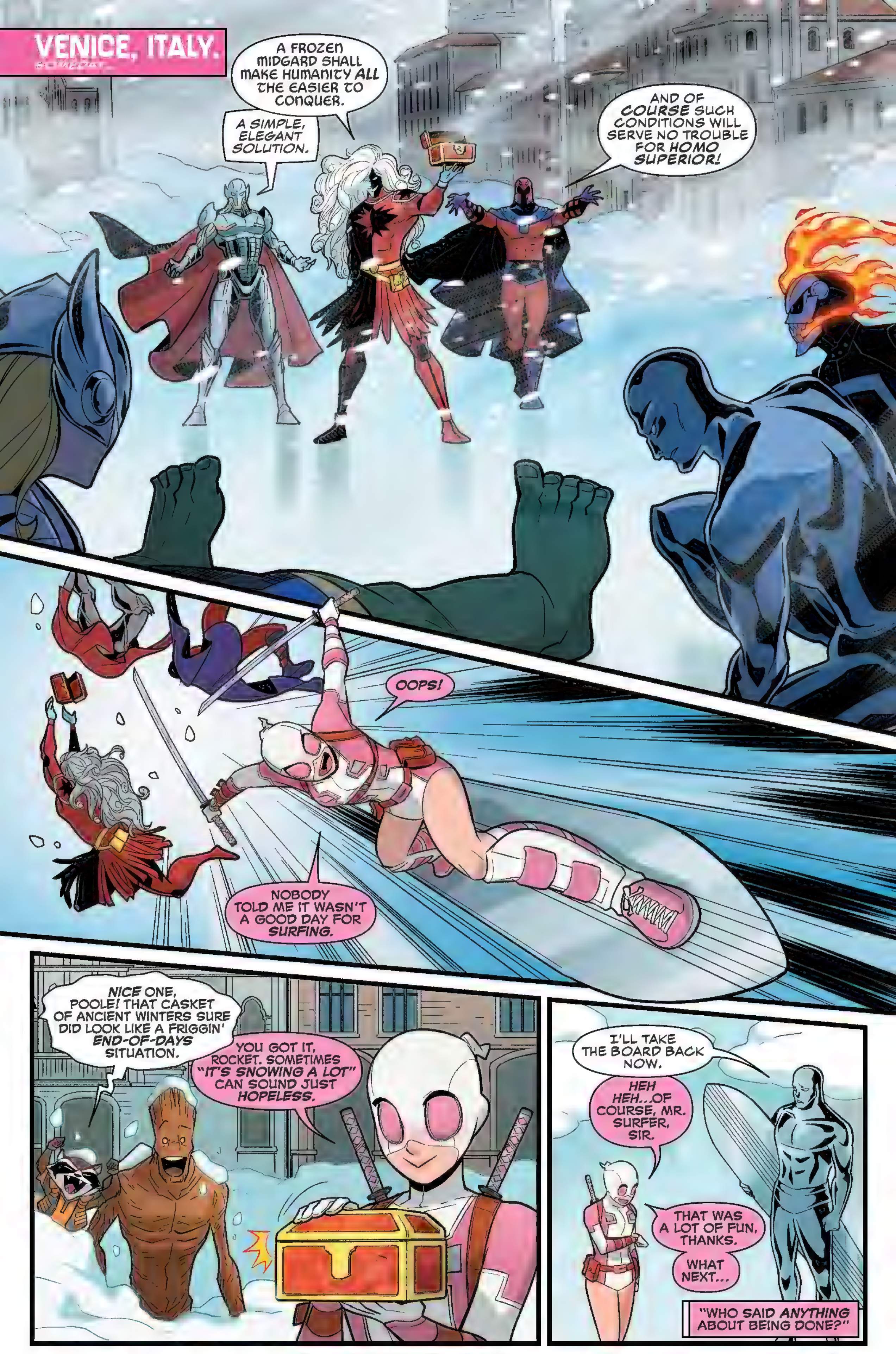
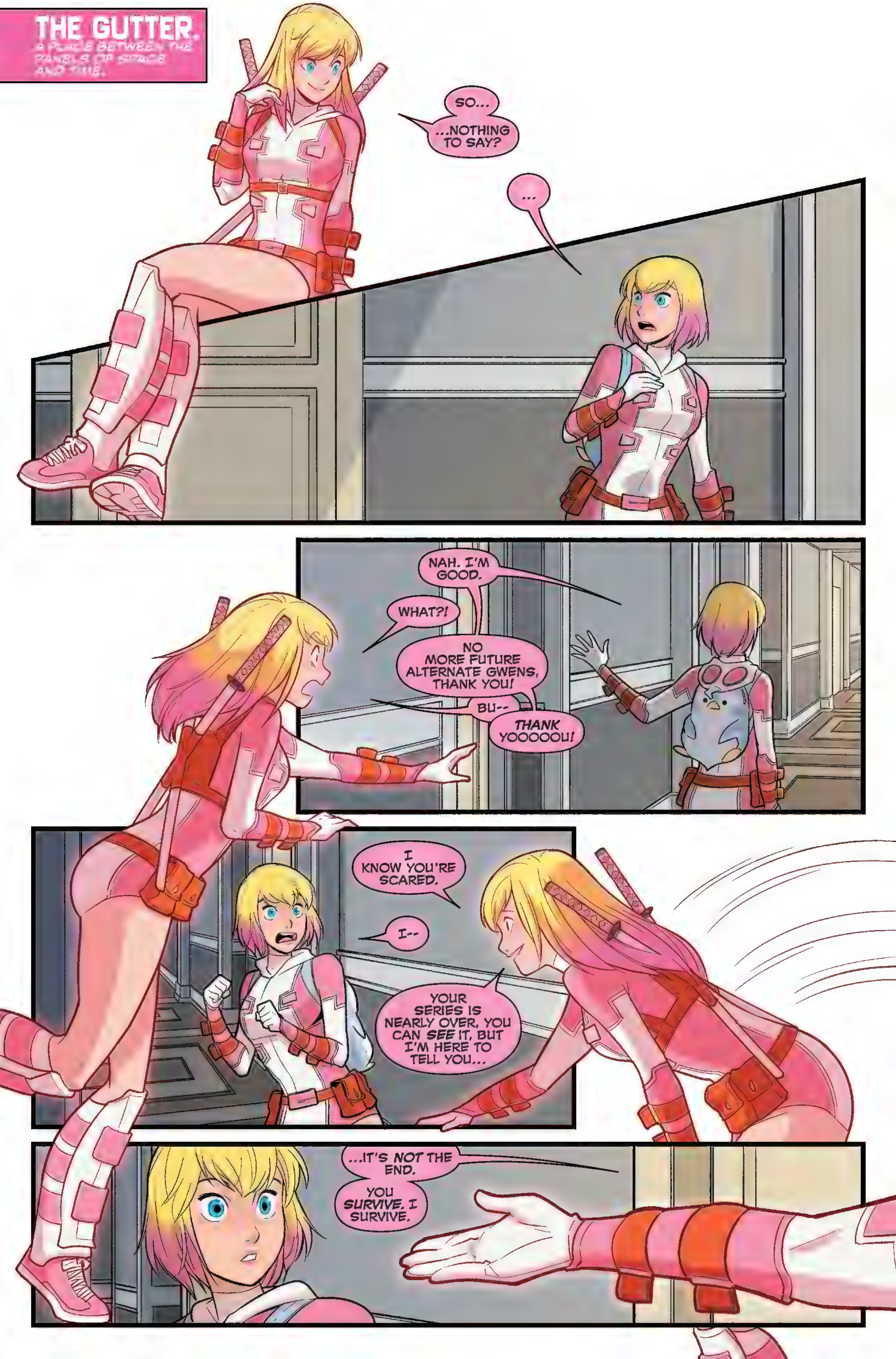
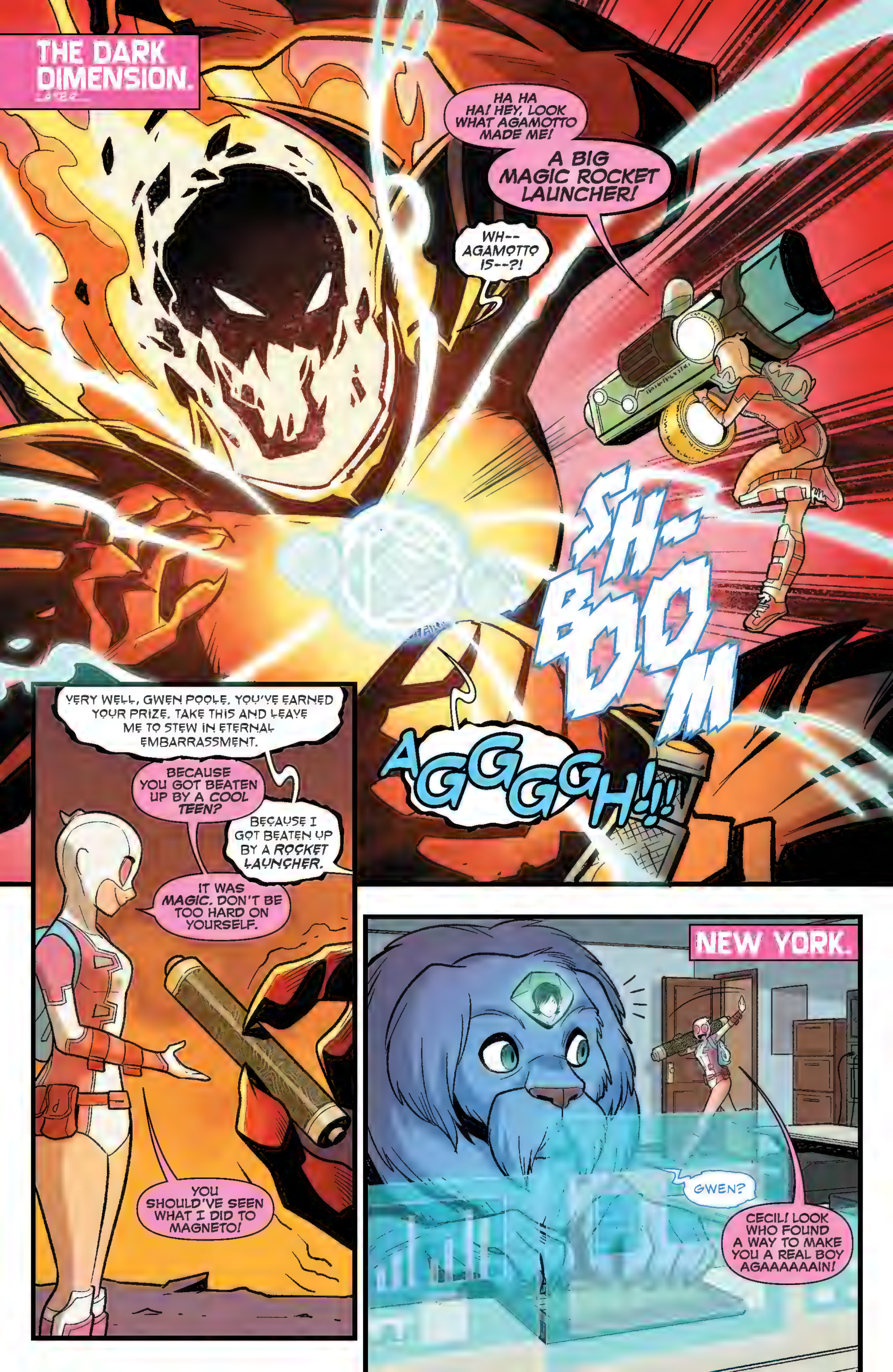
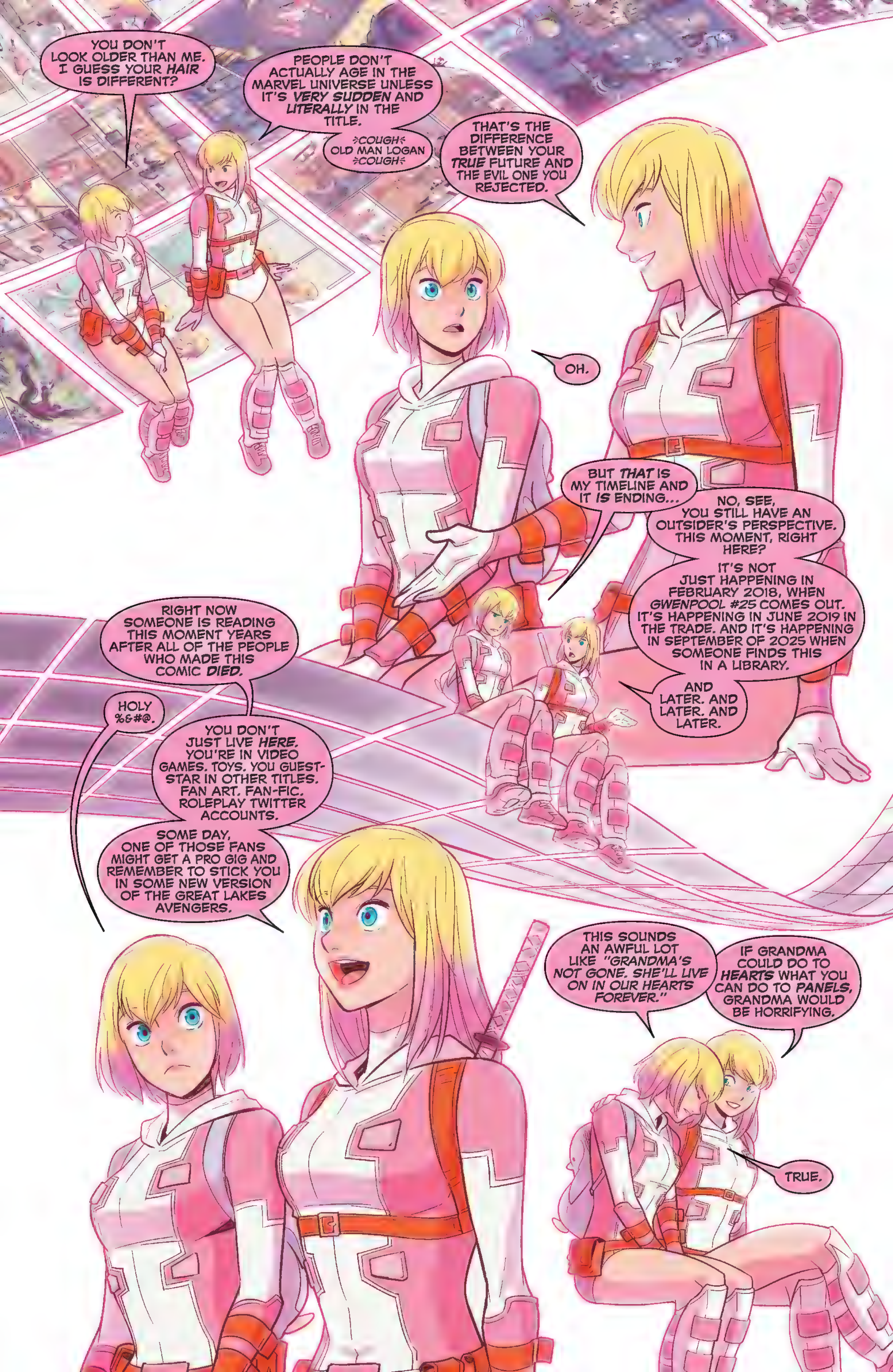
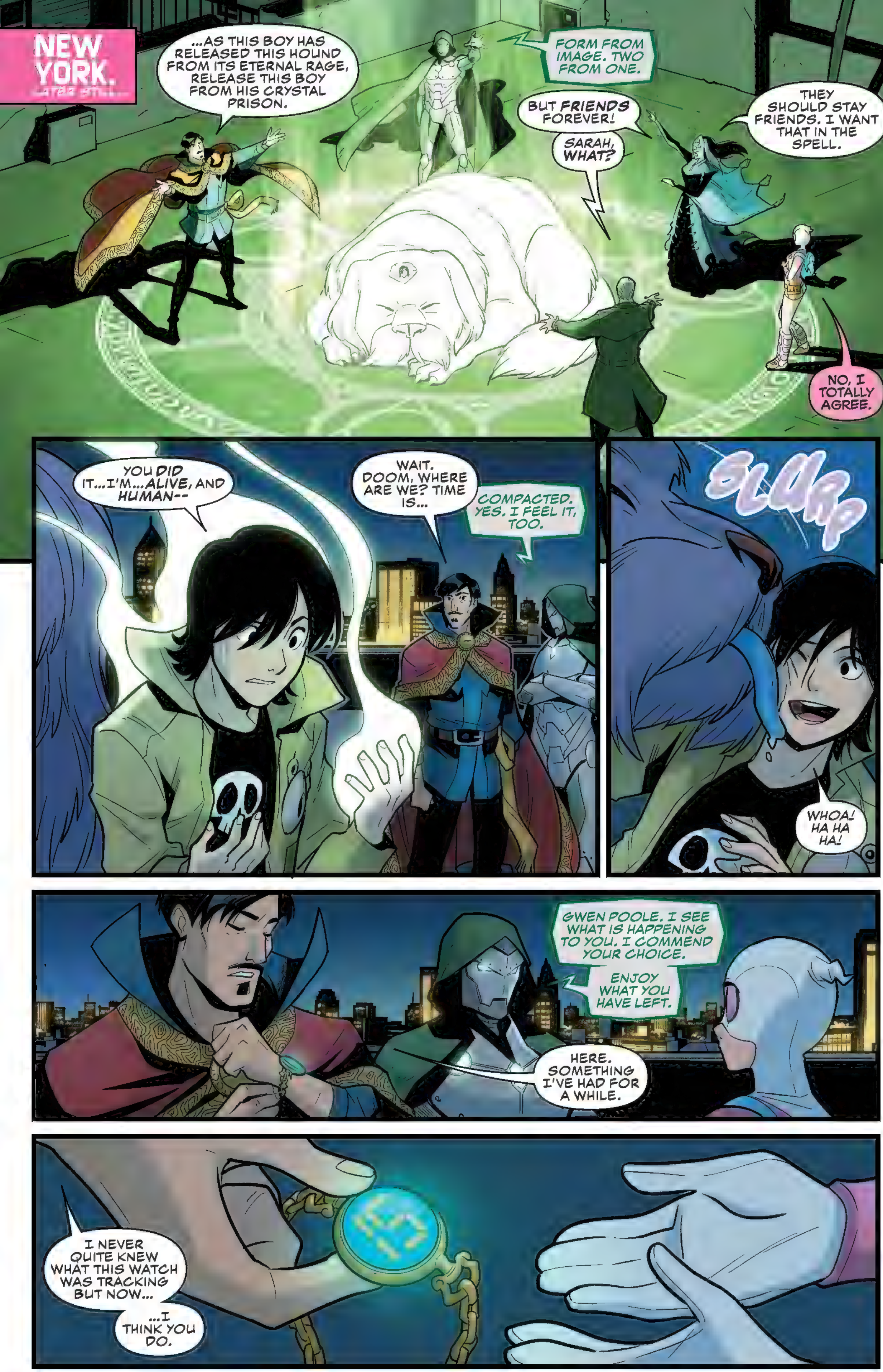
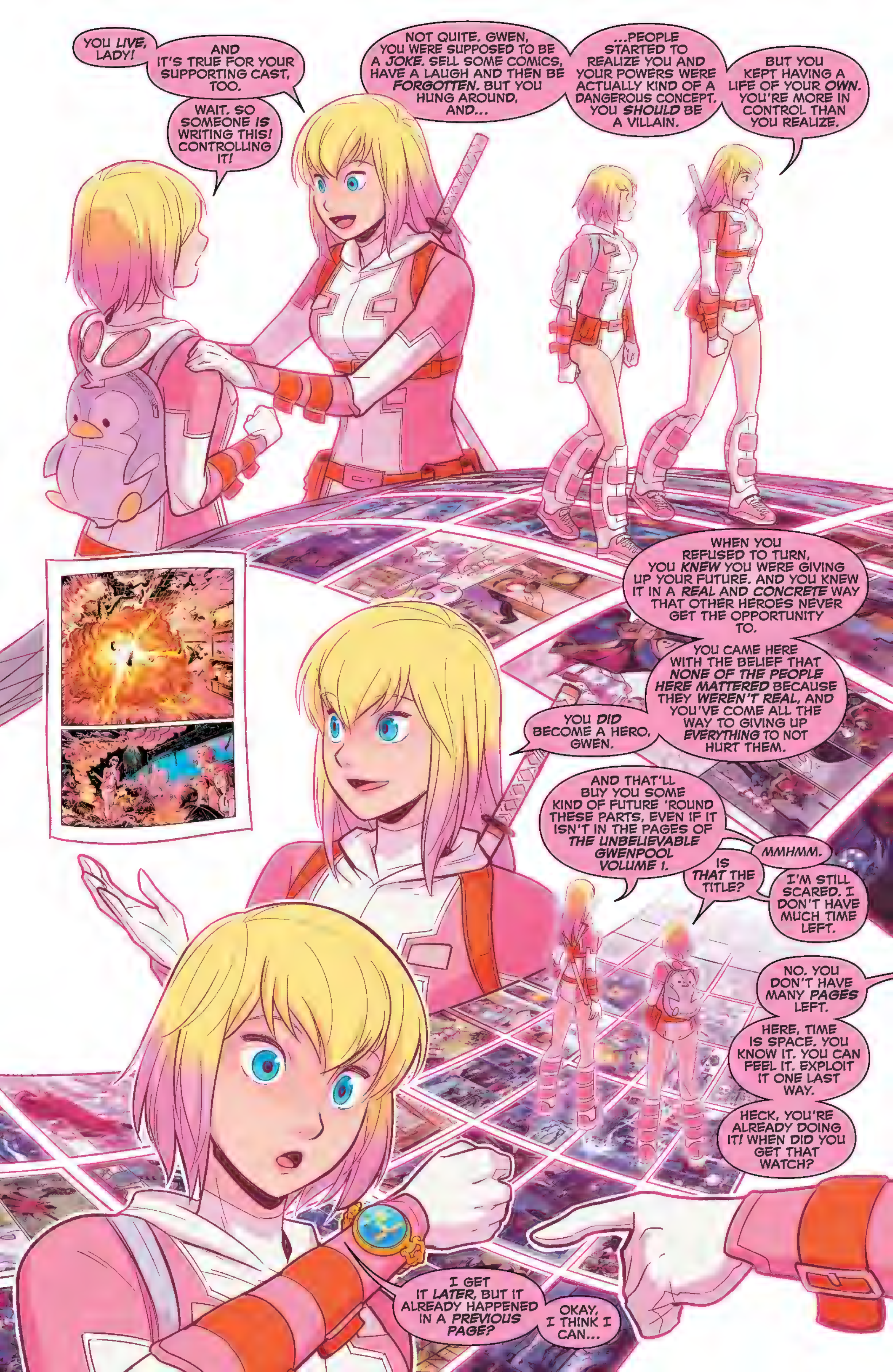

VENICE, ITALY.
A FROZEN MIDGARD SHALL MAKE HUMANITY *ALL* THE EASIER TO CONQUER.
A SIMPLE, ELEGANT SOLUTION.
AND OF *COURSE* SUCH CONDITIONS WILL SERVE NO TROUBLE FOR *HOMO SUPERIOR!*
OOPS!
NOBODY TOLD ME IT WASN'T A GOOD DAY FOR *SURFING.*
NICE ONE, POOLE! THAT CASKET OF ANCIENT WINTERS SURE DID LOOK LIKE A FRIGGIN' *END-OF-DAYS* SITUATION.
YOU GOT IT, ROCKET. SOMETIMES *"IT'S SNOWING A LOT"* CAN SOUND JUST *HOPELESS.*
I'LL TAKE THE BOARD BACK NOW.
HEH HEH...OF COURSE, MR. SURFER, SIR.
THAT WAS A LOT OF FUN, THANKS.
WHAT NEXT...
"WHO SAID *ANYTHING* ABOUT BEING DONE?"

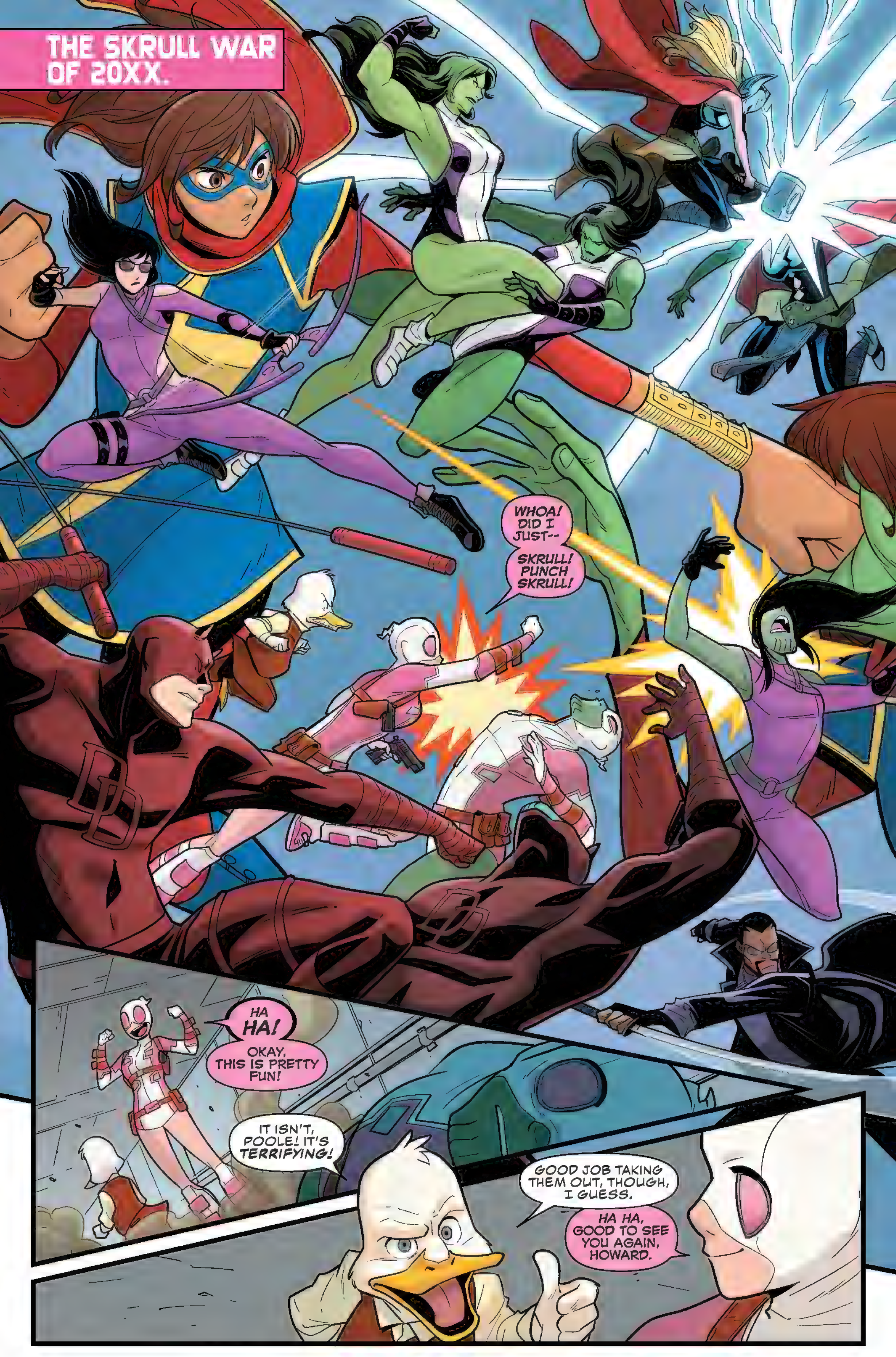

THE GUTTER.
A PLACE BETWEEN THE PANELS OF SPACE AND TIME.
SO...
...NOTHING TO SAY?
...
NAH. I'M GOOD.
WHAT?!
NO MORE FUTURE ALTERNATE GWENS, THANK YOU!
BU--
THANK YOOOOOU!
I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED.
I--
YOUR SERIES IS NEARLY OVER, YOU CAN SEE IT, BUT I'M HERE TO TELL YOU...
...IT'S NOT THE END.
YOU SURVIVE. I SURVIVE.

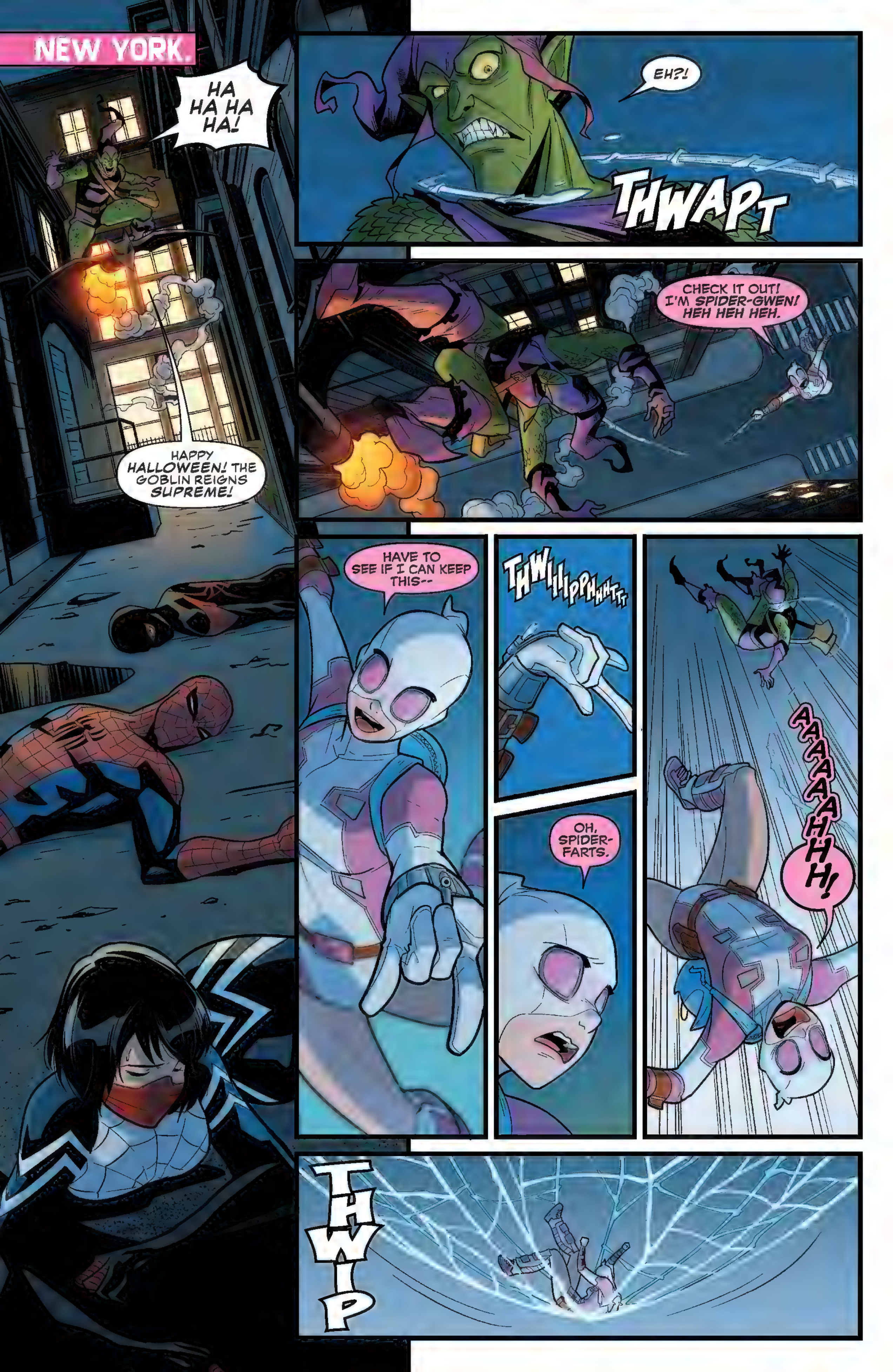

THE DARK DIMENSION.
HA HA HA! HEY, LOOK WHAT AGAMOTTO MADE ME!
A BIG MAGIC ROCKET LAUNCHER!
WH-- AGAMOTTO IS--?!
SH-BLOOM
AGGGGH!!!
VERY WELL, GWEN POOLE. YOU'VE EARNED YOUR PRIZE. TAKE THIS AND LEAVE ME TO STEW IN ETERNAL EMBARRASSMENT.
BECAUSE YOU GOT BEATEN UP BY A COOL TEEN?
BECAUSE I GOT BEATEN UP BY A ROCKET LAUNCHER.
IT WAS MAGIC. DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF.
YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN WHAT I DID TO MAGNETO!
NEW YORK.
GWEN?
CECIL! LOOK WHO FOUND A WAY TO MAKE YOU A REAL BOY AGAAAAAAIN!

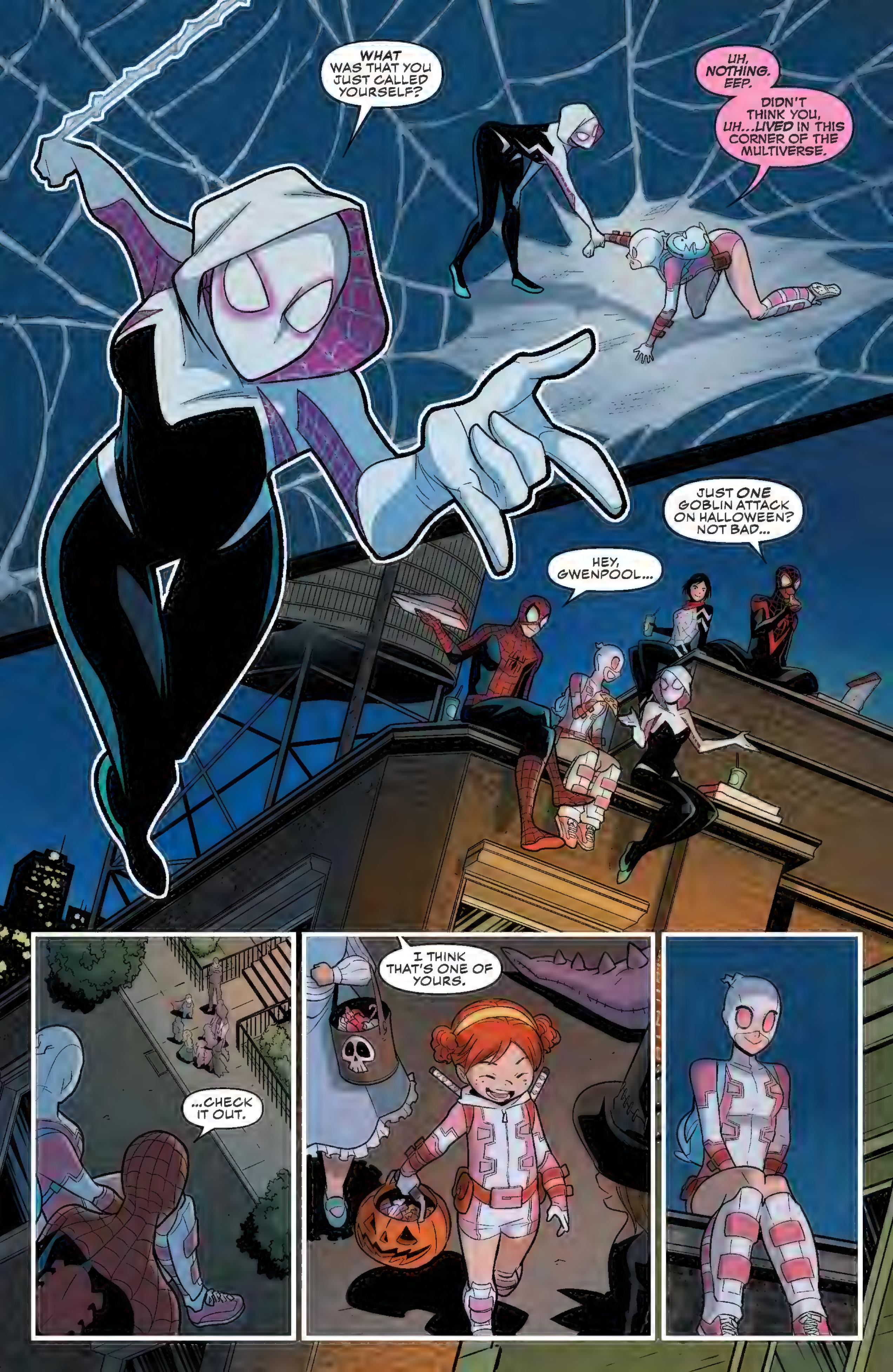

YOU DON'T LOOK OLDER THAN ME. I GUESS YOUR HAIR IS DIFFERENT?
PEOPLE DON'T ACTUALLY AGE IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE UNLESS IT'S VERY SUDDEN AND LITERALLY IN THE TITLE.
COUGH OLD MAN LOGAN *COUGH*
THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR TRUE FUTURE AND THE EVIL ONE YOU REJECTED.
OH.
BUT THAT IS MY TIMELINE AND IT IS ENDING...
NO, SEE, YOU STILL HAVE AN OUTSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE. THIS MOMENT, RIGHT HERE?
IT'S NOT JUST HAPPENING IN FEBRUARY 2018, WHEN GWENPOOL #25 COMES OUT. IT'S HAPPENING IN JUNE 2019 IN THE TRADE. AND IT'S HAPPENING IN SEPTEMBER OF 2025 WHEN SOMEONE FINDS THIS IN A LIBRARY.
AND LATER. AND LATER. AND LATER.
RIGHT NOW SOMEONE IS READING THIS MOMENT YEARS AFTER ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO MADE THIS COMIC DIED.
HOLY %&#@.
YOU DON'T JUST LIVE HERE. YOU'RE IN VIDEO GAMES. TOYS. YOU GUEST-STAR IN OTHER TITLES. FAN ART. FAN-FIC. ROLEPLAY TWITTER ACCOUNTS.
SOME DAY, ONE OF THOSE FANS MIGHT GET A PRO GIG AND REMEMBER TO STICK YOU IN SOME NEW VERSION OF THE GREAT LAKES AVENGERS.
THIS SOUNDS AN AWFUL LOT LIKE "GRANDMA'S NOT GONE. SHE'LL LIVE ON IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER."
IF GRANDMA COULD DO TO HEARTS WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PANELS, GRANDMA WOULD BE HORRIFYING.
TRUE.

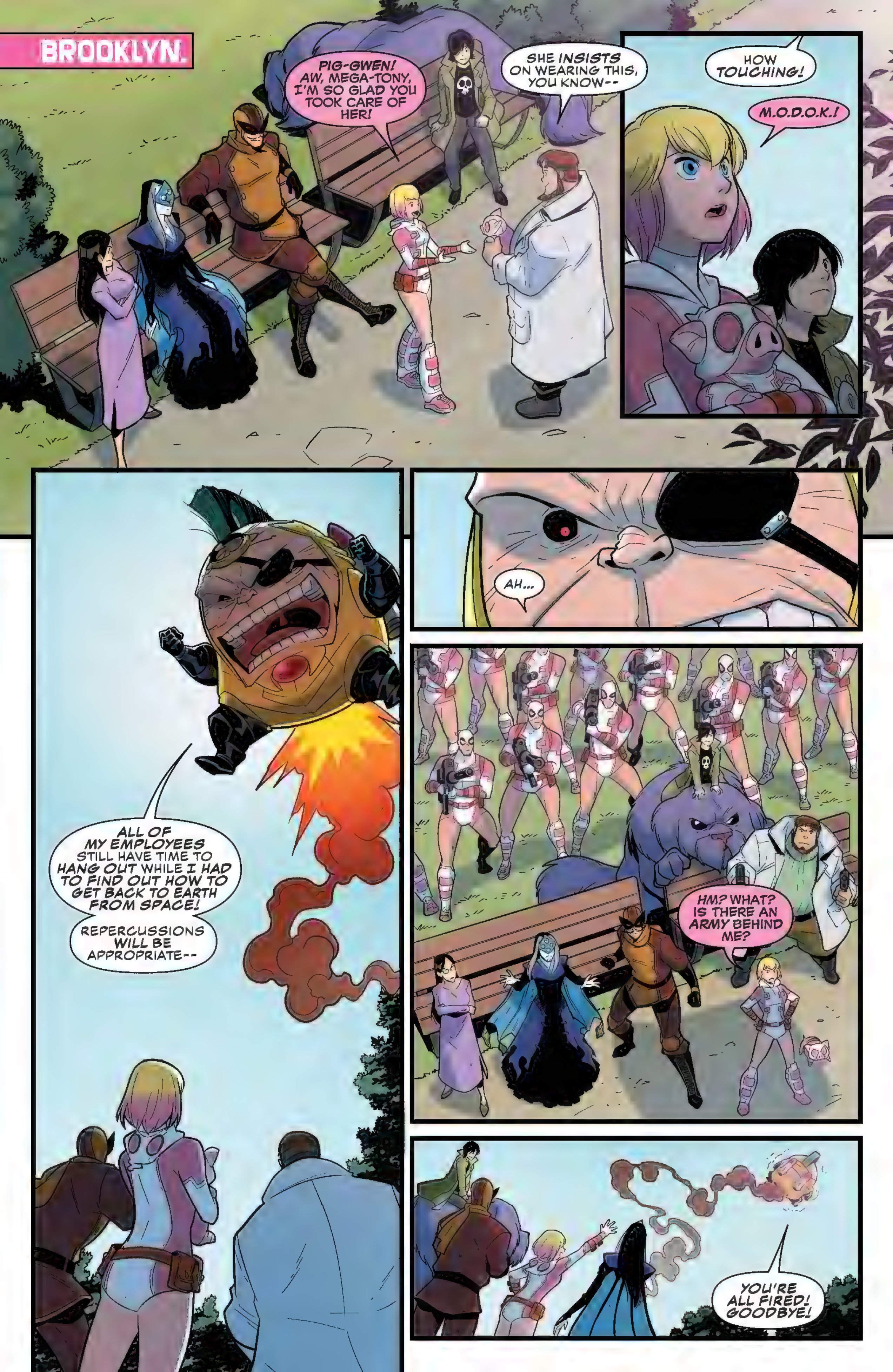

NEW YORK.
LATER STILL...
...AS THIS BOY HAS RELEASED THIS HOUND FROM ITS ETERNAL RAGE, RELEASE THIS BOY FROM HIS CRYSTAL PRISON.
FORM FROM IMAGE. TWO FROM ONE.
BUT FRIENDS FOREVER!
SARAH, WHAT?
THEY SHOULD STAY FRIENDS. I WANT THAT IN THE SPELL.
NO, I TOTALLY AGREE.
YOU DID IT...I'M...ALIVE, AND HUMAN--
WAIT. DOOM, WHERE ARE WE? TIME IS...
COMPACTED. YES. I FEEL IT, TOO.
SLURP
WHOA! HA HA HA!
GWEN POOLE. I SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING TO YOU. I COMMEND YOUR CHOICE.
ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE LEFT.
HERE. SOMETHING I'VE HAD FOR A WHILE.
I NEVER QUITE KNEW WHAT THIS WATCH WAS TRACKING BUT NOW...
...I THINK YOU DO.

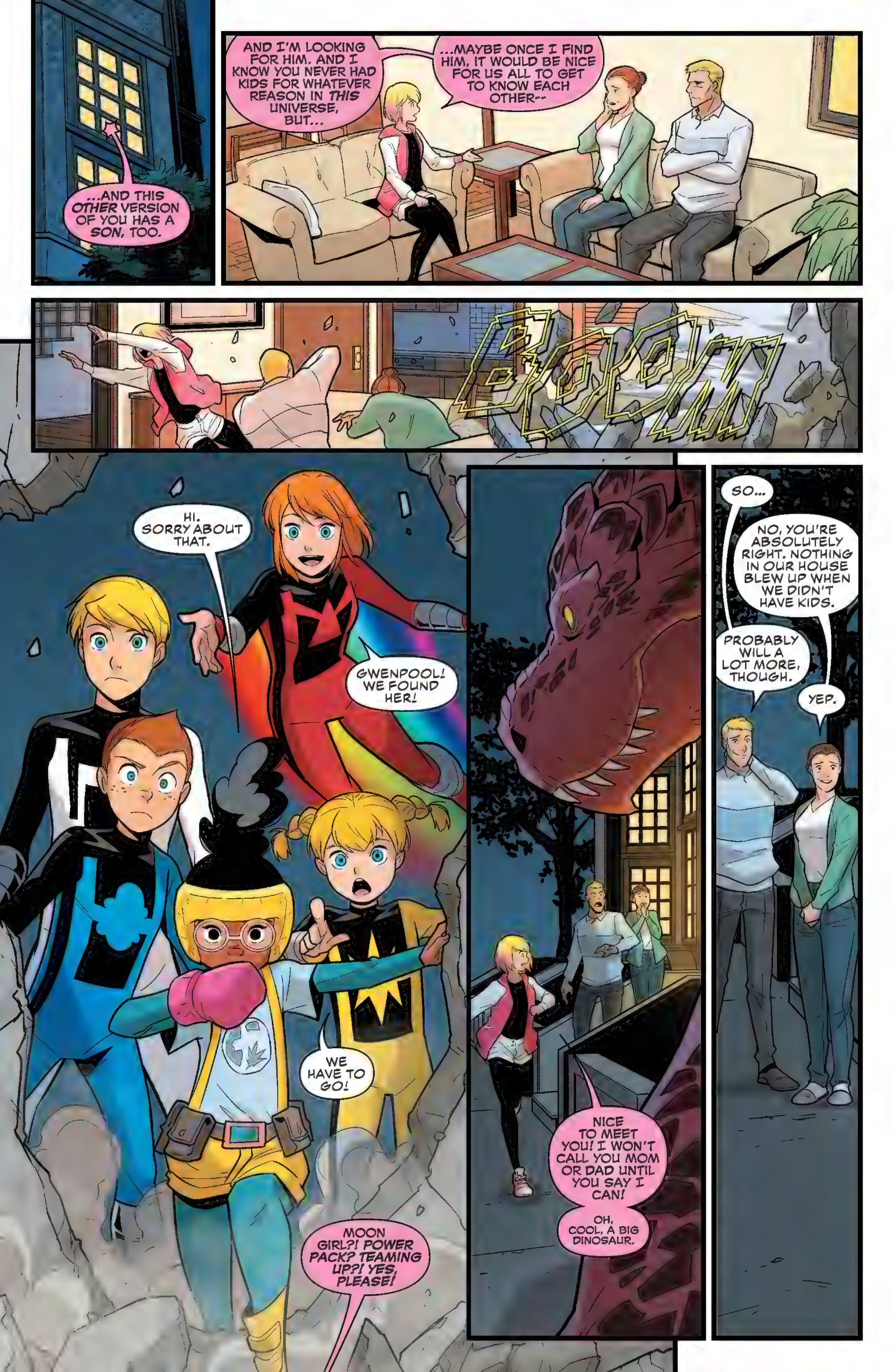

YOU *LIVE*, LADY!
AND IT'S TRUE FOR YOUR SUPPORTING CAST, TOO.
WAIT. SO SOMEONE *IS* WRITING THIS! CONTROLLING IT!
NOT QUITE. GWEN, YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE A *JOKE*. SELL SOME COMICS, HAVE A LAUGH AND THEN BE *FORGOTTEN*. BUT YOU HUNG AROUND, AND...
...PEOPLE STARTED TO REALIZE YOU AND YOUR POWERS WERE ACTUALLY KIND OF A DANGEROUS CONCEPT. YOU *SHOULD* BE A VILLAIN.
BUT YOU KEPT HAVING A LIFE OF YOUR *OWN*. YOU'RE MORE IN CONTROL THAN YOU REALIZE.
WHEN YOU REFUSED TO TURN, YOU *KNEW* YOU WERE GIVING UP YOUR FUTURE. AND YOU KNEW IT IN A *REAL* AND *CONCRETE* WAY THAT OTHER HEROES NEVER GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO.
YOU CAME HERE WITH THE BELIEF THAT *NONE OF THE PEOPLE HERE MATTERED* BECAUSE THEY *WEREN'T REAL*, AND YOU'VE COME ALL THE WAY TO GIVING UP *EVERYTHING* TO NOT HURT THEM.
YOU *DID* BECOME A HERO, GWEN.
AND THAT'LL BUY YOU SOME KIND OF FUTURE 'ROUND THESE PARTS, EVEN IF IT ISN'T IN THE PAGES OF *THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL VOLUME 1*.
IS *THAT* THE TITLE?
MMHMM.
I'M STILL SCARED. I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT.
NO. YOU DON'T HAVE MANY *PAGES* LEFT.
HERE, TIME IS SPACE. YOU KNOW IT. YOU CAN FEEL IT. EXPLOIT IT ONE LAST WAY.
HECK, YOU'RE ALREADY DOING IT! WHEN DID YOU GET THAT WATCH?
I GET IT *LATER*, BUT IT ALREADY HAPPENED IN A *PREVIOUS* PAGE?
OKAY, I THINK I CAN...

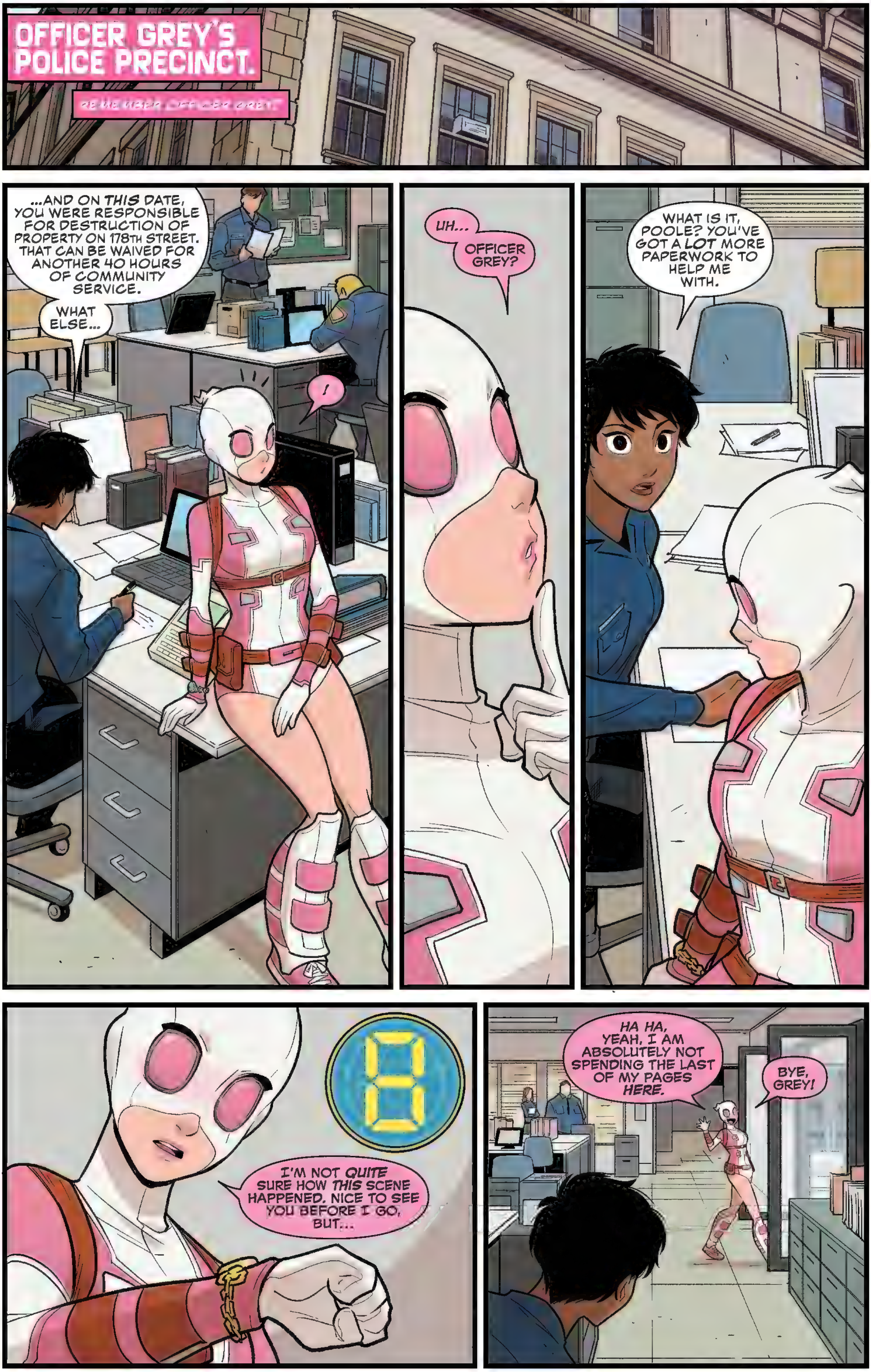

THE SKRULL WAR OF 20XX.
WHOA! DID I JUST--
SKRULL! PUNCH SKRULL!
HA HA! OKAY, THIS IS PRETTY FUN!
IT ISN'T, POOLE! IT'S TERRIFYING!
GOOD JOB TAKING THEM OUT, THOUGH, I GUESS.
HA HA, GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, HOWARD.

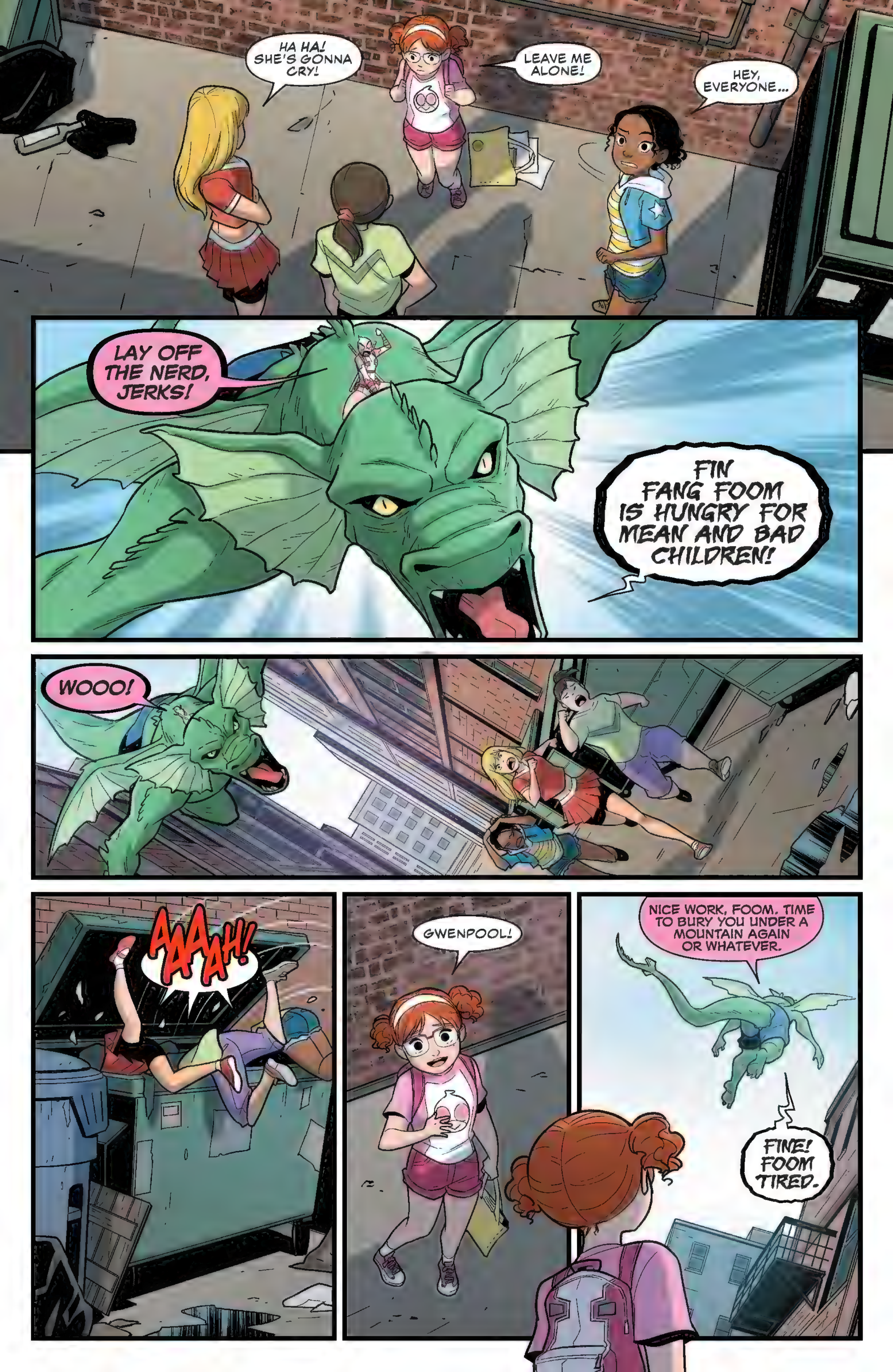

NEW YORK.
HA HA HA HA!
HAPPY HALLOWEEN! THE GOBLIN REIGNS SUPREME!
EH?!
THWAPT
CHECK IT OUT! I'M SPIDER-GWEN! HEH HEH HEH.
HAVE TO SEE IF I CAN KEEP THIS--
THWIIIIPPHHHTTT
OH, SPIDER-FARTS.
AAAAAAHHH!
THWIP

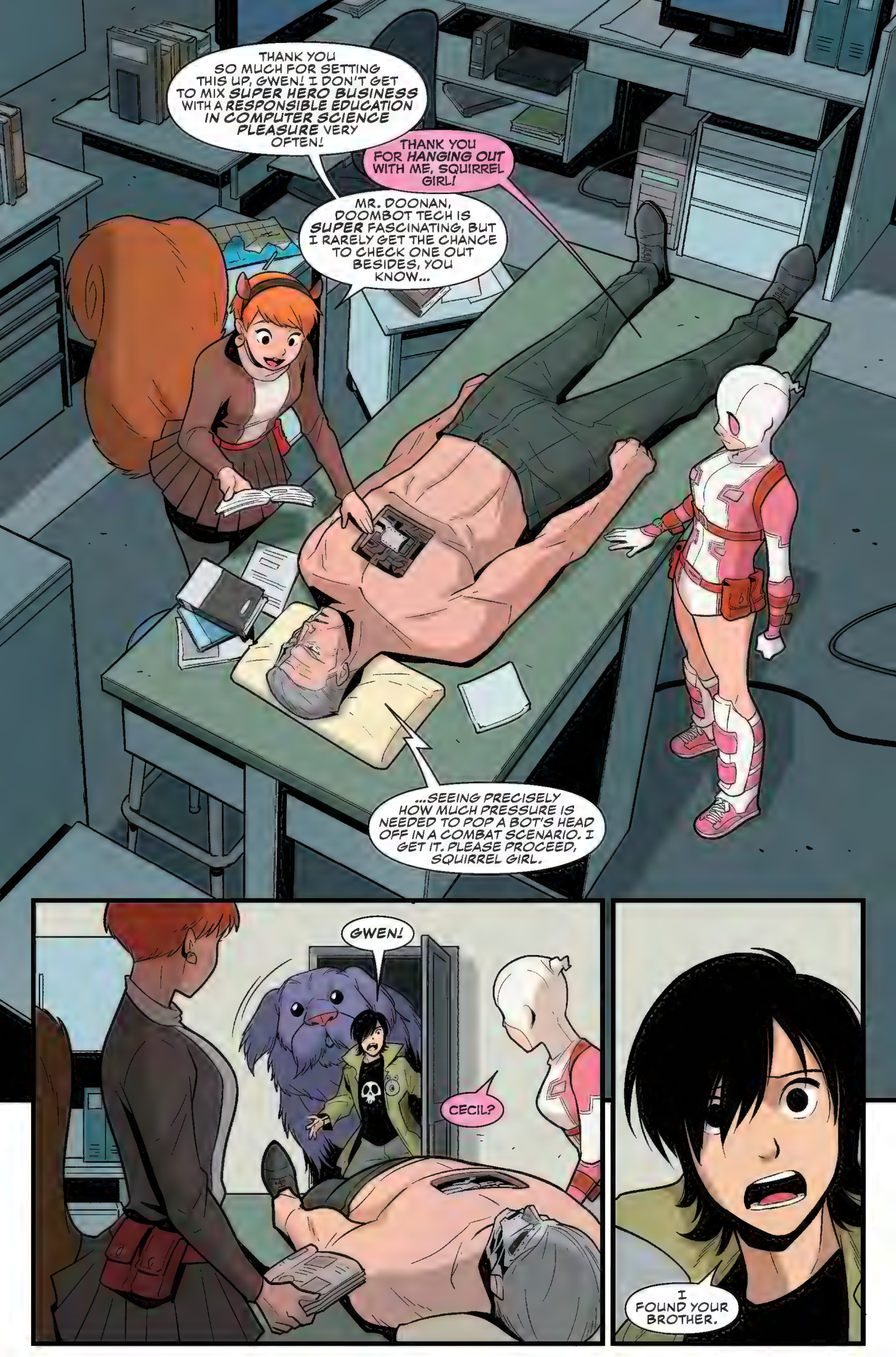

WHAT WAS THAT YOU JUST CALLED YOURSELF?
UH, NOTHING. EEP.
DIDN'T THINK YOU, UH...LIVED IN THIS CORNER OF THE MULTIVERSE.
JUST ONE GOBLIN ATTACK ON HALLOWEEN? NOT BAD...
HEY, GWENPOOL...
...CHECK IT OUT.
I THINK THAT'S ONE OF YOURS.

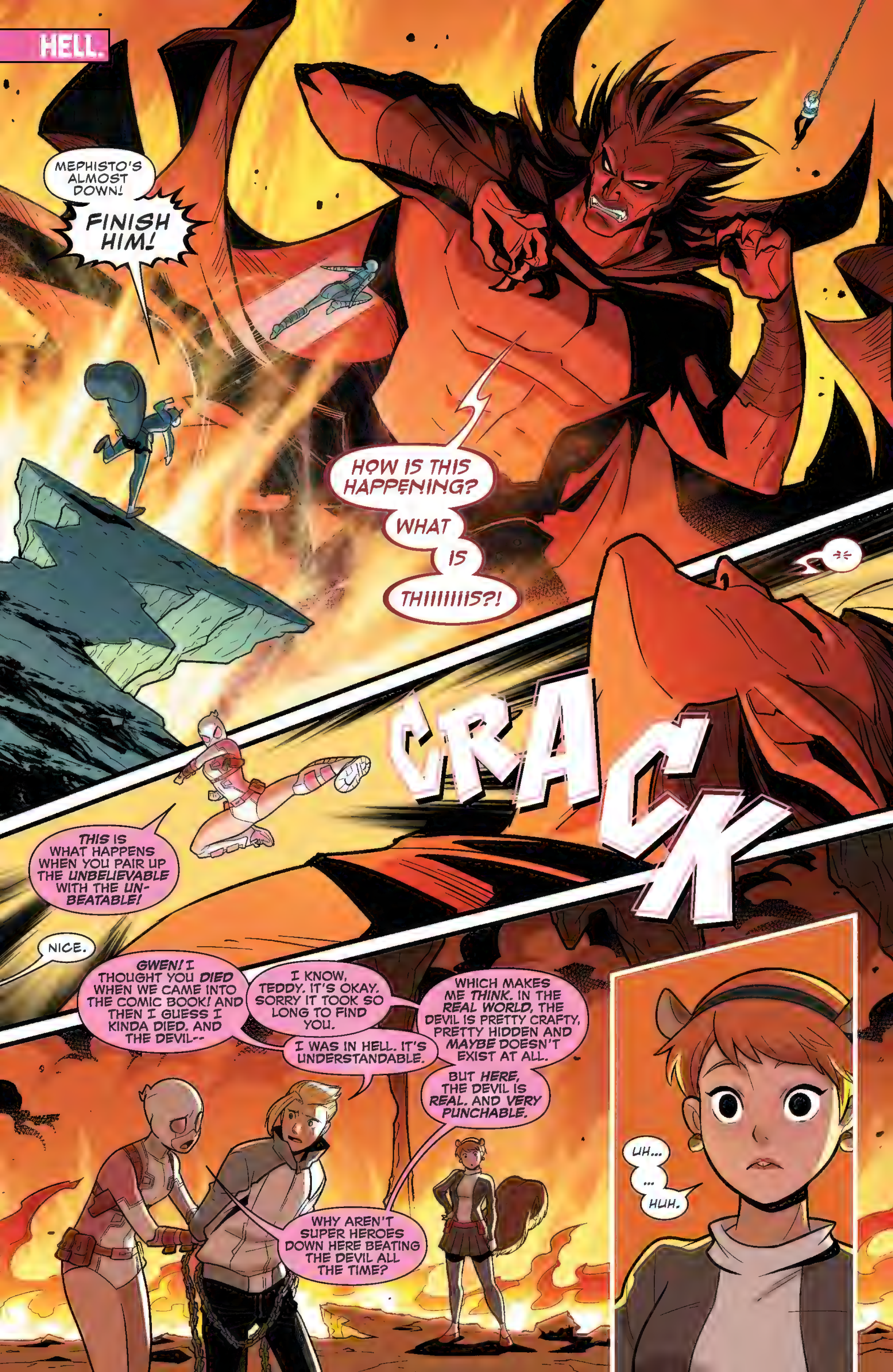

BROOKLYN.
PIG-GWEN! AW, MEGA-TONY, I'M SO GLAD YOU TOOK CARE OF HER!
SHE INSISTS ON WEARING THIS, YOU KNOW--
HOW TOUCHING!
M.O.D.O.K.!
ALL OF MY EMPLOYEES STILL HAVE TIME TO HANG OUT WHILE I HAD TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET BACK TO EARTH FROM SPACE!
REPERCUSSIONS WILL BE APPROPRIATE--
AH...
HM? WHAT? IS THERE AN ARMY BEHIND ME?
YOU'RE ALL FIRED! GOODBYE!

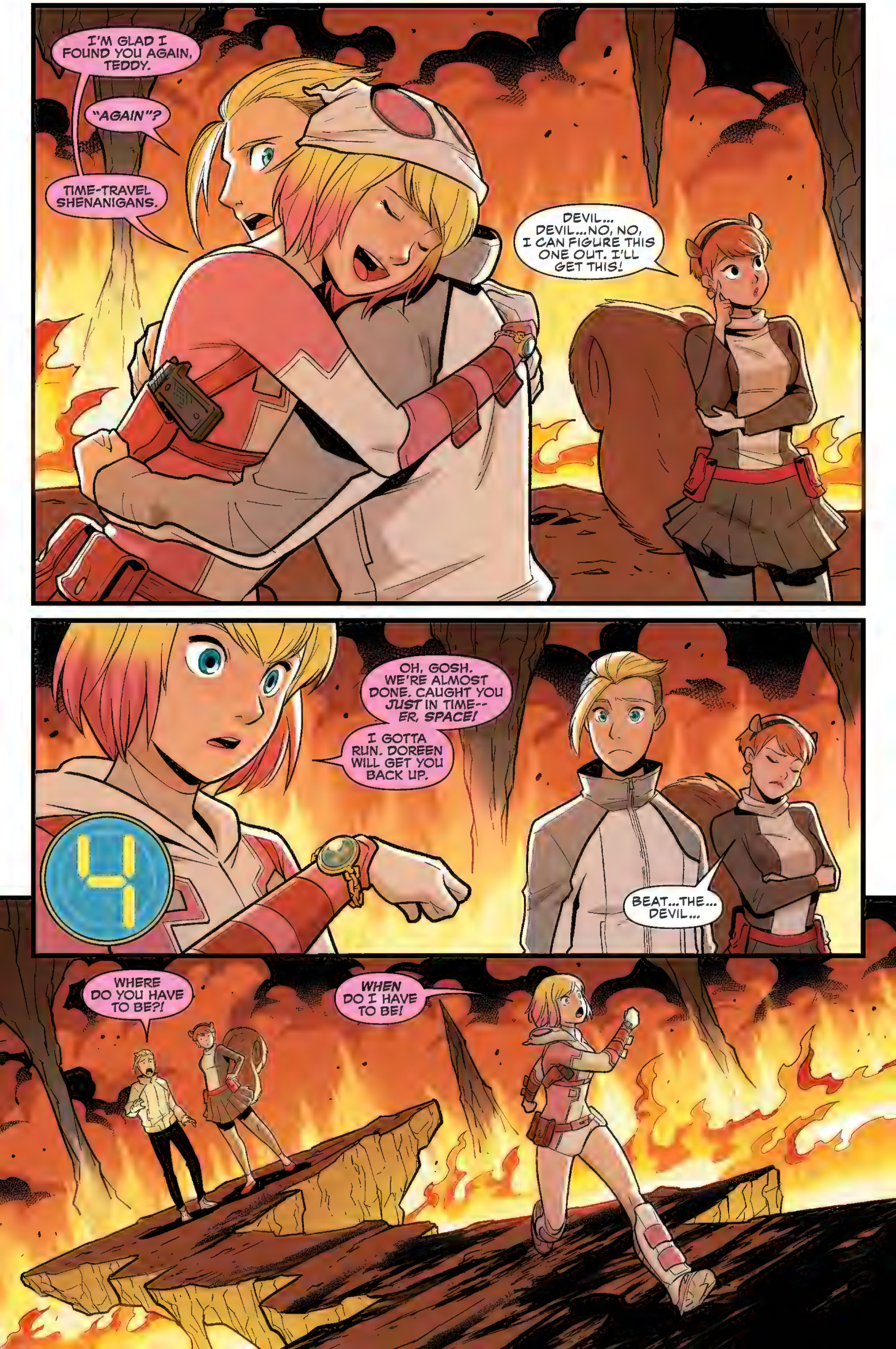

...AND THIS *OTHER* VERSION OF YOU HAS A SON, TOO.
AND I'M LOOKING FOR HIM. AND I KNOW YOU NEVER HAD KIDS FOR WHATEVER REASON IN *THIS* UNIVERSE, BUT...
...MAYBE ONCE I FIND HIM, IT WOULD BE NICE FOR US ALL TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER--
BOOM
HI. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
GWENPOOL! WE FOUND HER!
WE HAVE TO GO!
MOON GIRL?! POWER PACK? TEAMING UP?! YES, PLEASE!
NICE TO MEET YOU! I WON'T CALL YOU MOM OR DAD UNTIL YOU SAY I CAN!
OH, COOL, A BIG DINOSAUR.
SO...
NO, YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. NOTHING IN OUR HOUSE BLEW UP WHEN WE DIDN'T HAVE KIDS.
PROBABLY WILL A LOT MORE, THOUGH.
YEP.

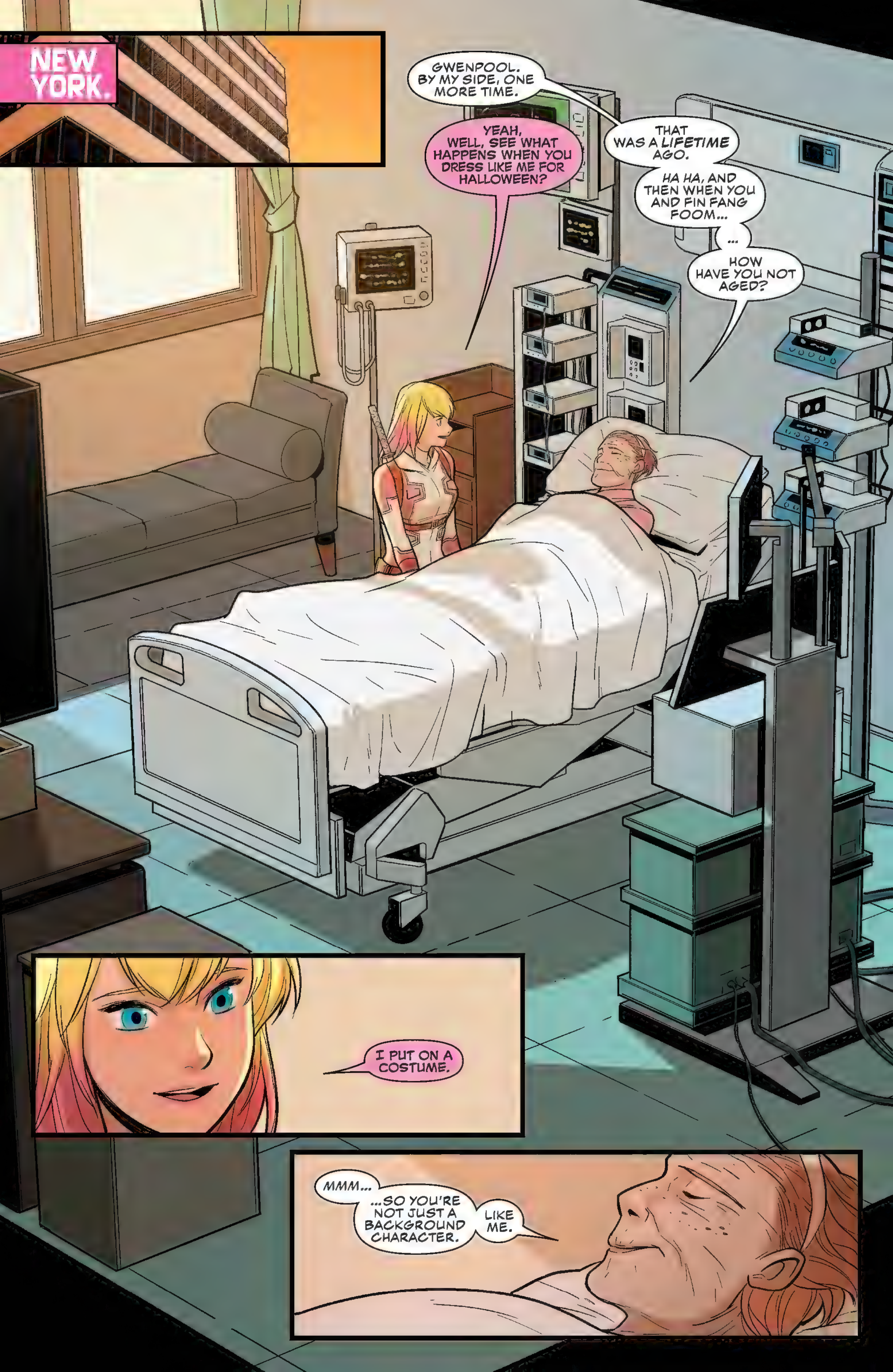

OFFICER GREY'S POLICE PRECINCT.
REMEMBER OFFICER GREY?
...AND ON THIS DATE, YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY ON 178TH STREET. THAT CAN BE WAIVED FOR ANOTHER 40 HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE.
WHAT ELSE...
!
UH...
OFFICER GREY?
WHAT IS IT, POOLE? YOU'VE GOT A LOT MORE PAPERWORK TO HELP ME WITH.
8
I'M NOT QUITE SURE HOW THIS SCENE HAPPENED. NICE TO SEE YOU BEFORE I GO, BUT...
HA HA, YEAH, I AM ABSOLUTELY NOT SPENDING THE LAST OF MY PAGES HERE.
BYE, GREY!

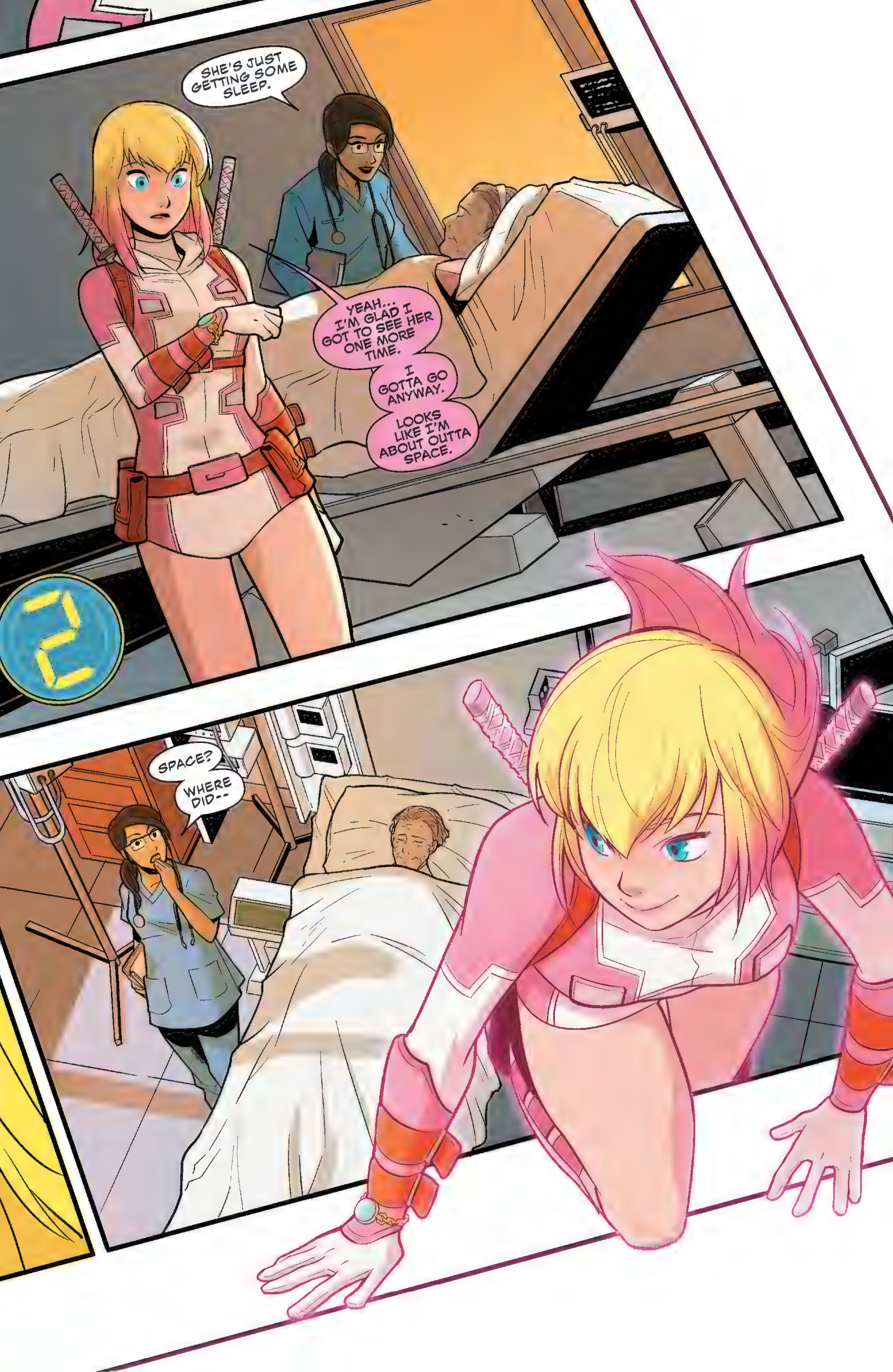

HA HA! SHE'S GONNA CRY!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
HEY, EVERYONE...
LAY OFF THE NERD, JERKS!
FIN FANG FOOM IS HUNGRY FOR MEAN AND BAD CHILDREN!
WOOO!
AAAAH!
GWENPOOL!
NICE WORK, FOOM. TIME TO BURY YOU UNDER A MOUNTAIN AGAIN OR WHATEVER.
FINE! FOOM TIRED.

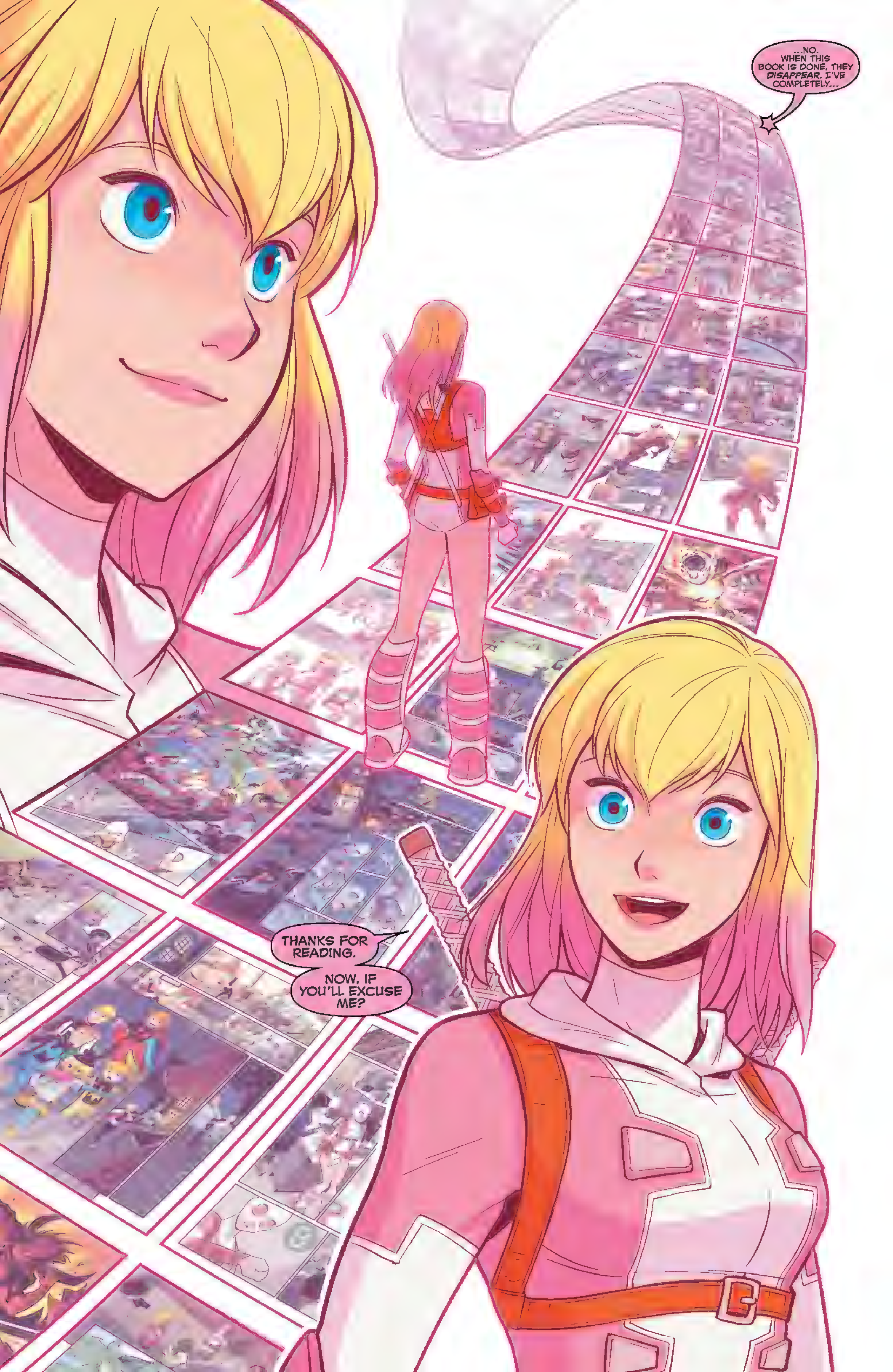

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SETTING THIS UP, GWEN! I DON'T GET TO MIX SUPER HERO BUSINESS WITH A RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION IN COMPUTER SCIENCE PLEASURE VERY OFTEN!
THANK YOU FOR HANGING OUT WITH ME, SQUIRREL GIRL!
MR. DOONAN, DOOMBOT TECH IS SUPER FASCINATING, BUT I RARELY GET THE CHANCE TO CHECK ONE OUT BESIDES, YOU KNOW...
...SEEING PRECISELY HOW MUCH PRESSURE IS NEEDED TO POP A BOT'S HEAD OFF IN A COMBAT SCENARIO. I GET IT. PLEASE PROCEED, SQUIRREL GIRL.
GWEN!
CECIL?
I FOUND YOUR BROTHER.

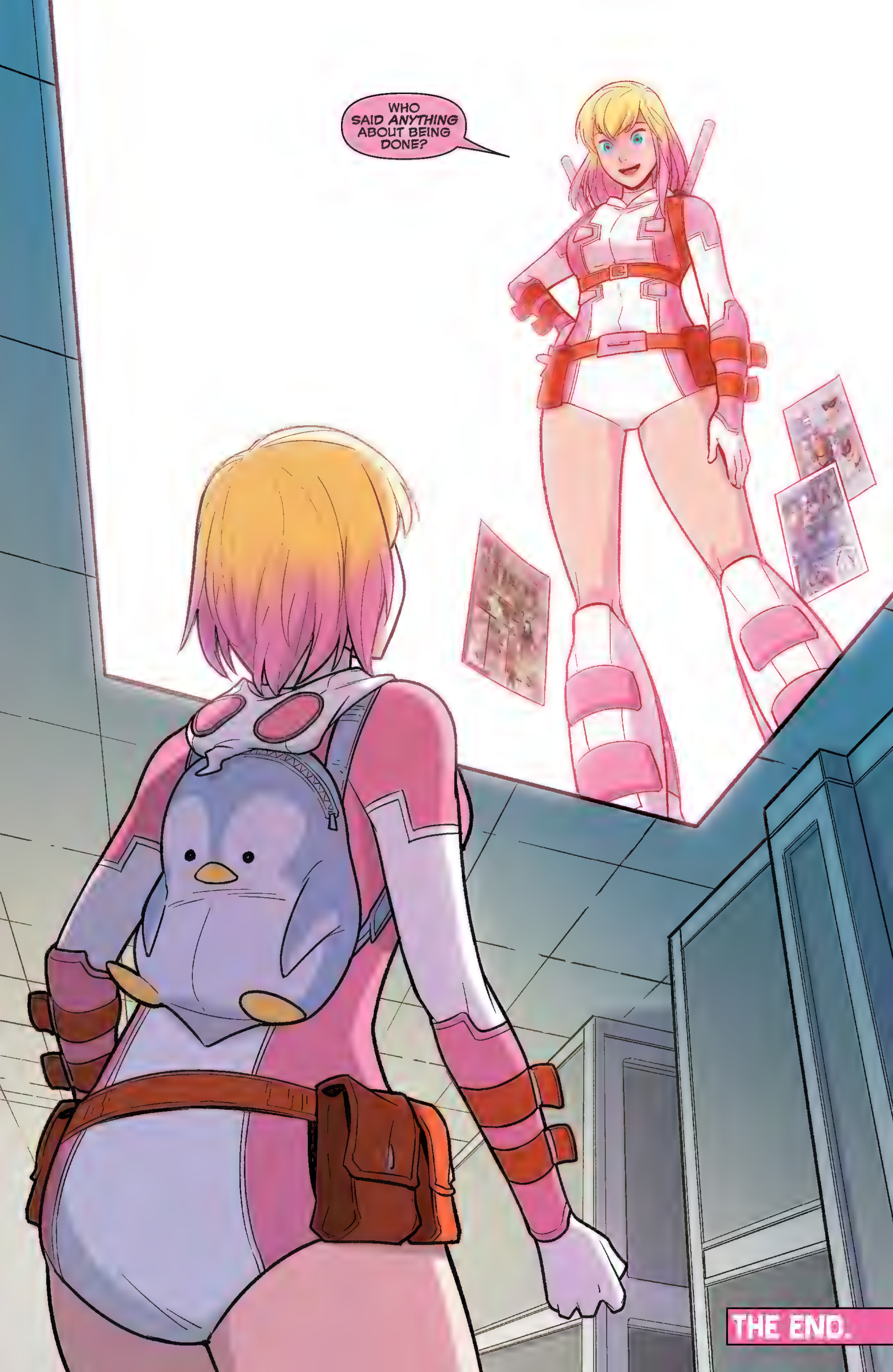

HELL.
MEPHISTO'S ALMOST DOWN! FINISH HIM!
HOW IS THIS HAPPENING? WHAT IS THIIIIIIIS?!
CRACK
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PAIR UP THE UNBELIEVABLE WITH THE UN-BEATABLE!
NICE.
GWEN! I THOUGHT YOU DIED WHEN WE CAME INTO THE COMIC BOOK! AND THEN I GUESS I KINDA DIED. AND THE DEVIL--
I KNOW, TEDDY. IT'S OKAY. SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG TO FIND YOU.
I WAS IN HELL. IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE.
WHICH MAKES ME THINK. IN THE REAL WORLD, THE DEVIL IS PRETTY CRAFTY, PRETTY HIDDEN AND MAYBE DOESN'T EXIST AT ALL.
BUT HERE, THE DEVIL IS REAL. AND VERY PUNCHABLE.
WHY AREN'T SUPER HEROES DOWN HERE BEATING THE DEVIL ALL THE TIME?
UH...
...
HUH.

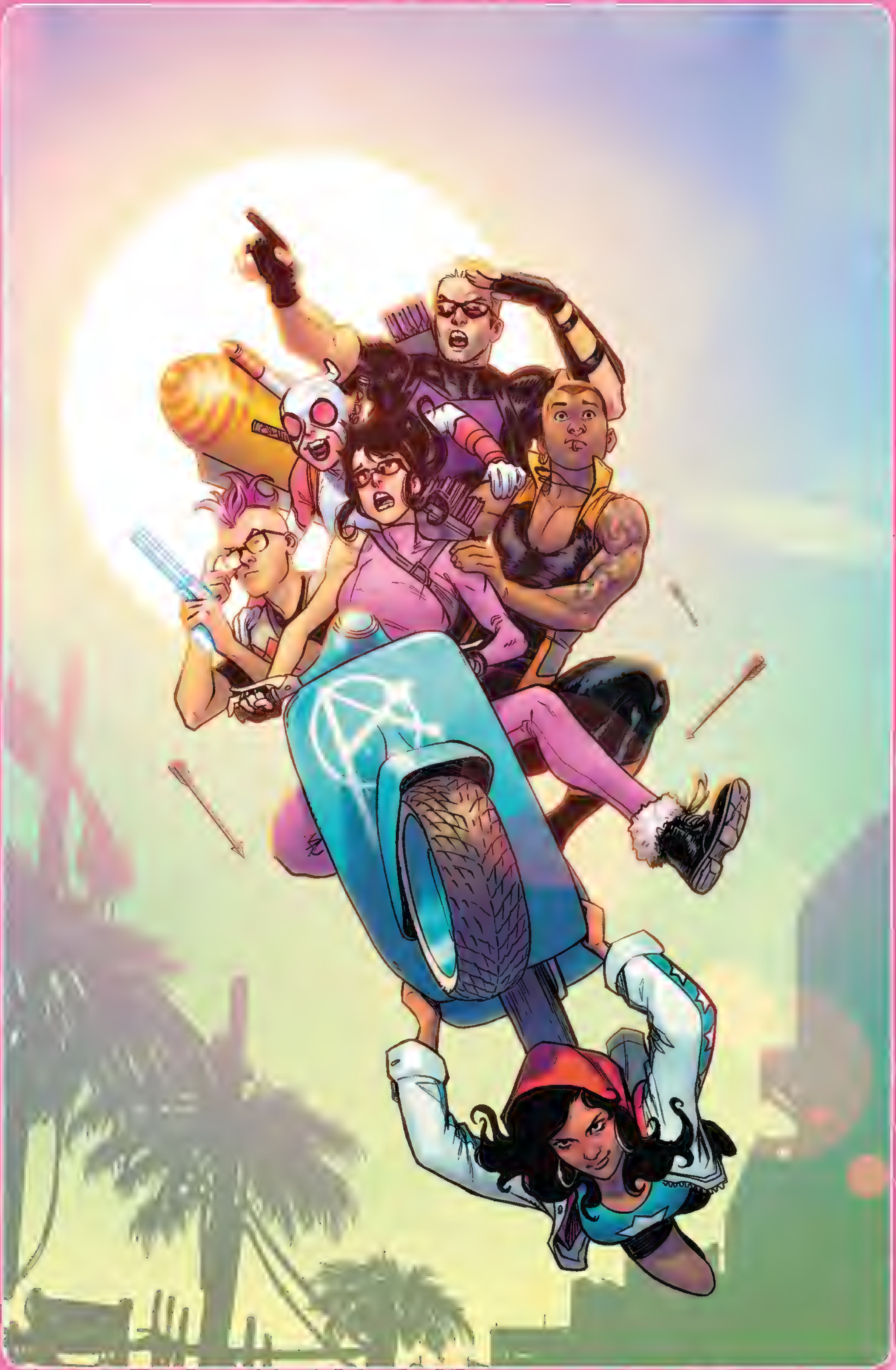

I'M GLAD I FOUND YOU AGAIN, TEDDY.
"*AGAIN*"?
TIME-TRAVEL SHENANIGANS.
DEVIL... DEVIL...NO, NO, I CAN FIGURE THIS ONE OUT. I'LL GET THIS!
OH, GOSH. WE'RE ALMOST DONE. CAUGHT YOU *JUST* IN TIME-- ER, *SPACE!*
I GOTTA RUN. DOREEN WILL GET YOU BACK UP.
4
BEAT...THE... DEVIL...
WHERE DO YOU HAVE TO BE?!
WHEN DO I HAVE TO BE!


NEW YORK.
GWENPOOL. BY MY SIDE, ONE MORE TIME.
YEAH, WELL, SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DRESS LIKE ME FOR HALLOWEEN?
THAT WAS A *LIFETIME* AGO.
HA HA, AND THEN WHEN YOU AND FIN FANG FOOM...
...
HOW HAVE YOU NOT AGED?
I PUT ON A COSTUME.
MMM...
...SO YOU'RE NOT JUST A BACKGROUND CHARACTER.
LIKE ME.

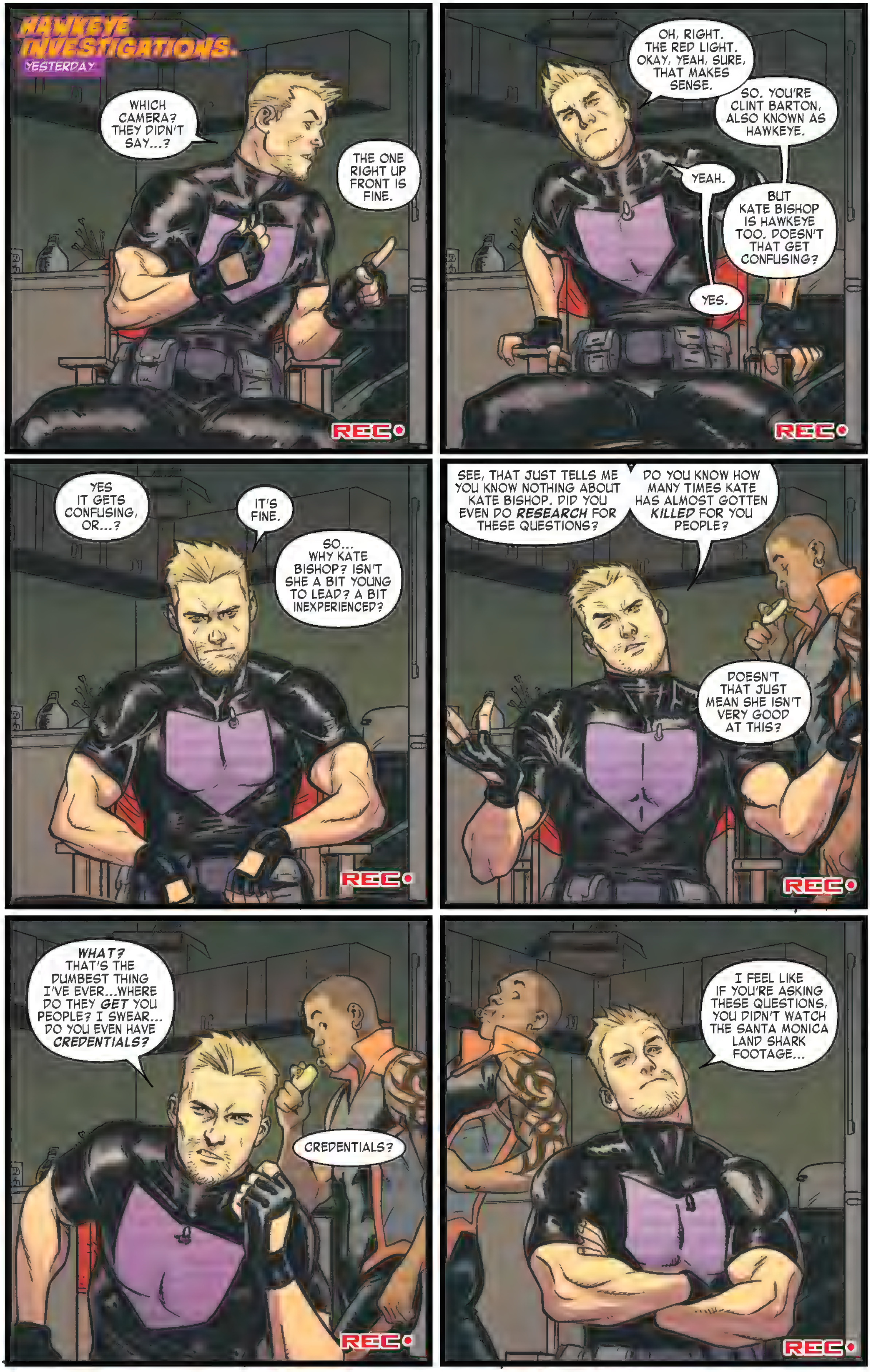

SHE'S JUST GETTING SOME SLEEP.
YEAH... I'M GLAD I GOT TO SEE HER ONE MORE TIME.
I GOTTA GO ANYWAY.
LOOKS LIKE I'M ABOUT OUTTA SPACE.
2
SPACE?
WHERE DID--

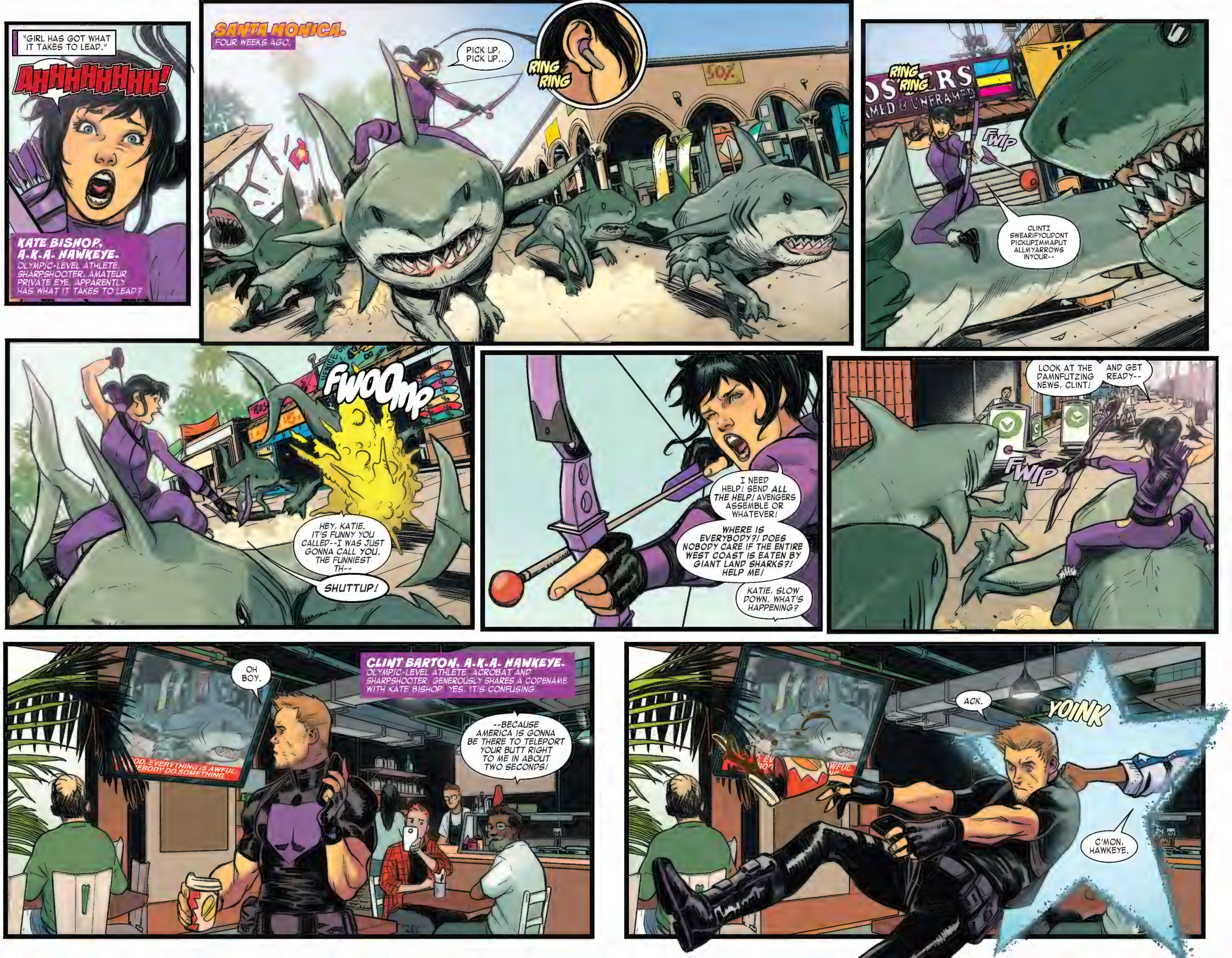

...NO. WHEN THIS BOOK IS DONE, THEY *DISAPPEAR*. I'VE COMPLETELY...
THANKS FOR READING.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME?

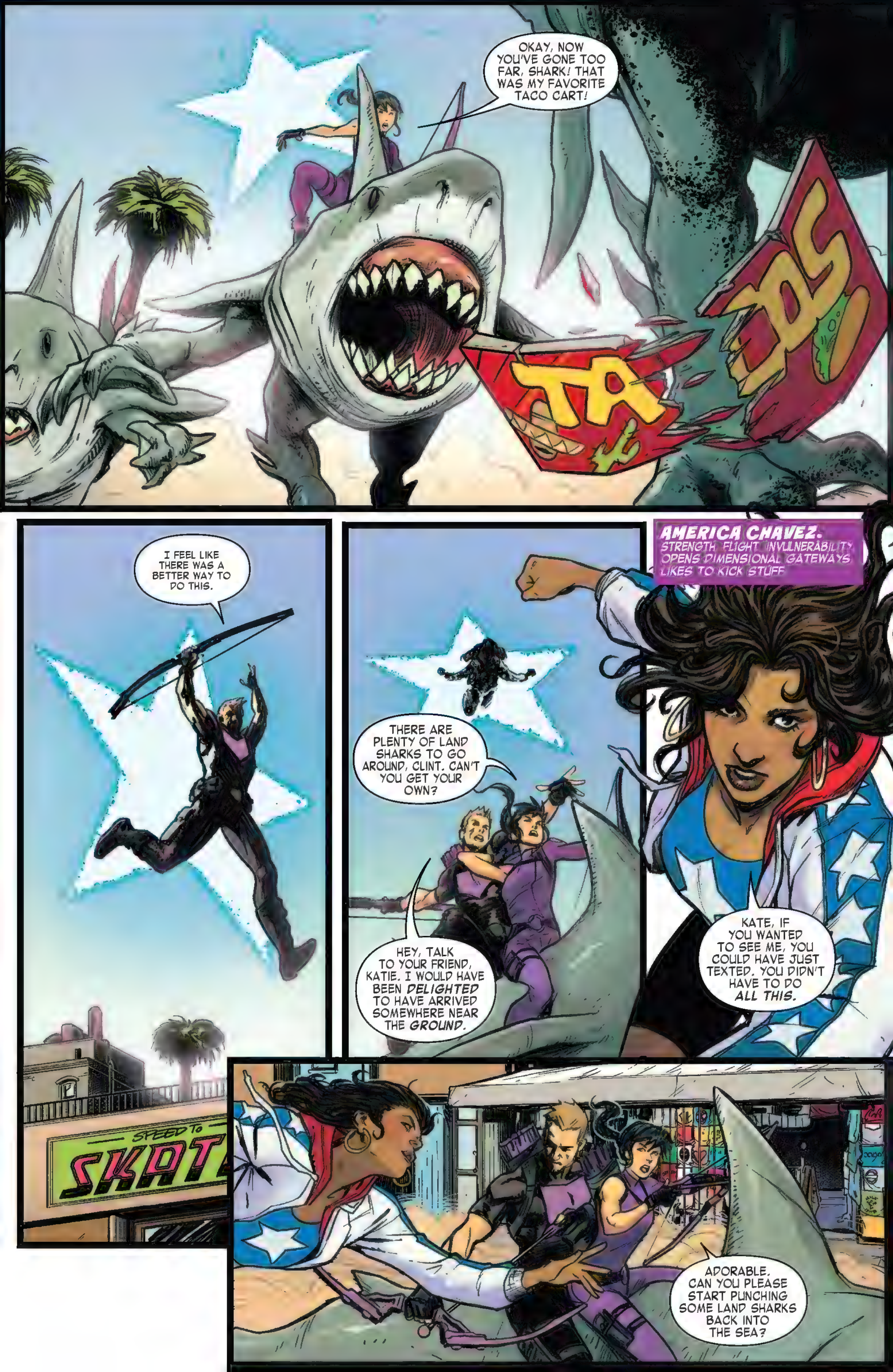

WHO SAID *ANYTHING* ABOUT BEING DONE?
THE END.

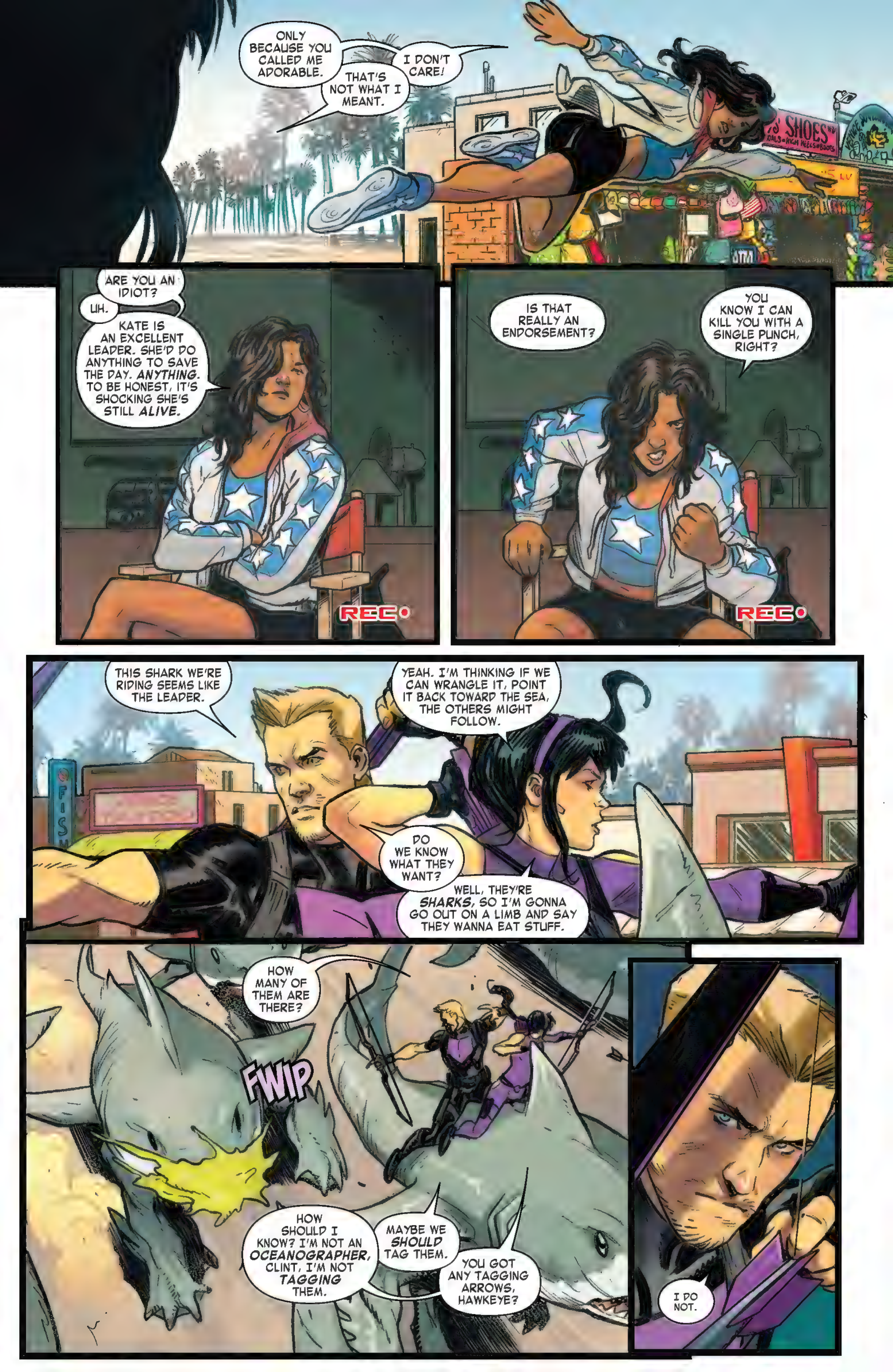


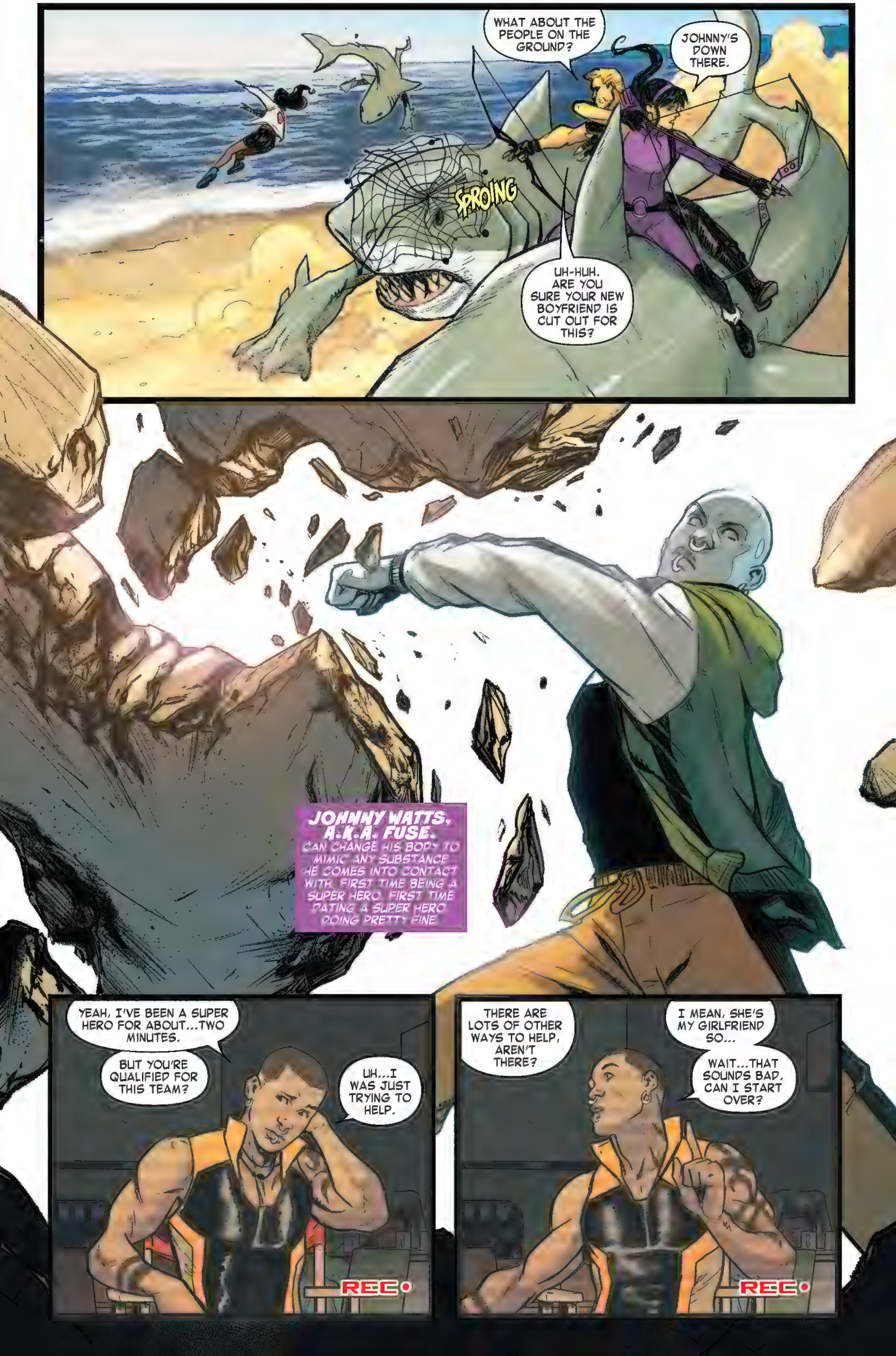
WEST COAST AVENGERS #1

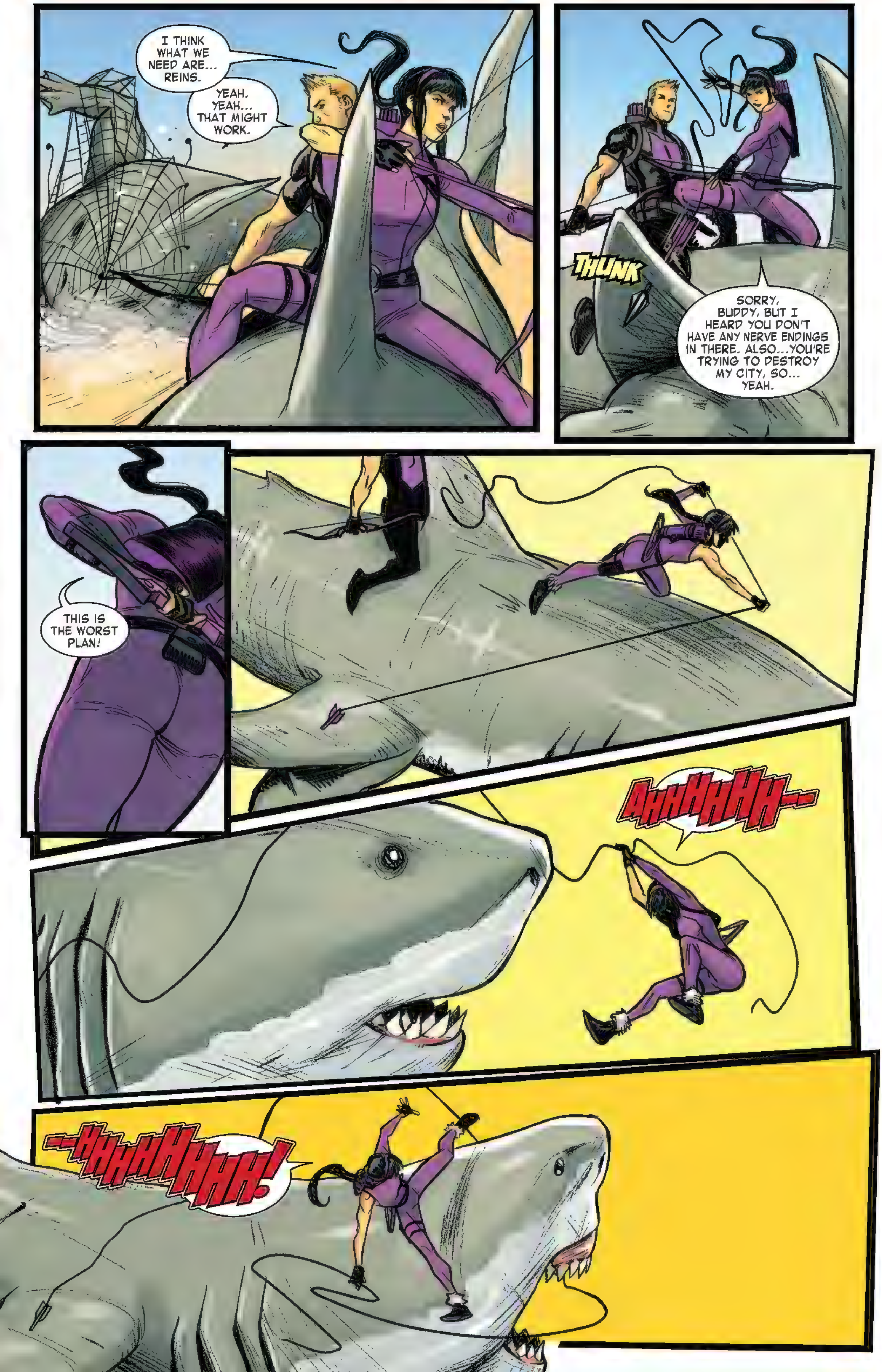

HAWKEYE INVESTIGATIONS.
YESTERDAY
WHICH CAMERA? THEY DIDN'T SAY...?
THE ONE RIGHT UP FRONT IS FINE.
REC
OH, RIGHT. THE RED LIGHT. OKAY, YEAH, SURE, THAT MAKES SENSE.
SO. YOU'RE CLINT BARTON, ALSO KNOWN AS HAWKEYE.
YEAH.
BUT KATE BISHOP IS HAWKEYE TOO. DOESN'T THAT GET CONFUSING?
YES.
REC
YES IT GETS CONFUSING, OR...?
IT'S FINE.
SO... WHY KATE BISHOP? ISN'T SHE A BIT YOUNG TO LEAD? A BIT INEXPERIENCED?
REC
SEE, THAT JUST TELLS ME YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT KATE BISHOP. DID YOU EVEN DO *RESEARCH* FOR THESE QUESTIONS?
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY TIMES KATE HAS ALMOST GOTTEN *KILLED* FOR YOU PEOPLE?
DOESN'T THAT JUST MEAN SHE ISN'T VERY GOOD AT THIS?
REC
WHAT? THAT'S THE DUMBEST THING I'VE EVER...WHERE DO THEY *GET* YOU PEOPLE? I SWEAR... DO YOU EVEN HAVE *CREDENTIALS?*
CREDENTIALS?
REC
I FEEL LIKE IF YOU'RE ASKING THESE QUESTIONS, YOU DIDN'T WATCH THE SANTA MONICA LAND SHARK FOOTAGE...
REC

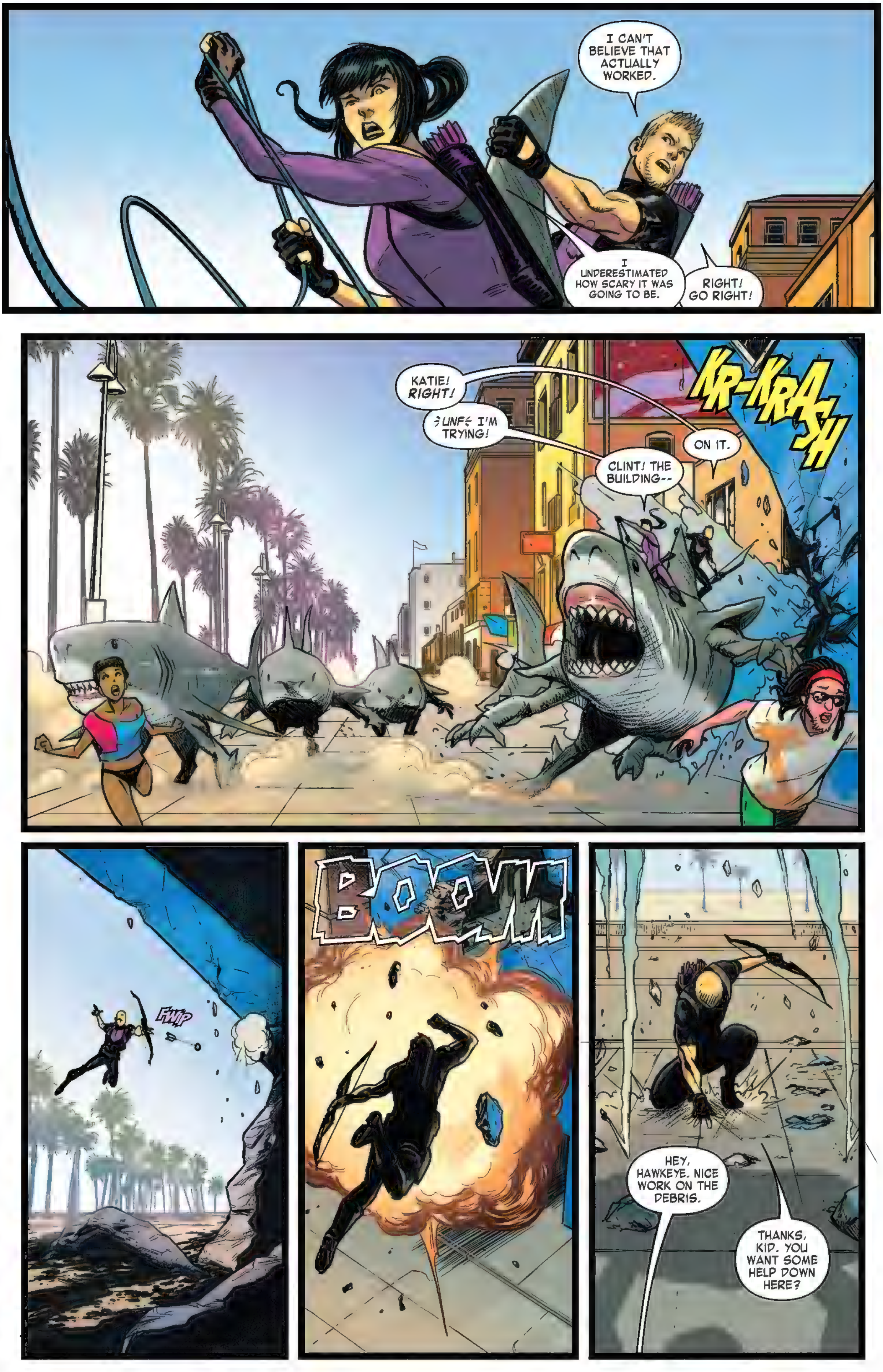

"GIRL HAS GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO LEAD."
AHHHHHHHH!
KATE BISHOP, A.K.A. HAWKEYE.
OLYMPIC-LEVEL ATHLETE. SHARPSHOOTER. AMATEUR PRIVATE EYE. APPARENTLY HAS WHAT IT TAKES TO LEAD?
SANTA MONICA.
FOUR WEEKS AGO.
PICK UP, PICK UP...
RING RING
50%
RING RING
OSTERS
AMED & UNFRAMED
FWIP
CLINT! SWEARIFYOUDONT PICKUPIMMAPUT ALLMYARROWS INYOUR--
FWOOMP
HEY, KATIE. IT'S FUNNY YOU CALLED--I WAS JUST GONNA CALL YOU. THE FUNNIEST TH--
SHUTTUP!
I NEED HELP! SEND ALL THE HELP! AVENGERS ASSEMBLE OR WHATEVER!
WHERE IS EVERYBODY?! DOES NOBODY CARE IF THE ENTIRE WEST COAST IS EATEN BY GIANT LAND SHARKS?! HELP ME!
KATIE, SLOW DOWN. WHAT'S HAPPENING?
LOOK AT THE DAMNFLITZING NEWS, CLINT!
AND GET READY--
FWIP
OH BOY.
CLINT BARTON, A.K.A. HAWKEYE.
OLYMPIC-LEVEL ATHLETE, ACROBAT AND SHARPSHOOTER. GENEROUSLY SHARES A CODENAME WITH KATE BISHOP. YES, IT'S CONFUSING.
OD, EVERYTHING IS AWFUL
EBODY DO SOMETHING
--BECAUSE AMERICA IS GONNA BE THERE TO TELEPORT YOUR BUTT RIGHT TO ME IN ABOUT TWO SECONDS!
ACK.
YOINK
C'MON, HAWKEYE.

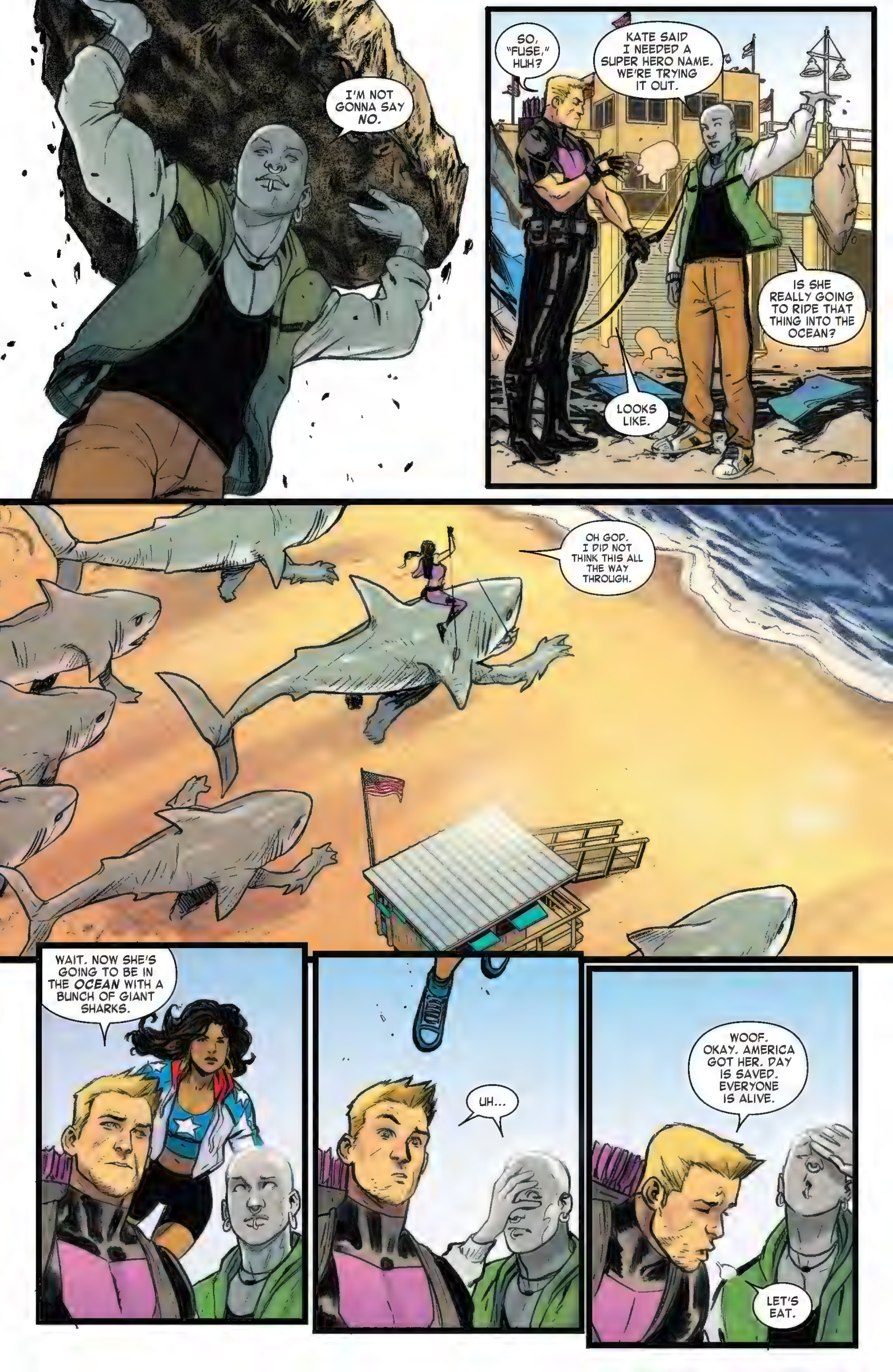

OKAY, NOW YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR, SHARK! THAT WAS MY FAVORITE TACO CART!
I FEEL LIKE THERE WAS A BETTER WAY TO DO THIS.
AMERICA CHAVEZ.
STRENGTH. FLIGHT. INVULNERABILITY.
OPENS DIMENSIONAL GATEWAYS.
LIKES TO KICK STUFF.
THERE ARE PLENTY OF LAND SHARKS TO GO AROUND, CLINT. CAN'T YOU GET YOUR OWN?
HEY, TALK TO YOUR FRIEND, KATIE. I WOULD HAVE BEEN *DELIGHTED* TO HAVE ARRIVED SOMEWHERE NEAR THE *GROUND*.
KATE, IF YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, YOU COULD HAVE JUST TEXTED. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO *ALL THIS*.
SPEED TO SKAT
ADORABLE. CAN YOU PLEASE START PUNCHING SOME LAND SHARKS BACK INTO THE SEA?

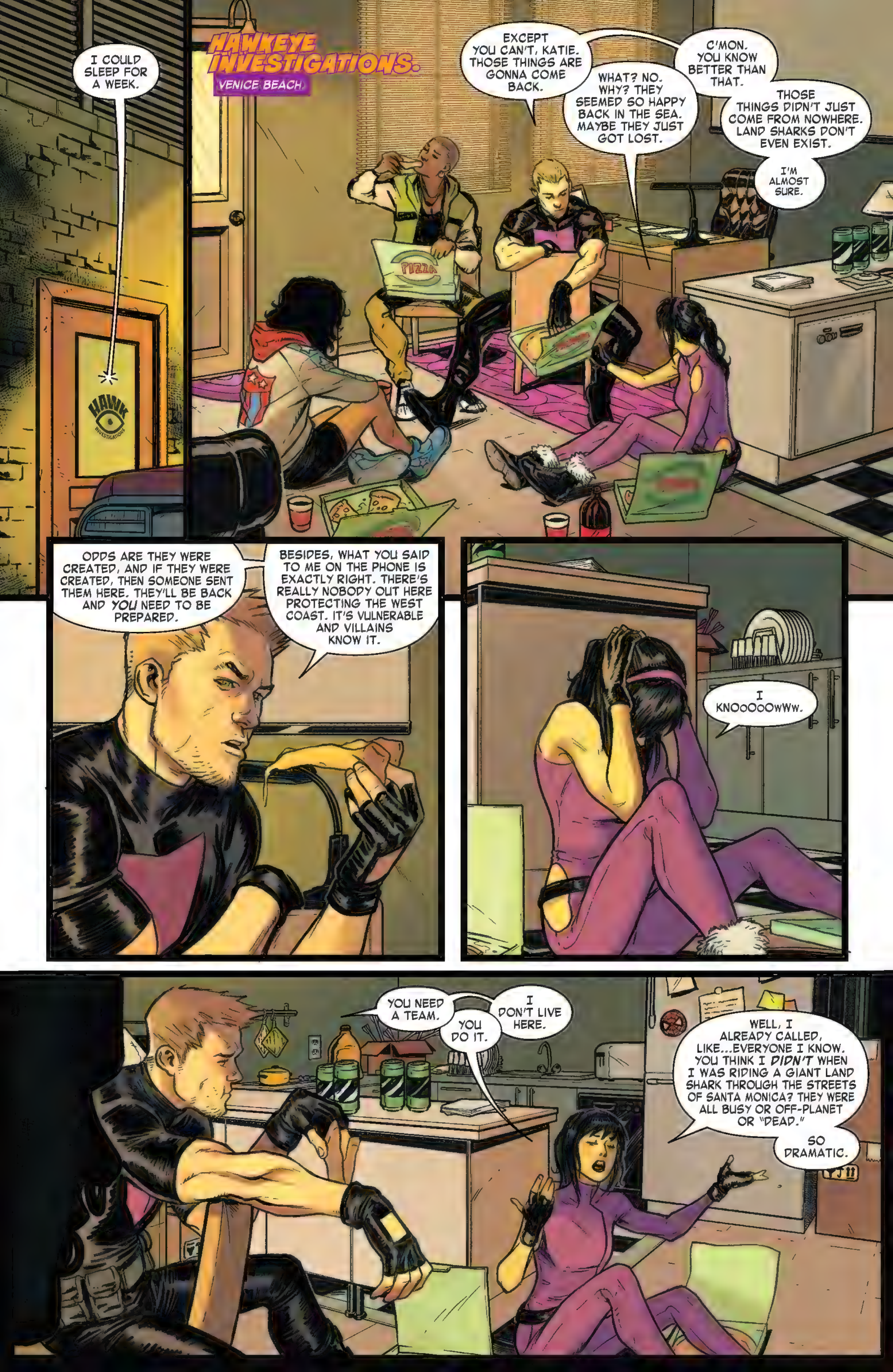

ONLY BECAUSE YOU CALLED ME ADORABLE.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
I DON'T CARE!
SHOES
ARE YOU AN IDIOT?
UH.
KATE IS AN EXCELLENT LEADER. SHE'D DO ANYTHING TO SAVE THE DAY. *ANYTHING.* TO BE HONEST, IT'S SHOCKING SHE'S STILL *ALIVE.*
REC
IS THAT REALLY AN ENDORSEMENT?
YOU KNOW I CAN KILL YOU WITH A SINGLE PUNCH, RIGHT?
REC
THIS SHARK WE'RE RIDING SEEMS LIKE THE LEADER.
YEAH. I'M THINKING IF WE CAN WRANGLE IT, POINT IT BACK TOWARD THE SEA, THE OTHERS MIGHT FOLLOW.
DO WE KNOW WHAT THEY WANT?
WELL, THEY'RE *SHARKS,* SO I'M GONNA GO OUT ON A LIMB AND SAY THEY WANNA EAT STUFF.
HOW MANY OF THEM ARE THERE?
FWIP
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? I'M NOT AN *OCEANOGRAPHER,* CLINT, I'M NOT *TAGGING* THEM.
MAYBE WE *SHOULD* TAG THEM.
YOU GOT ANY TAGGING ARROWS, HAWKEYE?
I DO NOT.

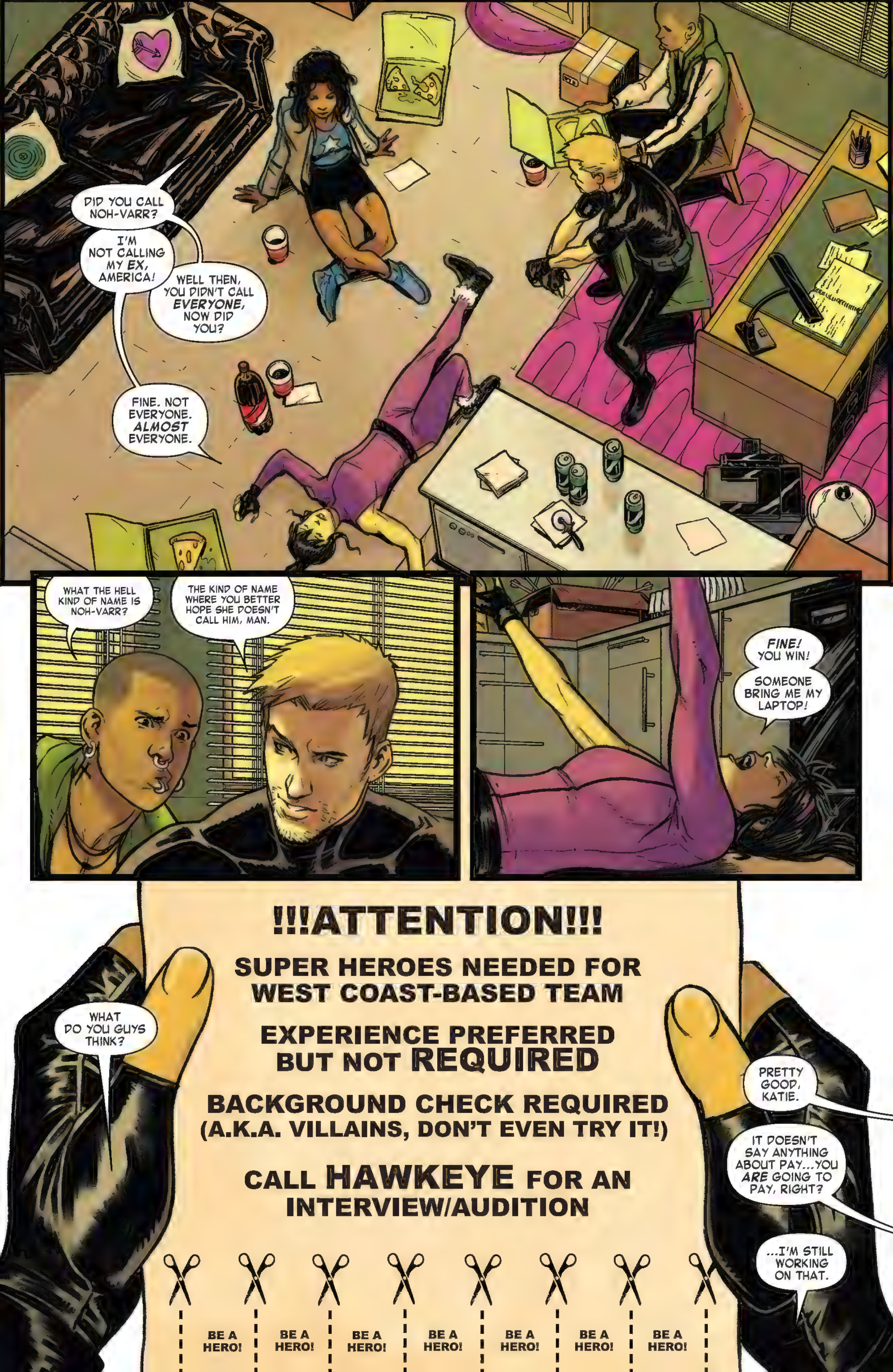

WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE ON THE GROUND?
JOHNNY'S DOWN THERE.
SPROING
UH-HUH. ARE YOU SURE YOUR NEW BOYFRIEND IS CUT OUT FOR THIS?
JOHNNY WATTS, A.K.A. FUSE.
CAN CHANGE HIS BODY TO MIMIC ANY SUBSTANCE HE COMES INTO CONTACT WITH. FIRST TIME BEING A SUPER HERO. FIRST TIME DATING A SUPER HERO. DOING PRETTY FINE.
YEAH, I'VE BEEN A SUPER HERO FOR ABOUT...TWO MINUTES.
BUT YOU'RE QUALIFIED FOR THIS TEAM?
UH...I WAS JUST TRYING TO HELP.
REC
THERE ARE LOTS OF OTHER WAYS TO HELP, AREN'T THERE?
I MEAN, SHE'S MY GIRLFRIEND SO...
WAIT...THAT SOUNDS BAD. CAN I START OVER?
REC

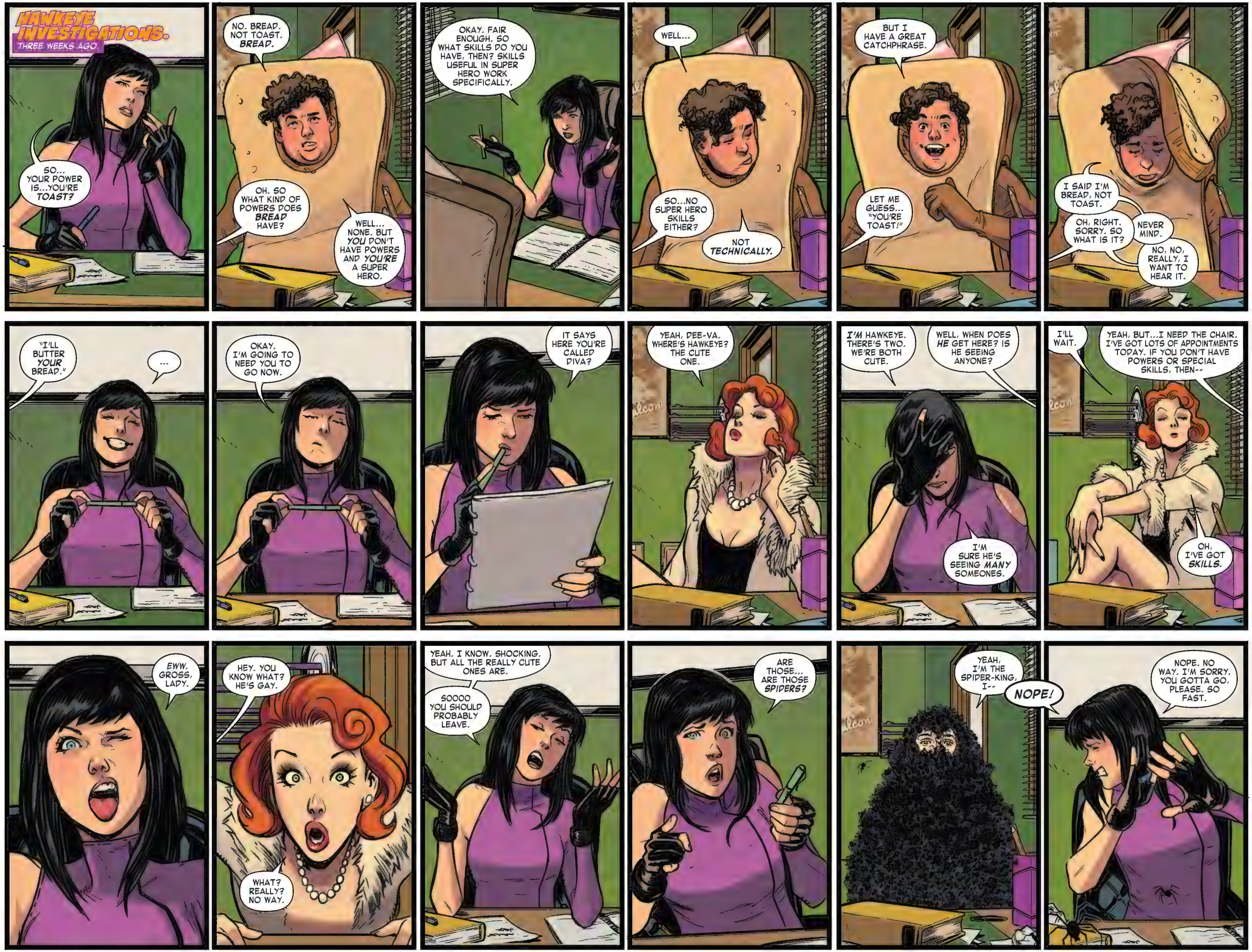

I THINK WHAT WE NEED ARE... REINS.
YEAH. YEAH... THAT MIGHT WORK.
THUNK
SORRY, BUDDY, BUT I HEARD YOU DON'T HAVE ANY NERVE ENDINGS IN THERE. ALSO...YOU'RE TRYING TO DESTROY MY CITY, SO... YEAH.
THIS IS THE WORST PLAN!
AHHHHHH--
--HHHHHHHH!

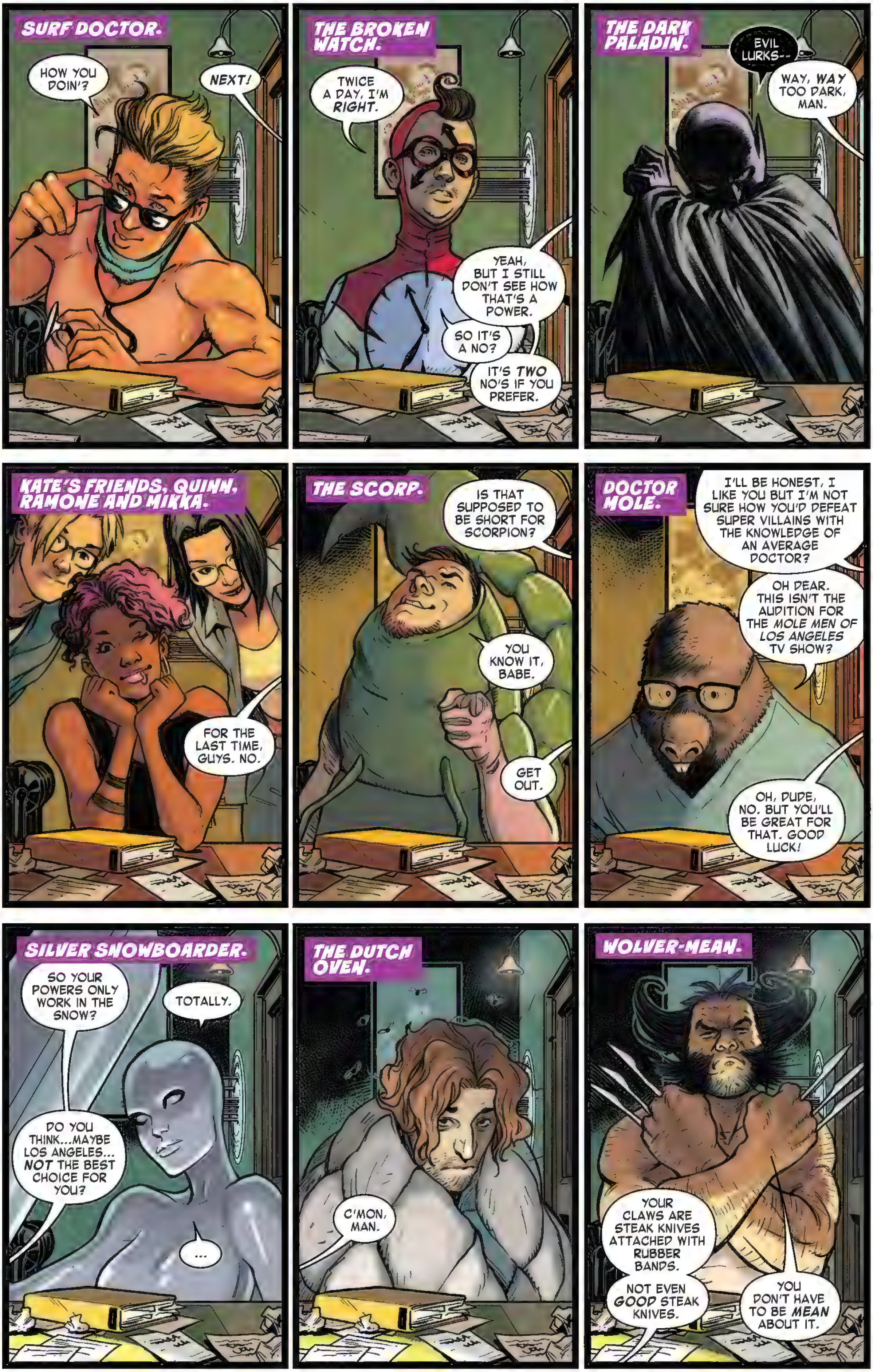

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT ACTUALLY WORKED.
I UNDERESTIMATED HOW SCARY IT WAS GOING TO BE.
RIGHT! GO RIGHT!
KATIE! RIGHT!
ON IT.
UNF I'M TRYING!
CLINT! THE BUILDING--
KR-KRASH
FWIP
BOOM
HEY, HAWKEYE. NICE WORK ON THE DEBRIS.
THANKS, KID. YOU WANT SOME HELP DOWN HERE?

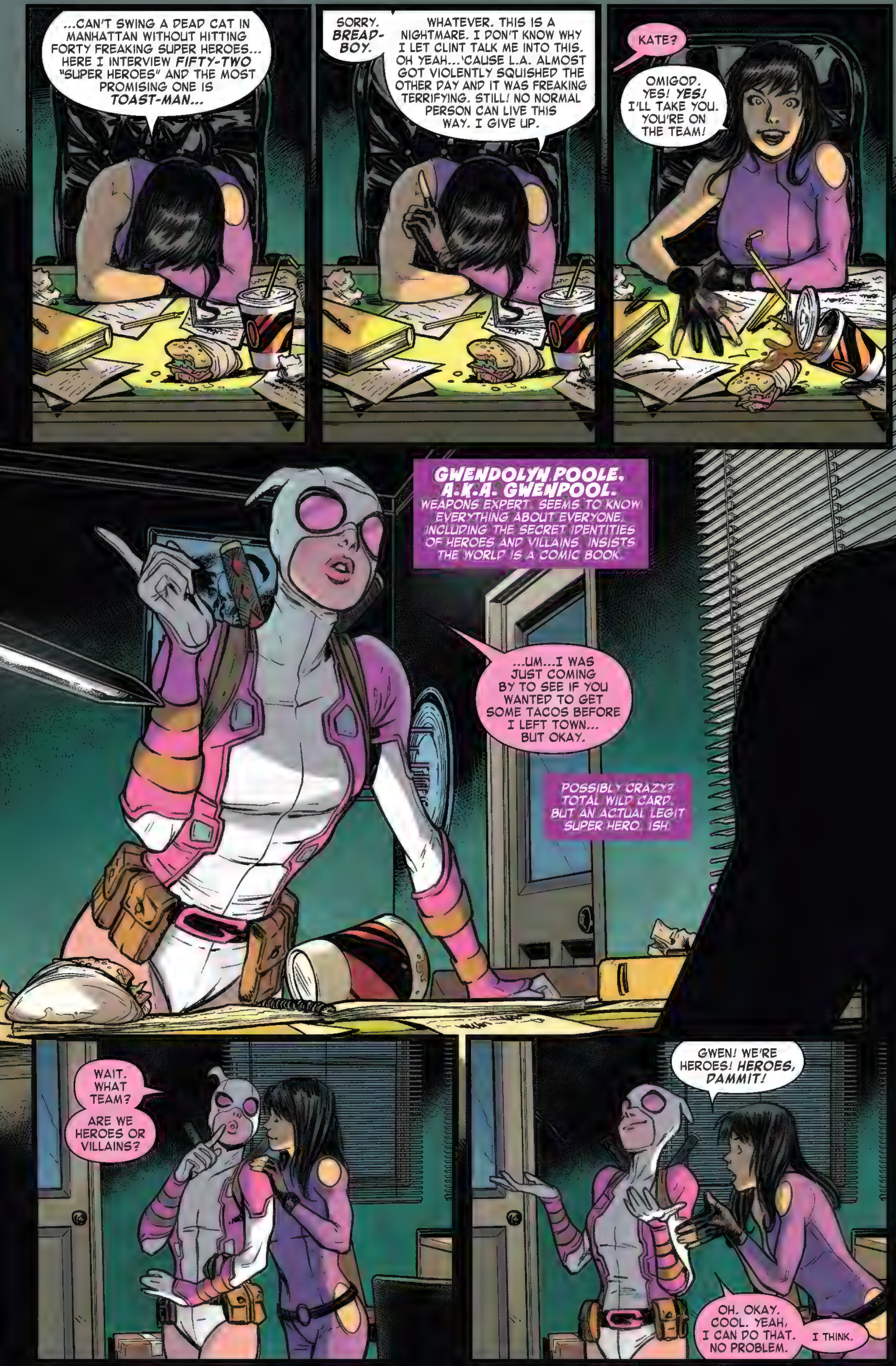

I'M NOT GONNA SAY *NO.*
SO, "FUSE," HUH?
KATE SAID I NEEDED A SUPER HERO NAME. WE'RE TRYING IT OUT.
IS SHE REALLY GOING TO RIDE THAT THING INTO THE OCEAN?
LOOKS LIKE.
OH GOD. I DID NOT THINK THIS ALL THE WAY THROUGH.
WAIT. NOW SHE'S GOING TO BE IN THE *OCEAN* WITH A BUNCH OF GIANT SHARKS.
UH...
WOOF. OKAY. AMERICA GOT HER. DAY IS SAVED. EVERYONE IS ALIVE.
LET'S EAT.

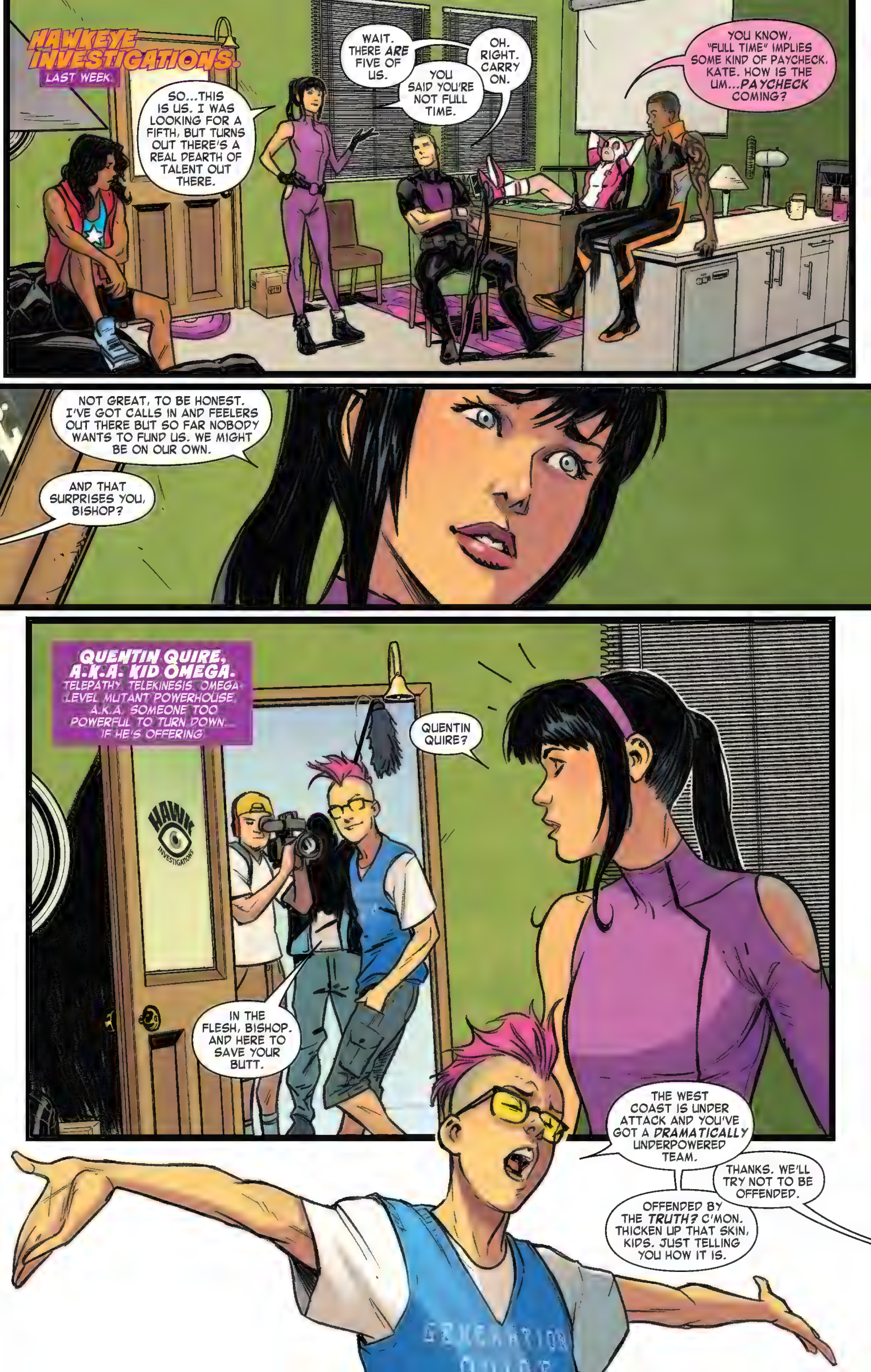

I COULD SLEEP FOR A WEEK.
HAWK INVESTIGATIONS
HAWKEYE INVESTIGATIONS.
VENICE BEACH.
PIZZA
EXCEPT YOU CAN'T, KATIE. THOSE THINGS ARE GONNA COME BACK.
WHAT? NO. WHY? THEY SEEMED SO HAPPY BACK IN THE SEA. MAYBE THEY JUST GOT LOST.
C'MON. YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT.
THOSE THINGS DIDN'T JUST COME FROM NOWHERE. LAND SHARKS DON'T EVEN EXIST.
I'M ALMOST SURE.
ODDS ARE THEY WERE CREATED, AND IF THEY WERE CREATED, THEN SOMEONE SENT THEM HERE. THEY'LL BE BACK AND *YOU* NEED TO BE PREPARED.
BESIDES, WHAT YOU SAID TO ME ON THE PHONE IS EXACTLY RIGHT. THERE'S REALLY NOBODY OUT HERE PROTECTING THE WEST COAST. IT'S VULNERABLE AND VILLAINS KNOW IT.
I KNOoOOoWWw.
YOU NEED A TEAM.
I DON'T LIVE HERE.
YOU DO IT.
WELL, I ALREADY CALLED, LIKE...EVERYONE I KNOW. YOU THINK I *DIDN'T* WHEN I WAS RIDING A GIANT LAND SHARK THROUGH THE STREETS OF SANTA MONICA? THEY WERE ALL BUSY OR OFF-PLANET OR "DEAD."
SO DRAMATIC.

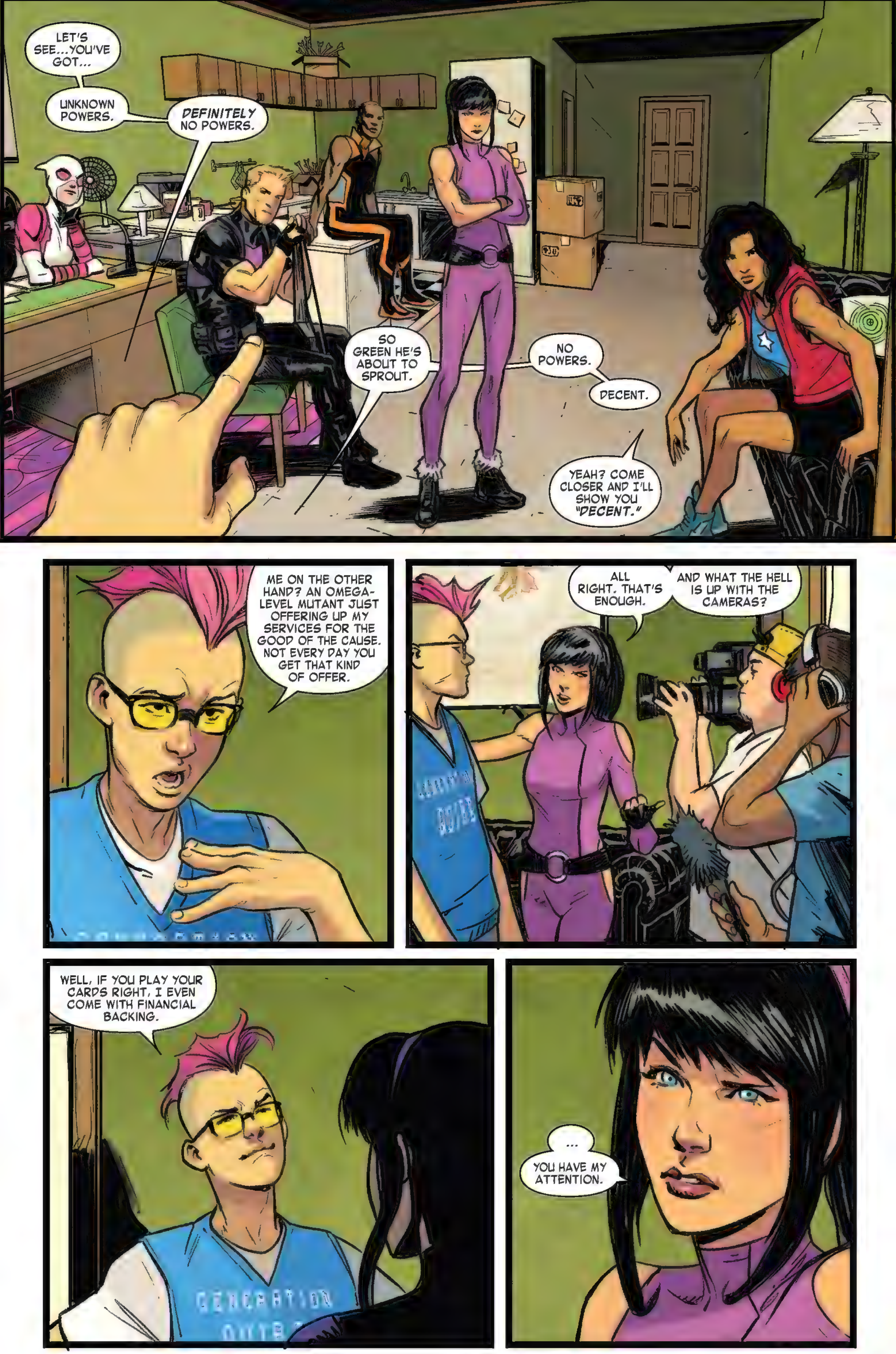

DID YOU CALL NOH-VARR?
I'M NOT CALLING MY *EX*, AMERICA!
WELL THEN, YOU DIDN'T CALL *EVERYONE*, NOW DID YOU?
FINE. NOT EVERYONE. *ALMOST* EVERYONE.
WHAT THE HELL KIND OF NAME IS NOH-VARR?
THE KIND OF NAME WHERE YOU BETTER HOPE SHE DOESN'T CALL HIM, MAN.
FINE! YOU WIN!
SOMEONE BRING ME MY LAPTOP!
!!!ATTENTION!!!
SUPER HEROES NEEDED FOR WEST COAST-BASED TEAM
EXPERIENCE PREFERRED BUT NOT REQUIRED
BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIRED (A.K.A. VILLAINS, DON'T EVEN TRY IT!)
CALL HAWKEYE FOR AN INTERVIEW/AUDITION
BE A HERO! BE A HERO! BE A HERO! BE A HERO! BE A HERO! BE A HERO! BE A HERO!
WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK?
PRETTY GOOD, KATIE.
IT DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT PAY...YOU *ARE* GOING TO PAY, RIGHT?
...I'M STILL WORKING ON THAT.

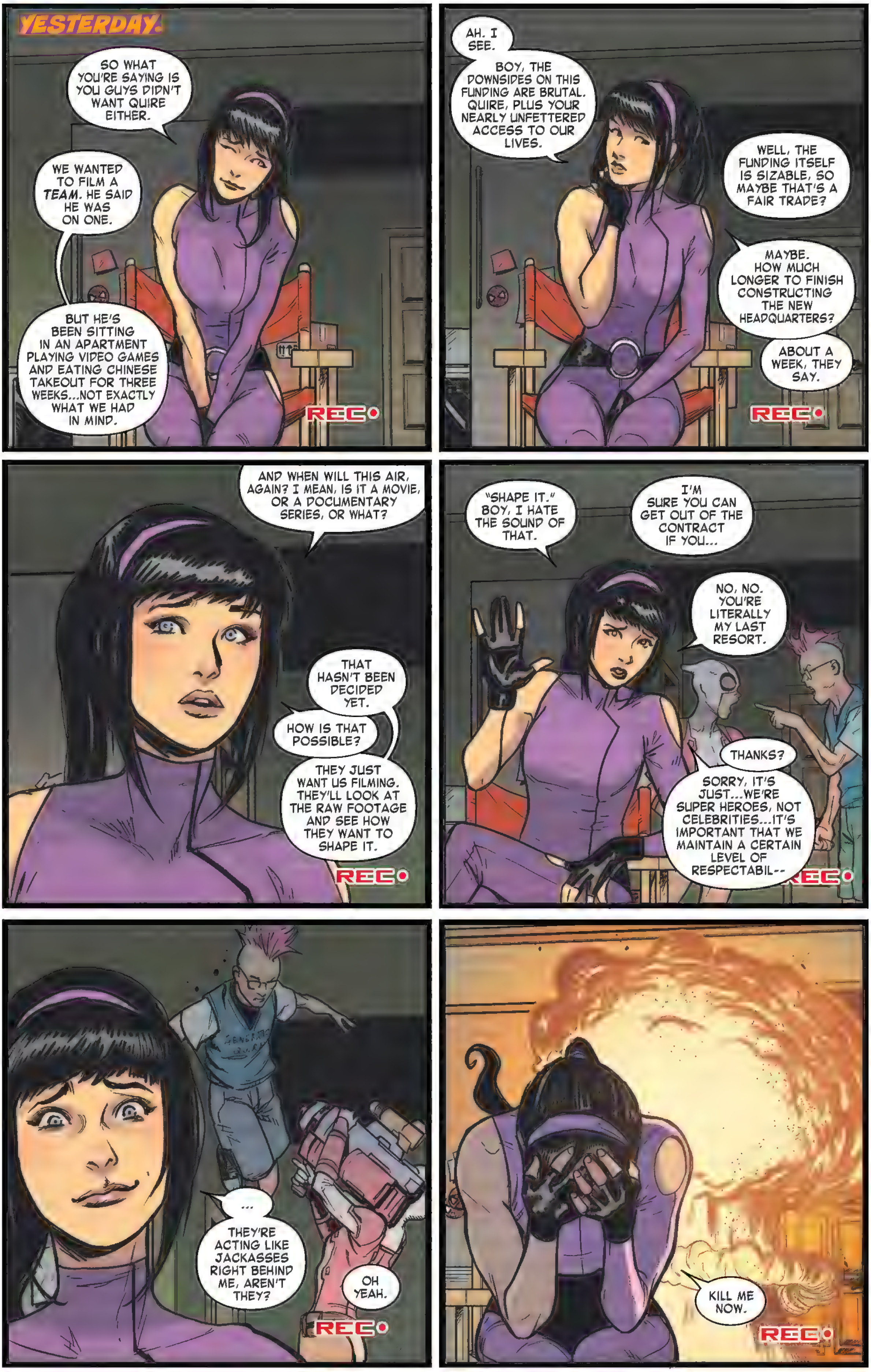

HAWKEYE INVESTIGATIONS.
THREE WEEKS AGO
SO... YOUR POWER IS...YOU'RE TOAST?
NO. BREAD. NOT TOAST. BREAD.
OH. SO WHAT KIND OF POWERS DOES BREAD HAVE?
WELL... NONE. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE POWERS AND YOU'RE A SUPER HERO.
OKAY. FAIR ENOUGH. SO WHAT SKILLS DO YOU HAVE, THEN? SKILLS USEFUL IN SUPER HERO WORK SPECIFICALLY.
WELL...
SO...NO SUPER HERO SKILLS EITHER?
NOT TECHNICALLY.
BUT I HAVE A GREAT CATCHPHRASE.
LET ME GUESS... "YOU'RE TOAST!"
I SAID I'M BREAD, NOT TOAST.
OH, RIGHT. SORRY. SO WHAT IS IT?
NEVER MIND.
NO, NO, REALLY, I WANT TO HEAR IT.
"I'LL BUTTER YOUR BREAD."
...
OKAY. I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO GO NOW.
IT SAYS HERE YOU'RE CALLED DIVA?
YEAH, DEE-VA. WHERE'S HAWKEYE? THE CUTE ONE.
I'M HAWKEYE. THERE'S TWO. WE'RE BOTH CUTE.
WELL, WHEN DOES HE GET HERE? IS HE SEEING ANYONE?
I'M SURE HE'S SEEING MANY SOMEONES.
I'LL WAIT.
YEAH, BUT...I NEED THE CHAIR. I'VE GOT LOTS OF APPOINTMENTS TODAY. IF YOU DON'T HAVE POWERS OR SPECIAL SKILLS, THEN--
OH, I'VE GOT SKILLS.
EWW. GROSS, LADY.
HEY. YOU KNOW WHAT? HE'S GAY.
WHAT? REALLY? NO WAY.
YEAH. I KNOW. SHOCKING. BUT ALL THE REALLY CUTE ONES ARE.
SOOOO YOU SHOULD PROBABLY LEAVE.
ARE THOSE... ARE THOSE SPIDERS?
YEAH, I'M THE SPIDER-KING, I--
NOPE!
NOPE. NO WAY. I'M SORRY. YOU GOTTA GO, PLEASE. SO FAST.

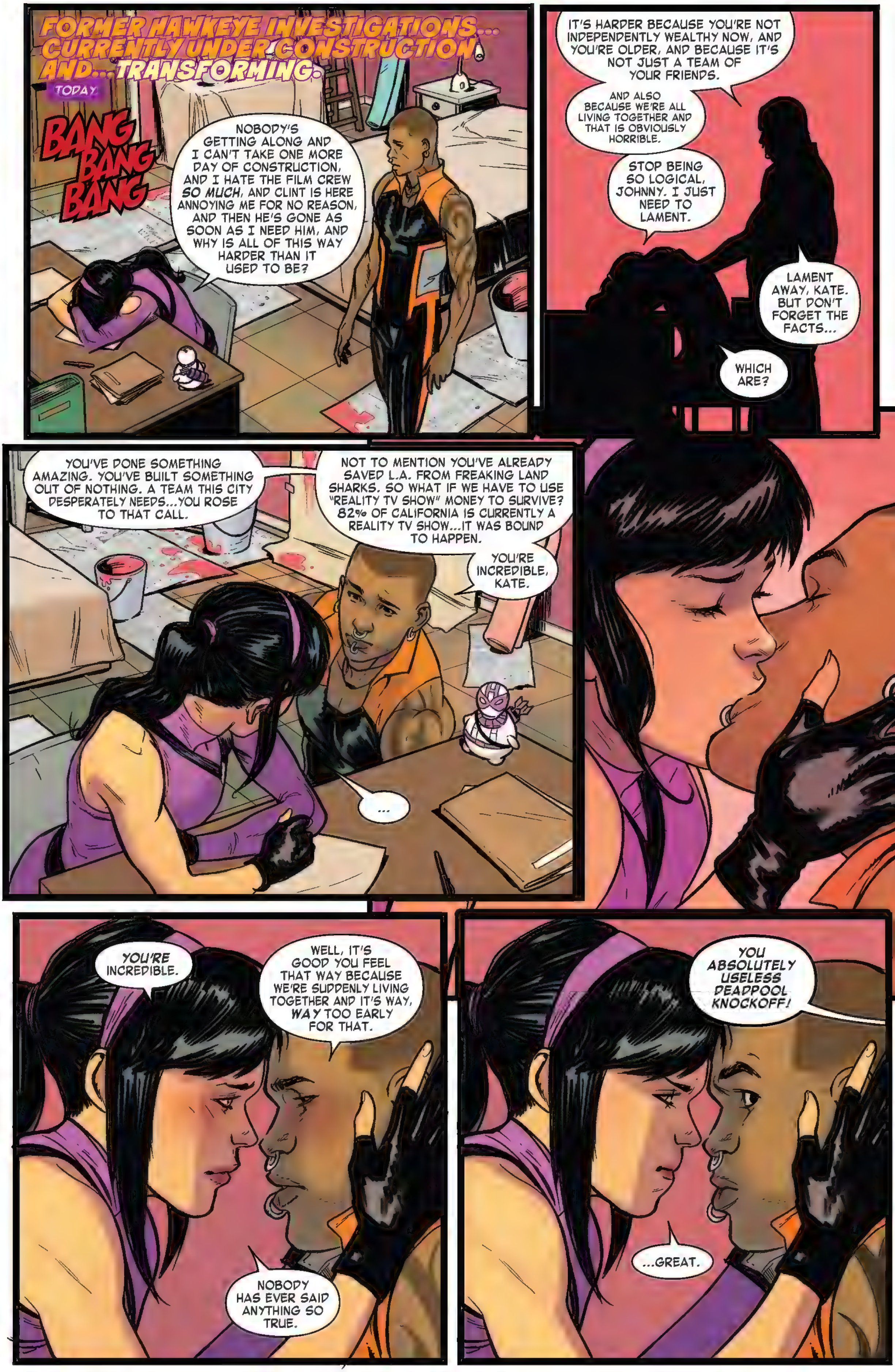

SURF DOCTOR.
HOW YOU DOIN'?
NEXT!
THE BROKEN WATCH.
TWICE A DAY, I'M *RIGHT*.
YEAH, BUT I STILL DON'T SEE HOW THAT'S A POWER.
SO IT'S A NO?
IT'S *TWO* NO'S IF YOU PREFER.
THE DARK PALADIN.
EVIL LURKS--
WAY, *WAY* TOO DARK, MAN.
KATE'S FRIENDS, QUINN, RAMONE AND MIKKA.
FOR THE LAST TIME, GUYS. NO.
THE SCORP.
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE SHORT FOR SCORPION?
YOU KNOW IT, BABE.
GET OUT.
DOCTOR MOLE.
I'LL BE HONEST, I LIKE YOU BUT I'M NOT SURE HOW YOU'D DEFEAT SUPER VILLAINS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF AN AVERAGE DOCTOR?
OH DEAR. THIS ISN'T THE AUDITION FOR THE *MOLE MEN OF LOS ANGELES* TV SHOW?
OH, DUDE, NO. BUT YOU'LL BE GREAT FOR THAT. GOOD LUCK!
SILVER SNOWBOARDER.
SO YOUR POWERS ONLY WORK IN THE SNOW?
TOTALLY.
DO YOU THINK...MAYBE LOS ANGELES... *NOT* THE BEST CHOICE FOR YOU?
...
THE DUTCH OVEN.
C'MON, MAN.
WOLVER-MEAN.
YOUR CLAWS ARE STEAK KNIVES ATTACHED WITH RUBBER BANDS.
NOT EVEN *GOOD* STEAK KNIVES.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE *MEAN* ABOUT IT.

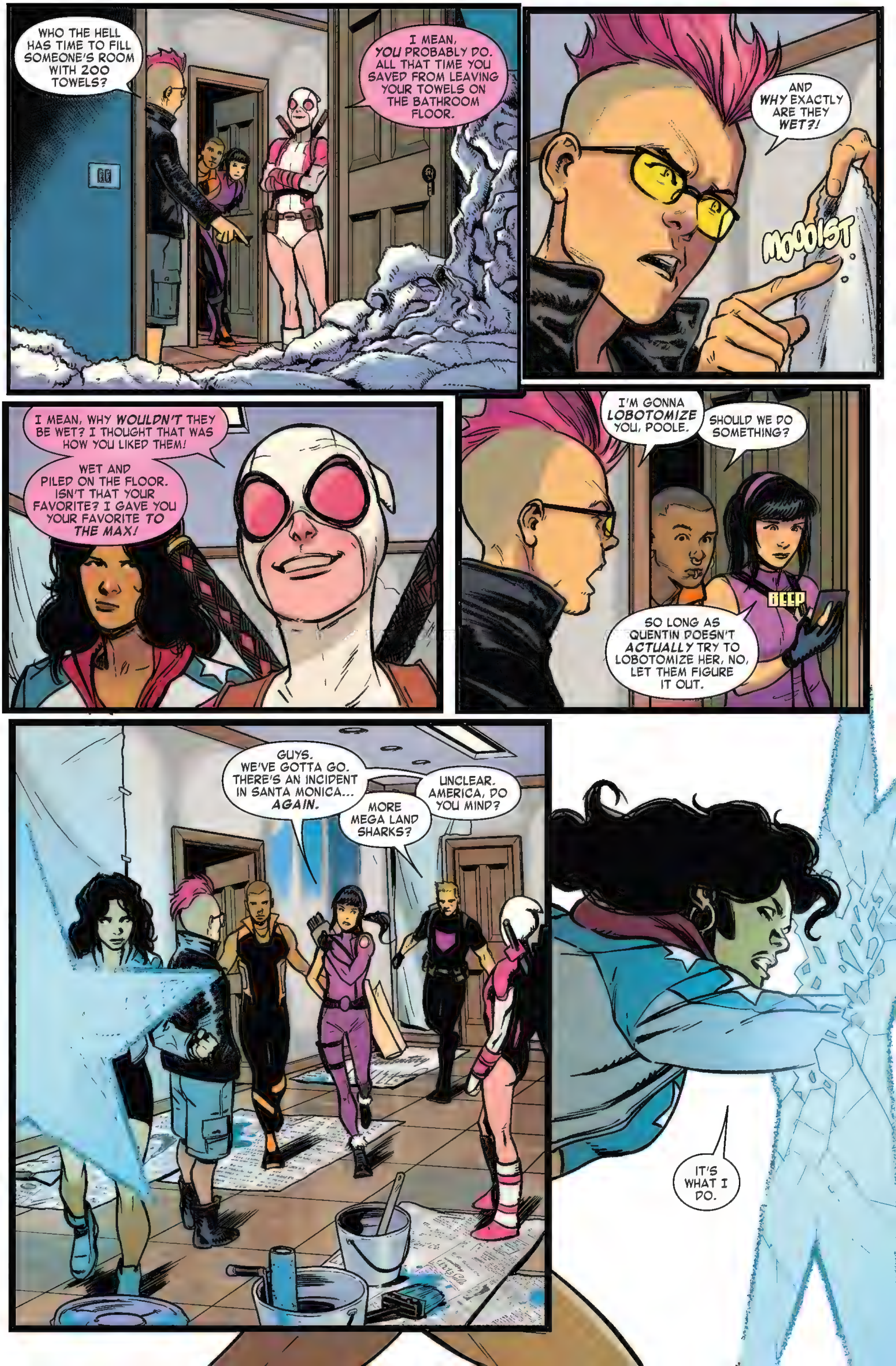

...CAN'T SWING A DEAD CAT IN MANHATTAN WITHOUT HITTING FORTY FREAKING SUPER HEROES... HERE I INTERVIEW *FIFTY-TWO* "SUPER HEROES" AND THE MOST PROMISING ONE IS *TOAST-MAN*...
SORRY. *BREAD-BOY*.
WHATEVER. THIS IS A NIGHTMARE. I DON'T KNOW WHY I LET CLINT TALK ME INTO THIS. OH YEAH...'CAUSE L.A. ALMOST GOT VIOLENTLY SQUISHED THE OTHER DAY AND IT WAS FREAKING TERRIFYING. STILL! NO NORMAL PERSON CAN LIVE THIS WAY. I GIVE UP.
KATE?
OMIGOD. YES! *YES!* I'LL TAKE YOU. YOU'RE ON THE TEAM!
GWENDOLYN POOLE. A.K.A. GWENPOOL. WEAPONS EXPERT. SEEMS TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE SECRET IDENTITIES OF HEROES AND VILLAINS. INSISTS THE WORLD IS A COMIC BOOK.
...UM...I WAS JUST COMING BY TO SEE IF YOU WANTED TO GET SOME TACOS BEFORE I LEFT TOWN... BUT OKAY.
POSSIBLY CRAZY? TOTAL WILD CARD. BUT AN ACTUAL LEGIT SUPER HERO. ISH.
WAIT. WHAT TEAM?
ARE WE HEROES OR VILLAINS?
GWEN! WE'RE HEROES! *HEROES, DAMMIT!*
OH. OKAY. COOL. YEAH, I CAN DO THAT. NO PROBLEM.
I THINK.

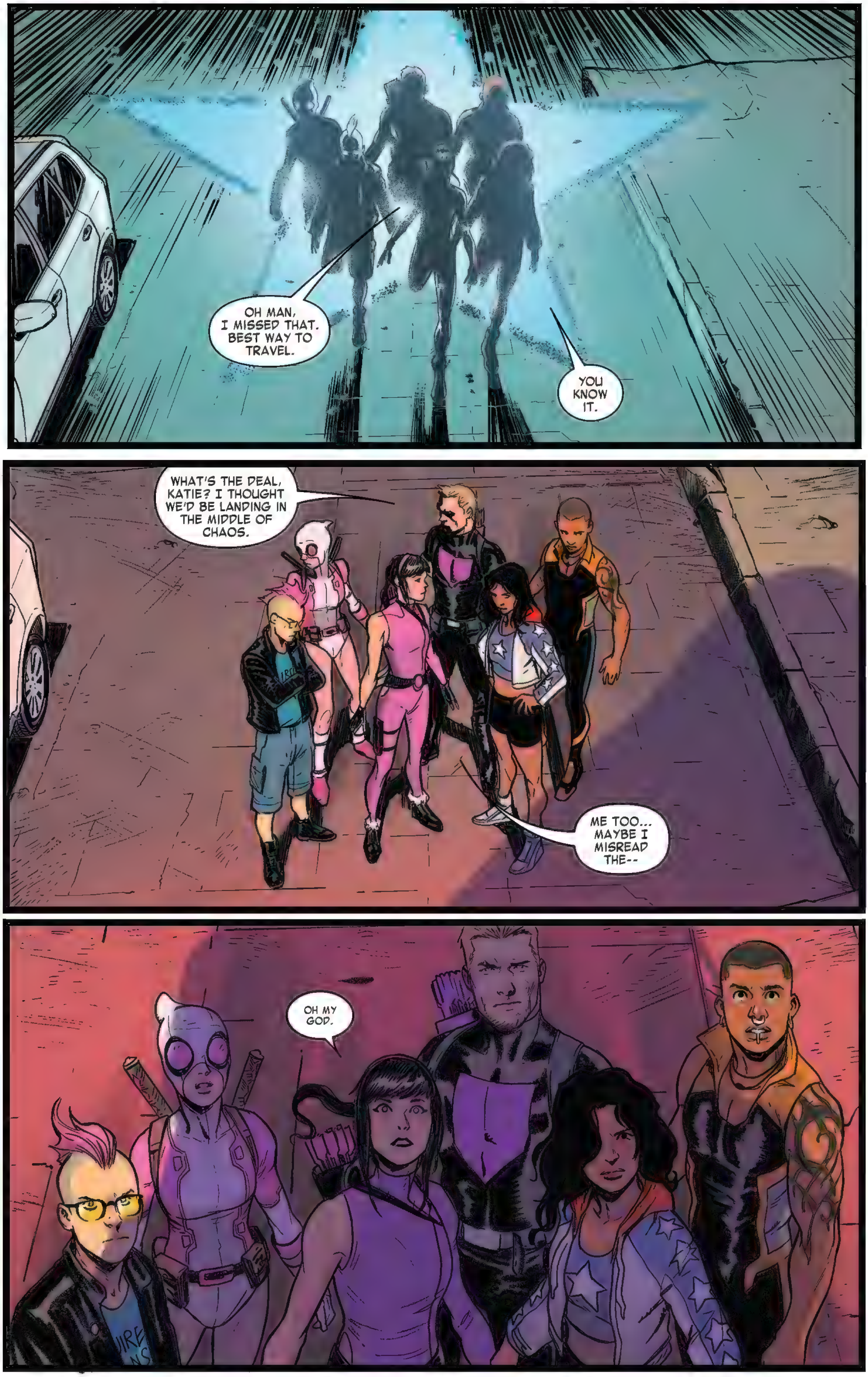

HAWKEYE INVESTIGATIONS.
LAST WEEK.
SO...THIS IS US. I WAS LOOKING FOR A FIFTH, BUT TURNS OUT THERE'S A REAL DEARTH OF TALENT OUT THERE.
WAIT. THERE *ARE* FIVE OF US.
YOU SAID YOU'RE NOT FULL TIME.
OH. RIGHT. CARRY ON.
YOU KNOW, "FULL TIME" IMPLIES SOME KIND OF PAYCHECK, KATE. HOW IS THE UM...*PAYCHECK* COMING?
NOT GREAT, TO BE HONEST. I'VE GOT CALLS IN AND FEELERS OUT THERE BUT SO FAR NOBODY WANTS TO FUND US. WE MIGHT BE ON OUR OWN.
AND THAT SURPRISES YOU, BISHOP?
QUENTIN QUIRE, A.K.A. KID OMEGA.
TELEPATHY. TELEKINESIS. OMEGA-LEVEL MUTANT POWERHOUSE. A.K.A. SOMEONE TOO POWERFUL TO TURN DOWN... IF HE'S OFFERING.
QUENTIN QUIRE?
HAWK INVESTIGATIONS
IN THE FLESH, BISHOP. AND HERE TO SAVE YOUR BUTT.
THE WEST COAST IS UNDER ATTACK AND YOU'VE GOT A *DRAMATICALLY* UNDERPOWERED TEAM.
THANKS. WE'LL TRY NOT TO BE OFFENDED.
OFFENDED BY THE *TRUTH?* C'MON. THICKEN UP THAT SKIN, KIDS. JUST TELLING YOU HOW IT IS.

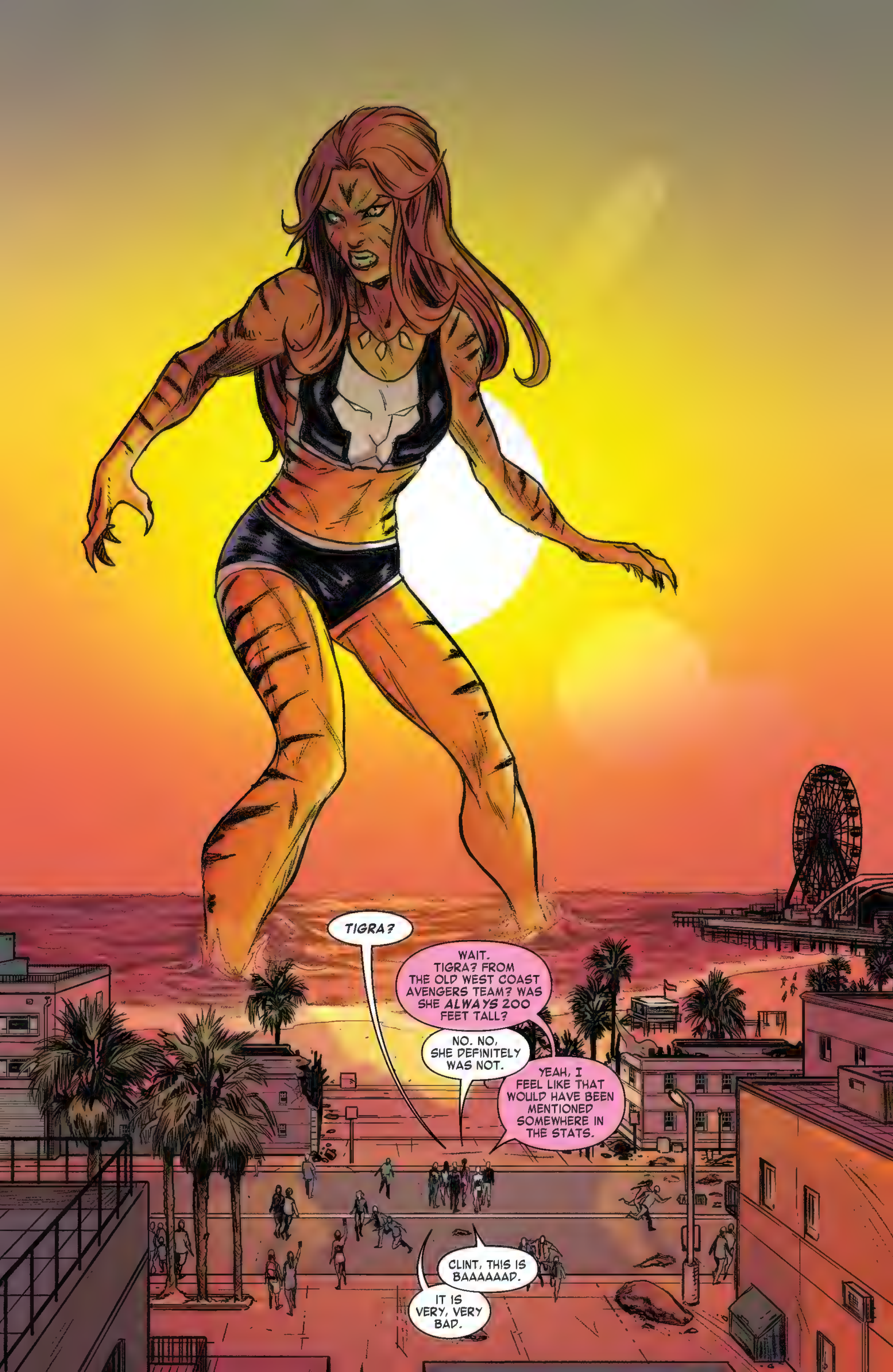

LET'S SEE...YOU'VE GOT...
UNKNOWN POWERS.
DEFINITELY NO POWERS.
SO GREEN HE'S ABOUT TO SPROUT.
NO POWERS.
DECENT.
YEAH? COME CLOSER AND I'LL SHOW YOU *"DECENT."*
ME ON THE OTHER HAND? AN OMEGA-LEVEL MUTANT JUST OFFERING UP MY SERVICES FOR THE GOOD OF THE CAUSE. NOT EVERY DAY YOU GET THAT KIND OF OFFER.
ALL RIGHT. THAT'S ENOUGH.
AND WHAT THE HELL IS UP WITH THE CAMERAS?
WELL, IF YOU PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT, I EVEN COME WITH FINANCIAL BACKING.
...
YOU HAVE MY ATTENTION.
GENERATION OUTBE

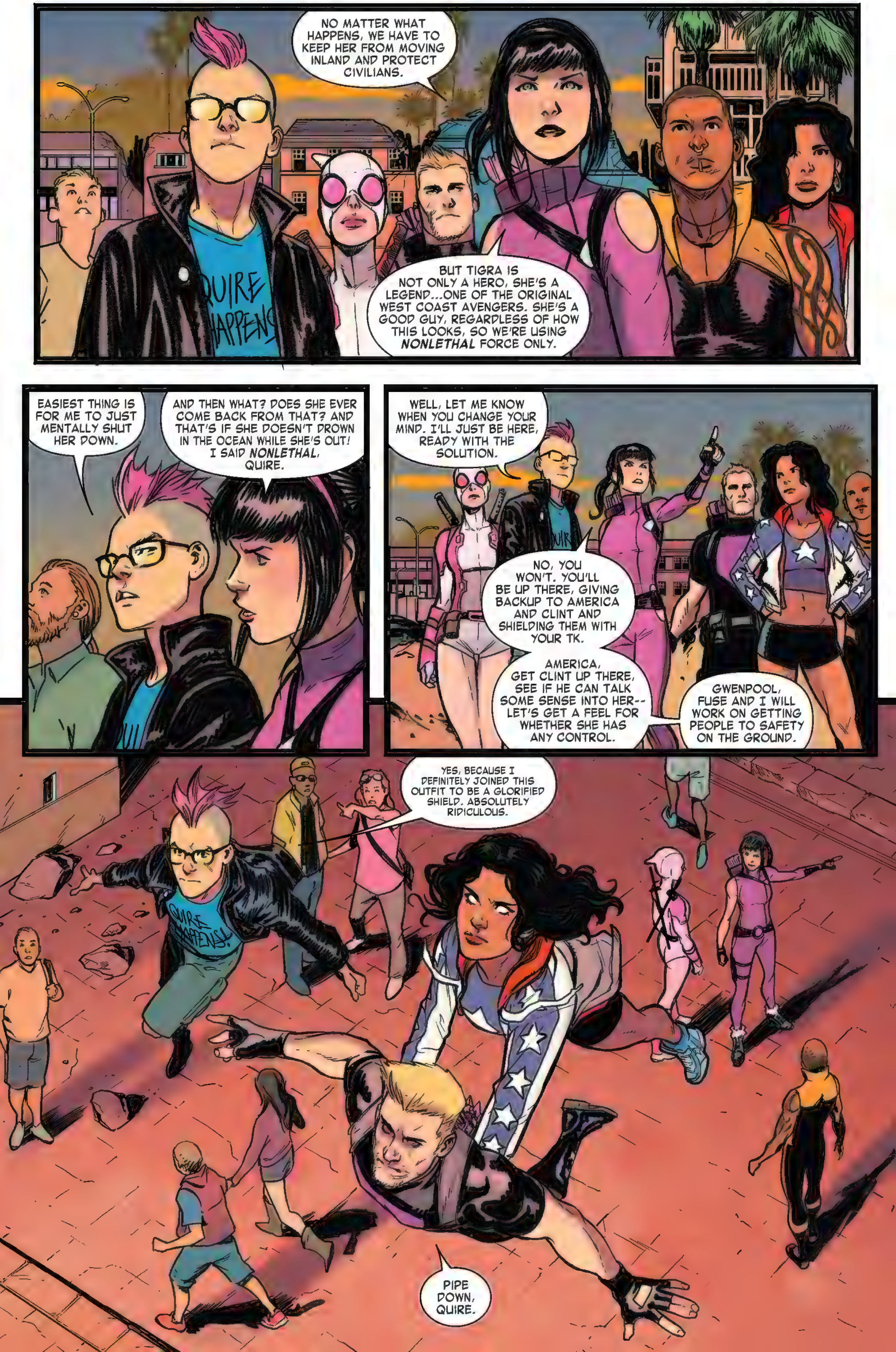

YESTERDAY.
SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS YOU GUYS DIDN'T WANT QUIRE EITHER.
WE WANTED TO FILM A TEAM. HE SAID HE WAS ON ONE.
BUT HE'S BEEN SITTING IN AN APARTMENT PLAYING VIDEO GAMES AND EATING CHINESE TAKEOUT FOR THREE WEEKS...NOT EXACTLY WHAT WE HAD IN MIND.
REC
AH. I SEE.
BOY, THE DOWNSIDES ON THIS FUNDING ARE BRUTAL. QUIRE, PLUS YOUR NEARLY UNFETTERED ACCESS TO OUR LIVES.
WELL, THE FUNDING ITSELF IS SIZABLE, SO MAYBE THAT'S A FAIR TRADE?
MAYBE. HOW MUCH LONGER TO FINISH CONSTRUCTING THE NEW HEADQUARTERS?
ABOUT A WEEK, THEY SAY.
REC
AND WHEN WILL THIS AIR, AGAIN? I MEAN, IS IT A MOVIE, OR A DOCUMENTARY SERIES, OR WHAT?
THAT HASN'T BEEN DECIDED YET.
HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
THEY JUST WANT US FILMING. THEY'LL LOOK AT THE RAW FOOTAGE AND SEE HOW THEY WANT TO SHAPE IT.
REC
"SHAPE IT." BOY, I HATE THE SOUND OF THAT.
I'M SURE YOU CAN GET OUT OF THE CONTRACT IF YOU...
NO, NO. YOU'RE LITERALLY MY LAST RESORT.
THANKS?
SORRY, IT'S JUST...WE'RE SUPER HEROES, NOT CELEBRITIES...IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE MAINTAIN A CERTAIN LEVEL OF RESPECTABIL--
REC
...
THEY'RE ACTING LIKE JACKASSES RIGHT BEHIND ME, AREN'T THEY?
OH YEAH.
REC
KILL ME NOW.
REC

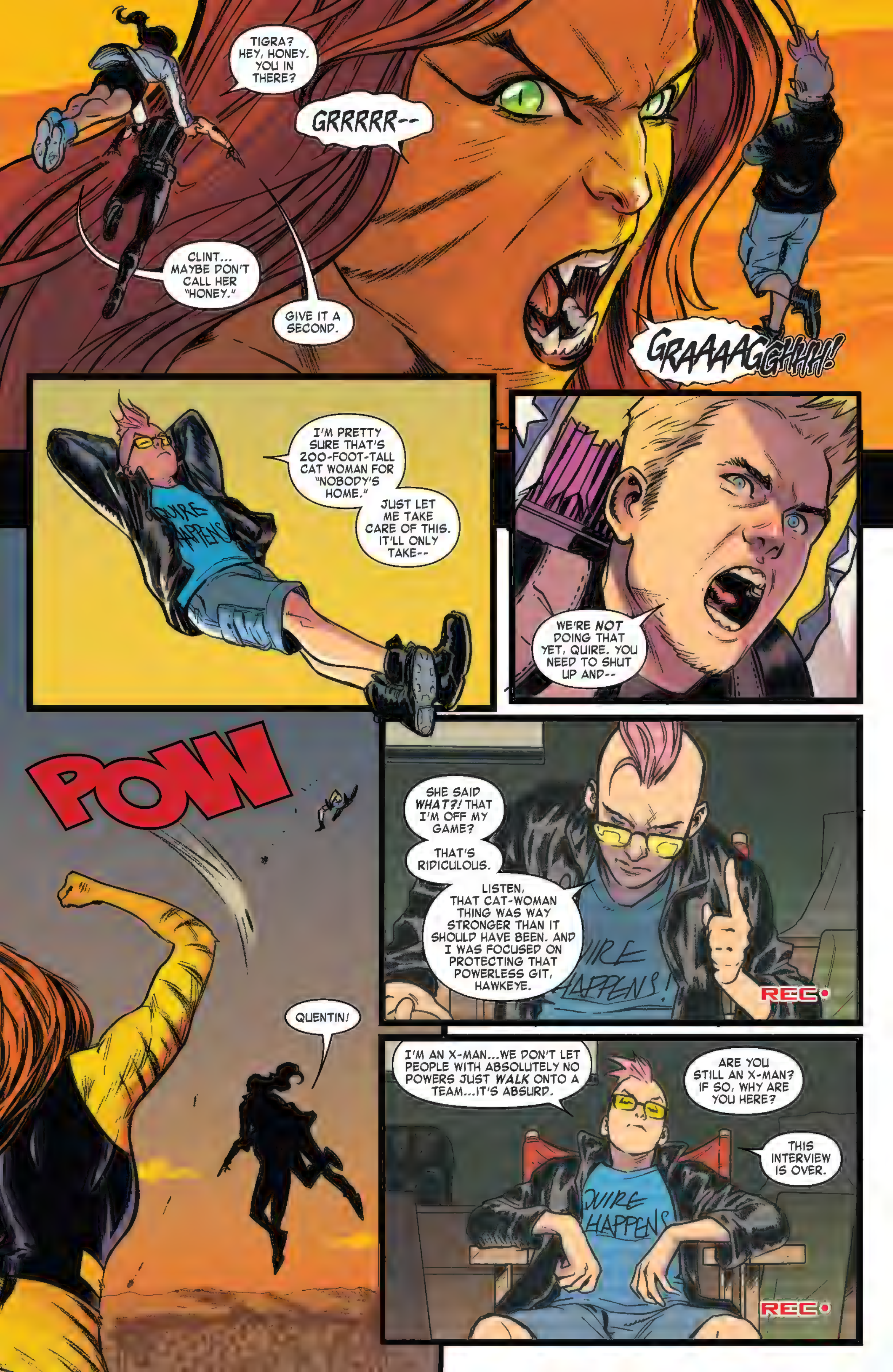

FORMER HAWKEYE INVESTIGATIONS... CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND...TRANSFORMING.
TODAY
BANG BANG BANG
NOBODY'S GETTING ALONG AND I CAN'T TAKE ONE MORE DAY OF CONSTRUCTION, AND I HATE THE FILM CREW *SO MUCH*, AND CLINT IS HERE ANNOYING ME FOR NO REASON, AND THEN HE'S GONE AS SOON AS I NEED HIM, AND WHY IS ALL OF THIS WAY HARDER THAN IT USED TO BE?
IT'S HARDER BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY NOW, AND YOU'RE OLDER, AND BECAUSE IT'S NOT JUST A TEAM OF YOUR FRIENDS.
AND ALSO BECAUSE WE'RE ALL LIVING TOGETHER AND THAT IS OBVIOUSLY HORRIBLE.
STOP BEING SO LOGICAL, JOHNNY. I JUST NEED TO LAMENT.
LAMENT AWAY, KATE. BUT DON'T FORGET THE FACTS...
WHICH ARE?
YOU'VE DONE SOMETHING AMAZING. YOU'VE BUILT SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING. A TEAM THIS CITY DESPERATELY NEEDS...YOU ROSE TO THAT CALL.
NOT TO MENTION YOU'VE ALREADY SAVED L.A. FROM FREAKING LAND SHARKS. SO WHAT IF WE HAVE TO USE "REALITY TV SHOW" MONEY TO SURVIVE? 82% OF CALIFORNIA IS CURRENTLY A REALITY TV SHOW...IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN.
YOU'RE INCREDIBLE, KATE.
...
YOU'RE INCREDIBLE.
WELL, IT'S GOOD YOU FEEL THAT WAY BECAUSE WE'RE SUDDENLY LIVING TOGETHER AND IT'S WAY, *WAY* TOO EARLY FOR THAT.
NOBODY HAS EVER SAID ANYTHING SO TRUE.
...GREAT.
YOU ABSOLUTELY USELESS DEADPOOL KNOCKOFF!

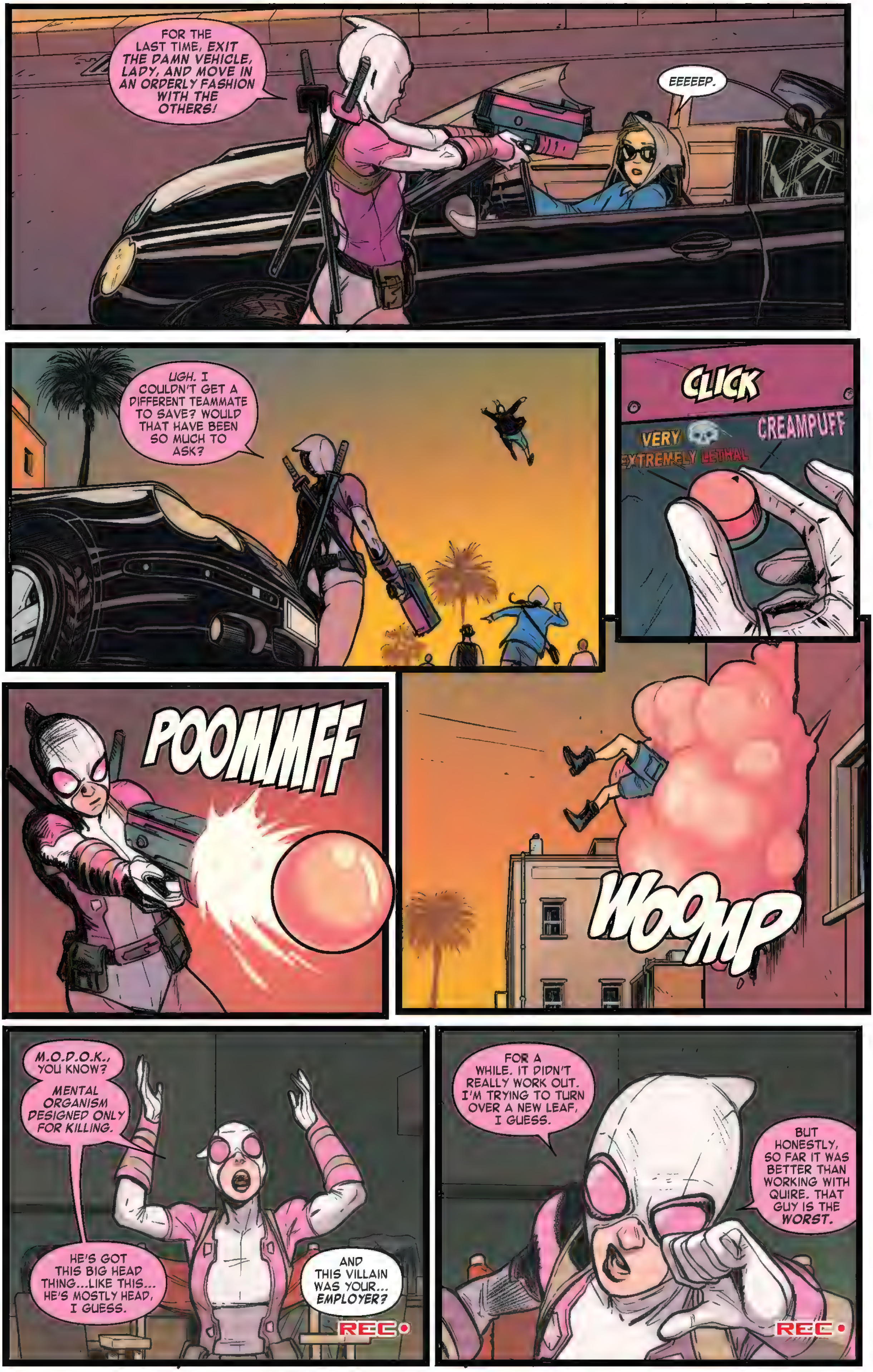

WHO THE HELL HAS TIME TO FILL SOMEONE'S ROOM WITH 200 TOWELS?
I MEAN, *YOU* PROBABLY DO. ALL THAT TIME YOU SAVED FROM LEAVING YOUR TOWELS ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR.
AND *WHY* EXACTLY ARE THEY *WET?!*
MOOOIST
I MEAN, WHY *WOULDN'T* THEY BE WET? I THOUGHT THAT WAS HOW YOU LIKED THEM!
WET AND PILED ON THE FLOOR. ISN'T THAT YOUR FAVORITE? I GAVE YOU YOUR FAVORITE *TO THE MAX!*
I'M GONNA *LOBOTOMIZE* YOU, POOLE.
SHOULD WE DO SOMETHING?
BEEP
SO LONG AS QUENTIN DOESN'T *ACTUALLY* TRY TO LOBOTOMIZE HER, NO, LET THEM FIGURE IT OUT.
GUYS. WE'VE GOTTA GO. THERE'S AN INCIDENT IN SANTA MONICA... *AGAIN.*
MORE MEGA LAND SHARKS?
UNCLEAR. AMERICA, DO YOU MIND?
IT'S WHAT I DO.

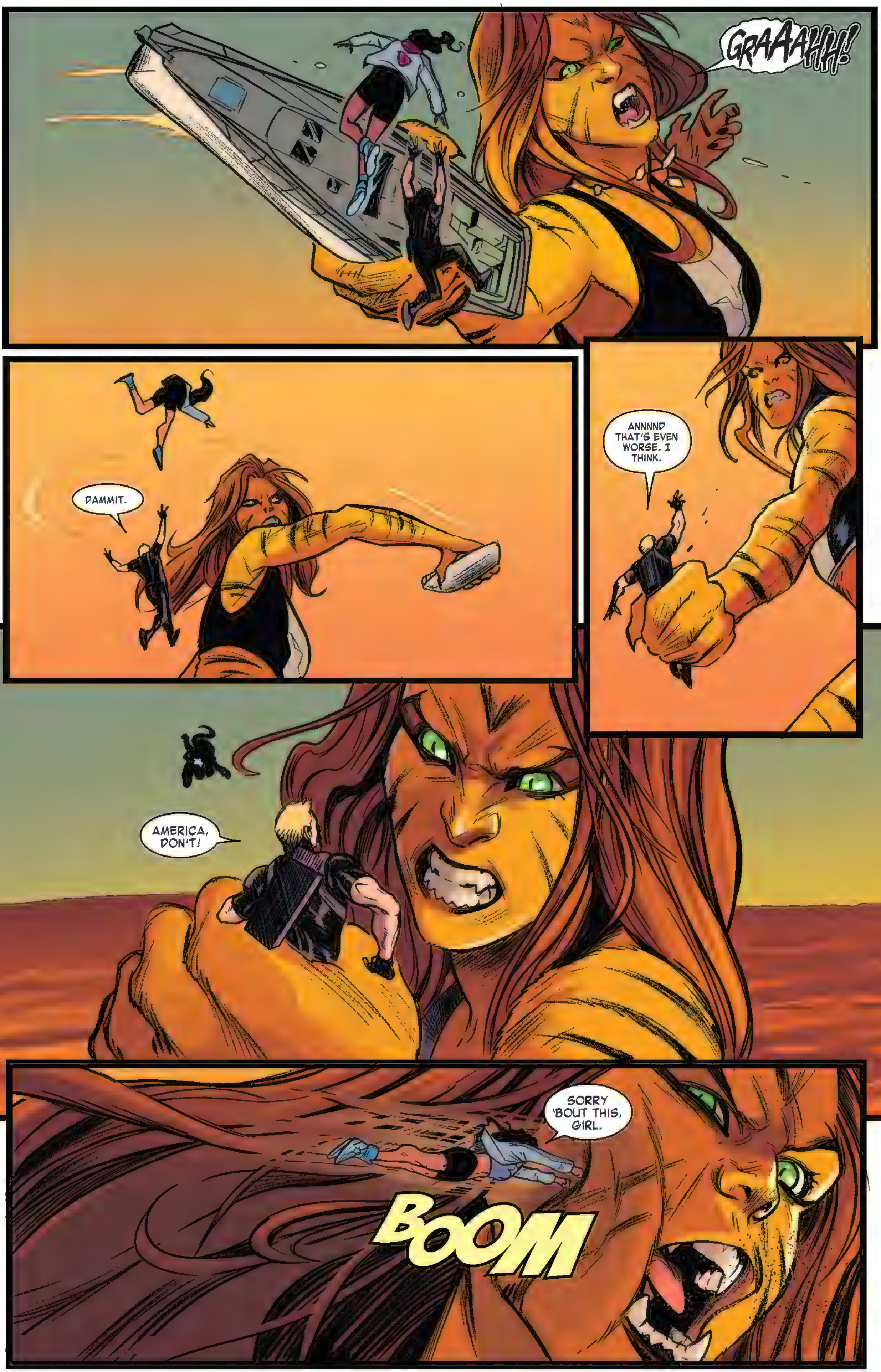

OH MAN, I MISSED THAT. BEST WAY TO TRAVEL.
YOU KNOW IT.
WHAT'S THE DEAL, KATIE? I THOUGHT WE'D BE LANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF CHAOS.
ME TOO... MAYBE I MISREAD THE--
OH MY GOD.

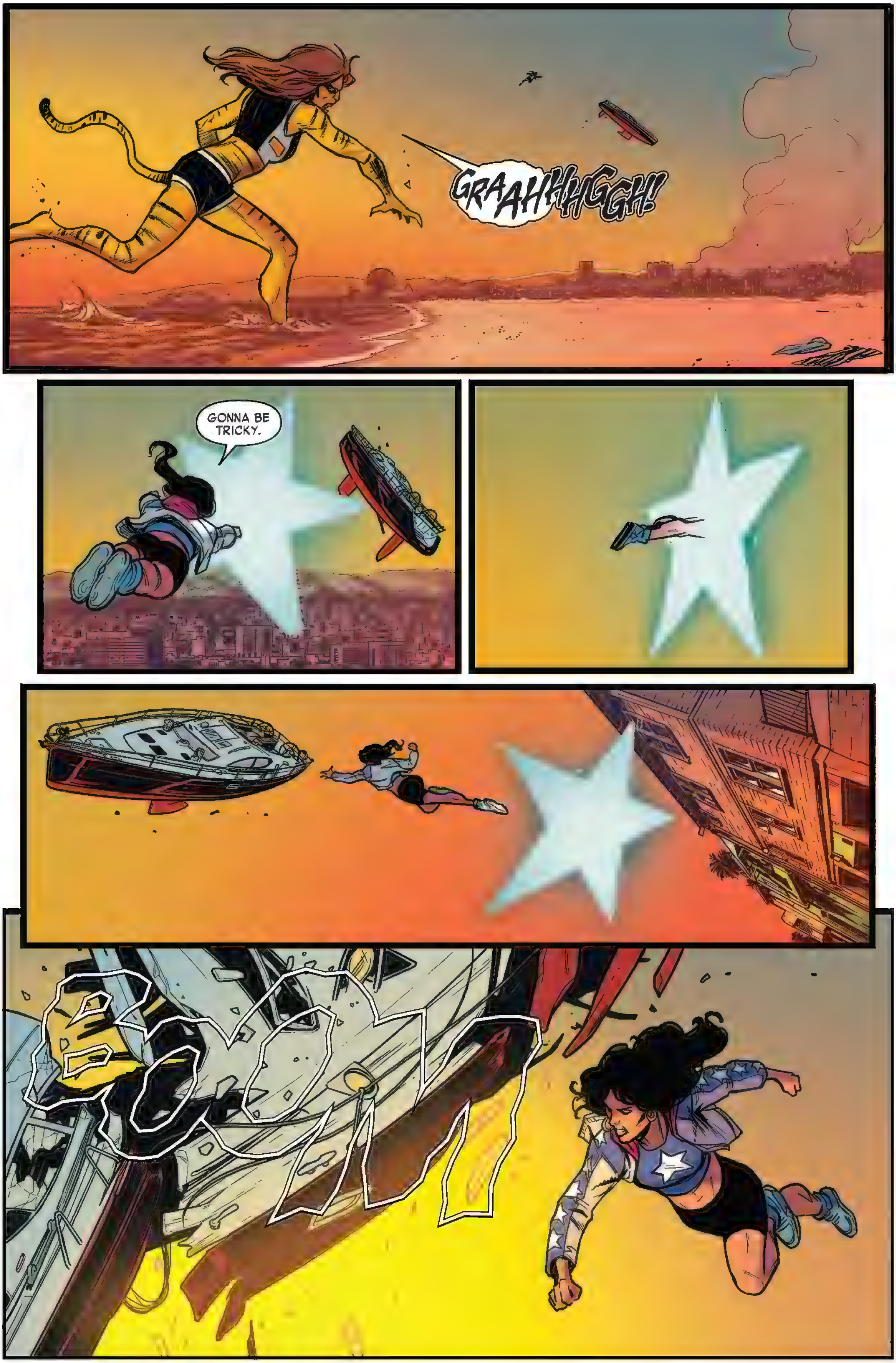

TIGRA?
WAIT. TIGRA? FROM THE OLD WEST COAST AVENGERS TEAM? WAS SHE *ALWAYS* 200 FEET TALL?
NO. NO, SHE DEFINITELY WAS NOT.
YEAH, I FEEL LIKE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN MENTIONED SOMEWHERE IN THE STATS.
CLINT, THIS IS BAAAAAAD.
IT IS VERY, VERY BAD.

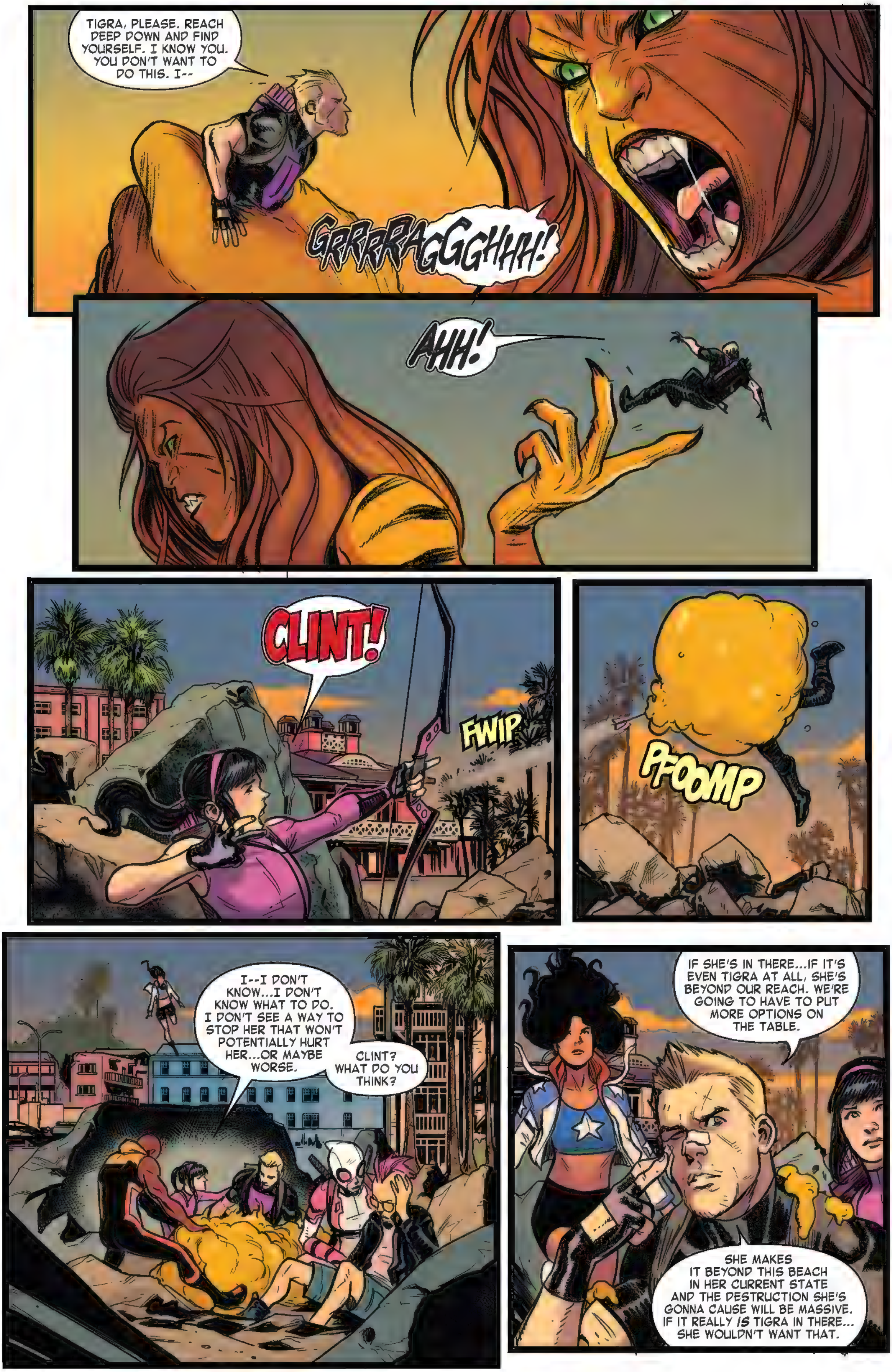

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, WE HAVE TO KEEP HER FROM MOVING INLAND AND PROTECT CIVILIANS.
BUT TIGRA IS NOT ONLY A HERO, SHE'S A LEGEND...ONE OF THE ORIGINAL WEST COAST AVENGERS. SHE'S A GOOD GUY, REGARDLESS OF HOW THIS LOOKS, SO WE'RE USING *NONLETHAL* FORCE ONLY.
QUIRE HAPPENS
EASIEST THING IS FOR ME TO JUST MENTALLY SHUT HER DOWN.
AND THEN WHAT? DOES SHE EVER COME BACK FROM THAT? AND THAT'S IF SHE DOESN'T DROWN IN THE OCEAN WHILE SHE'S OUT! I SAID *NONLETHAL*, QUIRE.
WELL, LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND. I'LL JUST BE HERE, READY WITH THE SOLUTION.
NO, YOU WON'T. YOU'LL BE UP THERE, GIVING BACKUP TO AMERICA AND CLINT AND SHIELDING THEM WITH YOUR TK.
AMERICA, GET CLINT UP THERE, SEE IF HE CAN TALK SOME SENSE INTO HER--LET'S GET A FEEL FOR WHETHER SHE HAS ANY CONTROL.
GWENPOOL, FUSE AND I WILL WORK ON GETTING PEOPLE TO SAFETY ON THE GROUND.
YES, BECAUSE I DEFINITELY JOINED THIS OUTFIT TO BE A GLORIFIED SHIELD. ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS.
QUIRE HAPPENS!
PIPE DOWN, QUIRE.

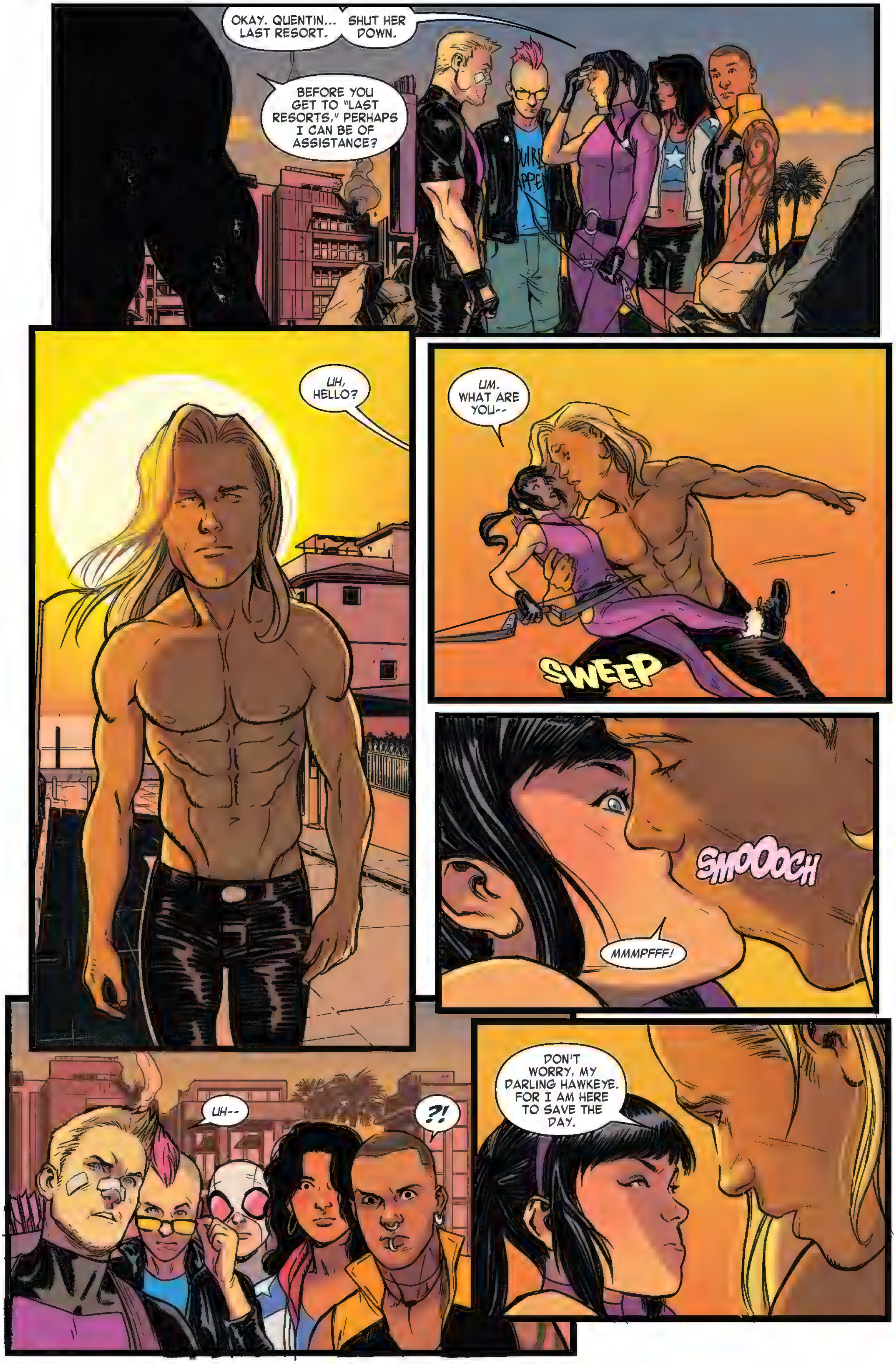

TIGRA? HEY, HONEY. YOU IN THERE?
GRRRRR--
CLINT... MAYBE DON'T CALL HER "HONEY."
GIVE IT A SECOND.
GRAAAAGGHHH!
I'M PRETTY SURE THAT'S 200-FOOT-TALL CAT WOMAN FOR "NOBODY'S HOME."
JUST LET ME TAKE CARE OF THIS. IT'LL ONLY TAKE--
QUIRE HAPPENS
WE'RE *NOT* DOING THAT YET, QUIRE. YOU NEED TO SHUT UP AND--
POW
QUENTIN!
SHE SAID *WHAT?!* THAT I'M OFF MY GAME?
THAT'S RIDICULOUS.
LISTEN, THAT CAT-WOMAN THING WAS WAY STRONGER THAN IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN. AND I WAS FOCUSED ON PROTECTING THAT POWERLESS GIT, HAWKEYE.
QUIRE HAPPENS!
REC
I'M AN X-MAN...WE DON'T LET PEOPLE WITH ABSOLUTELY NO POWERS JUST *WALK* ONTO A TEAM...IT'S ABSURD.
ARE YOU STILL AN X-MAN? IF SO, WHY ARE YOU HERE?
THIS INTERVIEW IS OVER.
QUIRE HAPPENS
REC

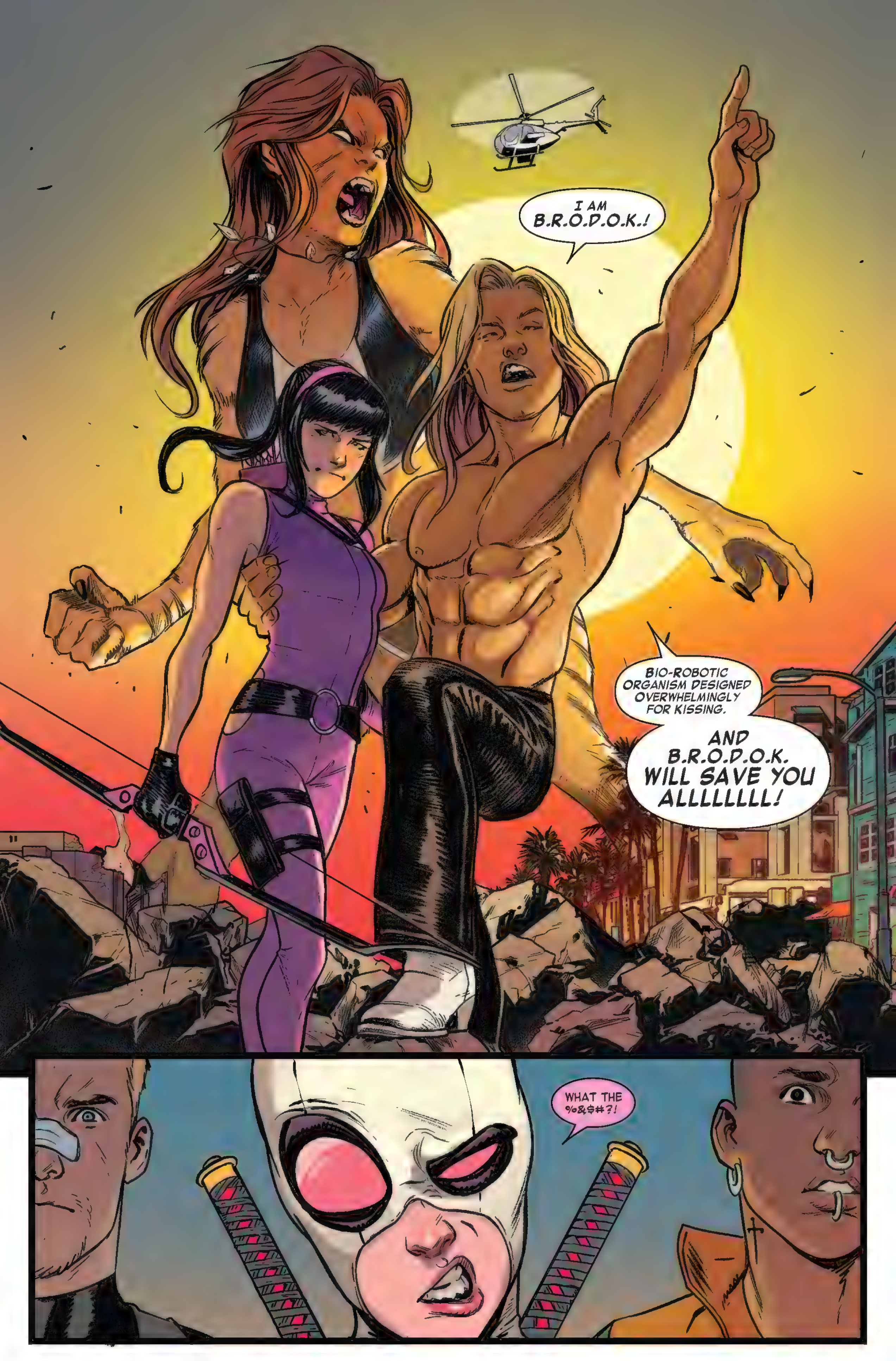

FOR THE LAST TIME, EXIT THE DAMN VEHICLE, LADY, AND MOVE IN AN ORDERLY FASHION WITH THE OTHERS!
EEEEEP.
UGH. I COULDN'T GET A DIFFERENT TEAMMATE TO SAVE? WOULD THAT HAVE BEEN SO MUCH TO ASK?
CLICK
VERY
EXTREMELY LETHAL
CREAMPUFF
POOMMFF
WOOMP
M.O.D.O.K., YOU KNOW?
MENTAL ORGANISM DESIGNED ONLY FOR KILLING.
HE'S GOT THIS BIG HEAD THING...LIKE THIS... HE'S MOSTLY HEAD, I GUESS.
AND THIS VILLAIN WAS YOUR... EMPLOYER?
REC
FOR A WHILE. IT DIDN'T REALLY WORK OUT. I'M TRYING TO TURN OVER A NEW LEAF, I GUESS.
BUT HONESTLY, SO FAR IT WAS BETTER THAN WORKING WITH QUIRE. THAT GUY IS THE WORST.
REC


GRAAAHH!
DAMMIT.
ANNNND THAT'S EVEN WORSE. I THINK.
AMERICA, DON'T!
SORRY 'BOUT THIS, GIRL.
BOOM

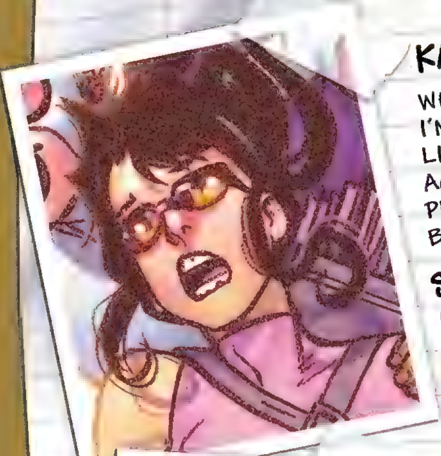

GRAAHHHGGH!
GONNA BE TRICKY.
BOOM!


TIGRA, PLEASE. REACH DEEP DOWN AND FIND YOURSELF. I KNOW YOU. YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS. I--
GRRRRAGGGHHH!
AHH!
CLINT!
FWIP
PFOOMP
I--I DON'T KNOW...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I DON'T SEE A WAY TO STOP HER THAT WON'T POTENTIALLY HURT HER...OR MAYBE WORSE.
CLINT? WHAT DO YOU THINK?
IF SHE'S IN THERE...IF IT'S EVEN TIGRA AT ALL, SHE'S BEYOND OUR REACH. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PUT MORE OPTIONS ON THE TABLE.
SHE MAKES IT BEYOND THIS BEACH IN HER CURRENT STATE AND THE DESTRUCTION SHE'S GONNA CAUSE WILL BE MASSIVE. IF IT REALLY *IS* TIGRA IN THERE... SHE WOULDN'T WANT THAT.


OKAY. QUENTIN... LAST RESORT.
SHUT HER DOWN.
BEFORE YOU GET TO "LAST RESORTS," PERHAPS I CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE?
UH, HELLO?
UM. WHAT ARE YOU--
SWEEP
SMOOOCH
MMMPFFF!
DON'T WORRY, MY DARLING HAWKEYE. FOR I AM HERE TO SAVE THE DAY.
UH--
?!


I AM B.R.O.D.O.K.!
BIO-ROBOTIC ORGANISM DESIGNED OVERWHELMINGLY FOR KISSING.
AND B.R.O.D.O.K. WILL SAVE YOU ALLLLLLLL!
WHAT THE %&$#?!

FROM THE KATE BISHOP FILES



KATE BISHOP, A.K.A. HAWKEYE

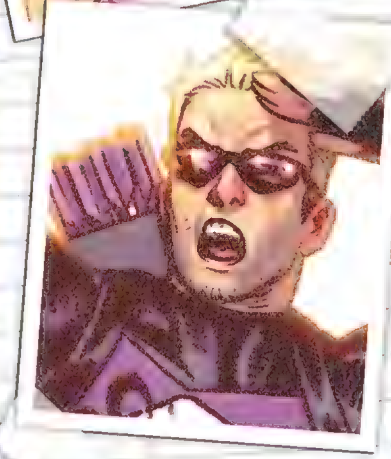
WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY ABOUT MYSELF. I'M ME. I'M AN AWESOME ARCHER AND A MOSTLY AWESOME SEMI-LICENSED PRIVATE EYE. HELLA SCRAPPY IN A FIGHT, EVEN AGAINST GIANT SHARKS WITH LEGS. I CAME FROM MONEY AND PROCEEDED TO CUT ALL TIES TO THAT MONEY...WHICH I MIGHT BE REGRETTING A LITTLE BIT NOW.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:

I SAID I WAS AWESOME ALREADY, RIGHT?

ROLE:

TEAM LEADER, ARROWS, INVESTIGATE-Y STUFF



CLINT BARTON, A.K.A. HAWKEYE

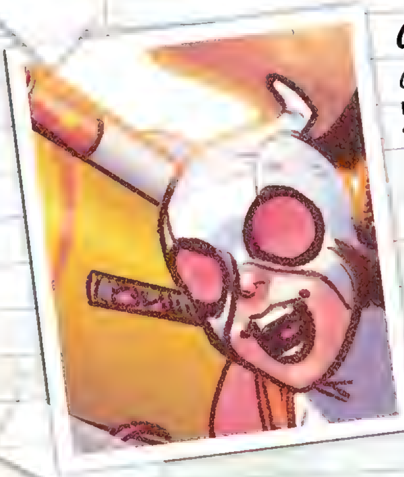
THE OTHER HAWKEYE. OR IS THAT ME? OLYMPIC-LEVEL ATHLETE/ACROBAT WITH EXTENSIVE TRAINING IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT AND WEAPONS. ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THE BEST ARCHER ON EARTH. OR ONE OF TWO, AT LEAST. CLINT IS ALSO THE FOUNDER OF THE ORIGINAL WEST COAST AVENGERS, MY MENTOR AND--ALL RIGHT, FINE--MY FAMILY.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:

I'M HOPING CLINT CAN GUIDE ME THROUGH THIS PROCESS AND MINIMIZE MY SCREWUPS.

ROLE:

CO-LEADER, SHOOTS ARROWS REAL GOOD



GWENDOLYN POOLE, A.K.A. GWENPOOL

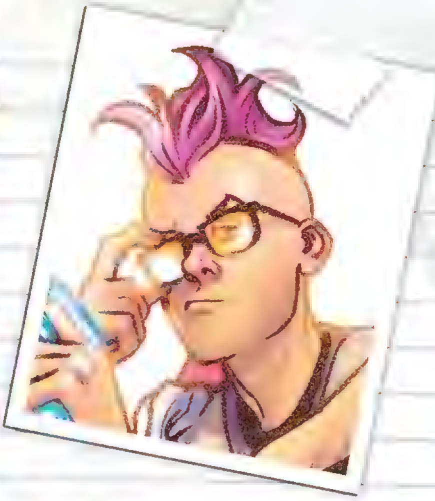
GWEN IS STILL KIND OF A MYSTERY TO ME. I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHAT HER POWERS ARE...IF ANY. SHE'S GOT GOOD INSTINCTS AND SEEMS TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT WEAPONS AND OTHER SUPER HEROES...BUT SHE MIGHT BE CRAZY? TBD?

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:

I THINK SHE'S DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR REDEMPTION, OR MAYBE A PLACE TO FIT IN? BUT THAT'S OKAY BY ME--LOTS OF PEOPLE COME TO L.A. SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING, WHY NOT HER?

ROLE:

TOTAL WILD CARD



QUENTIN QUIRE, A.K.A. KID OMEGA

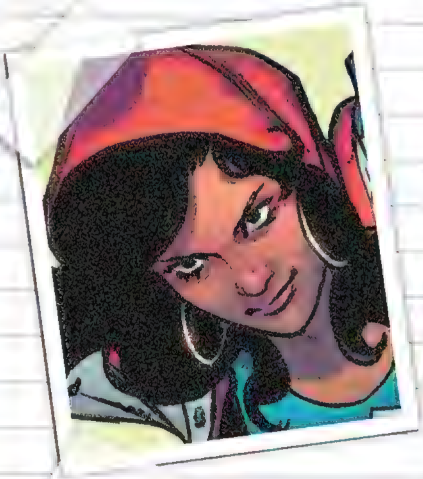
I HAVE NO IDEA WHY HE LEFT THE X-MEN...OR THE X-WHATEVER-IT-WAS. HE'S KEEPING THAT INFORMATION PRETTY CLOSE TO THE VEST. BUT HE'S GOT SOME OMEGA-LEVEL PSYCHIC POWERS THAT, AS A LEADER OF A TEAM, ARE HARD TO TURN DOWN. I'M ALSO NOT SURE HE'D GO AWAY IF I TOLD HIM TO SO I'M JUST GONNA ROLL WITH IT AND HOPE IT DOESN'T GO BAD.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:

SO FAR HE'S THE ONLY PERSON THAT'S ACTUALLY EXCITED ABOUT THE TV CAMERAS, WHICH IS... WORRYING.

ROLE:

TELEPATHIC DRAMA QUEEN



AMERICA CHAVEZ

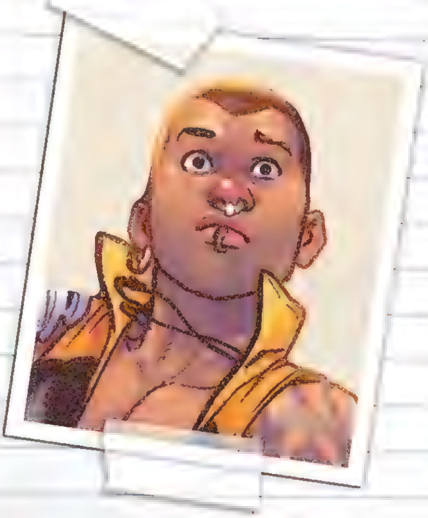
WHEN YOU'RE FORMING A RAD NEW SUPER HERO TEAM, YOUR FIRST CALL IS OBVIOUSLY YOUR BFF. DOESN'T HURT WHEN YOUR BEST FRIEND IS INVULNERABLE, FLIES, PUNCHES PEOPLE INTO LITERAL STARDUST AND CAN KICK OPEN DIMENSIONAL PORTALS. ALTHOUGH, BEING YOUR BEST FRIEND'S BOSS CAN MAKE THINGS SUPER AWKWARD AT BRUNCH.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:

IT'S NICE TO HAVE A BEST FRIEND WHO CAN KICK PEOPLE INTO THE SUN. I'M NEVER GONNA GET OVER HOW COOL THAT IS.

ROLE:

BFF AND FLYING MUSCLE WHO TELEPORTS



JOHNNY WATTS, A.K.A. FUSE

JOHNNY IS AS GREEN AS CAN BE, BUT HE'S GOOD AND KIND AND I TRUST HIM. PLUS HE CAN TURN INTO ANY MATERIAL HE TOUCHES AND GET THE POWER/STRENGTH/DURABILITY OF SAID MATERIAL. IT'S KINDA LIKE HE'S THAT SWORD IN *HARRY POTTER* THAT ONLY TAKES IN THAT WHICH MAKES IT STRONGER. WE SHOULD HAVE JUST NAMED HIM GRYFFINDOR. ALTHOUGH HUFFLEPUFF IS FUNNIER.

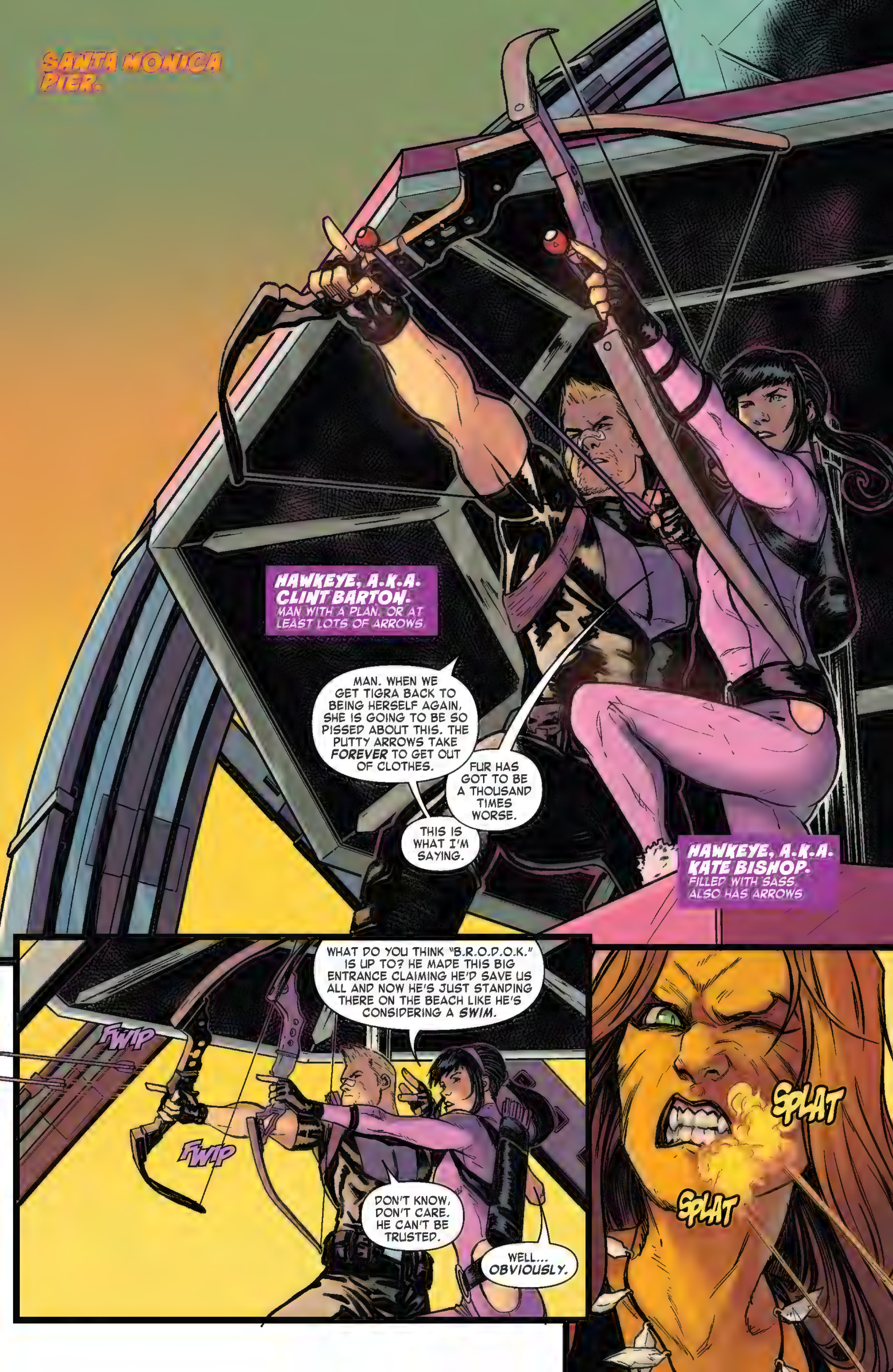
SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES:

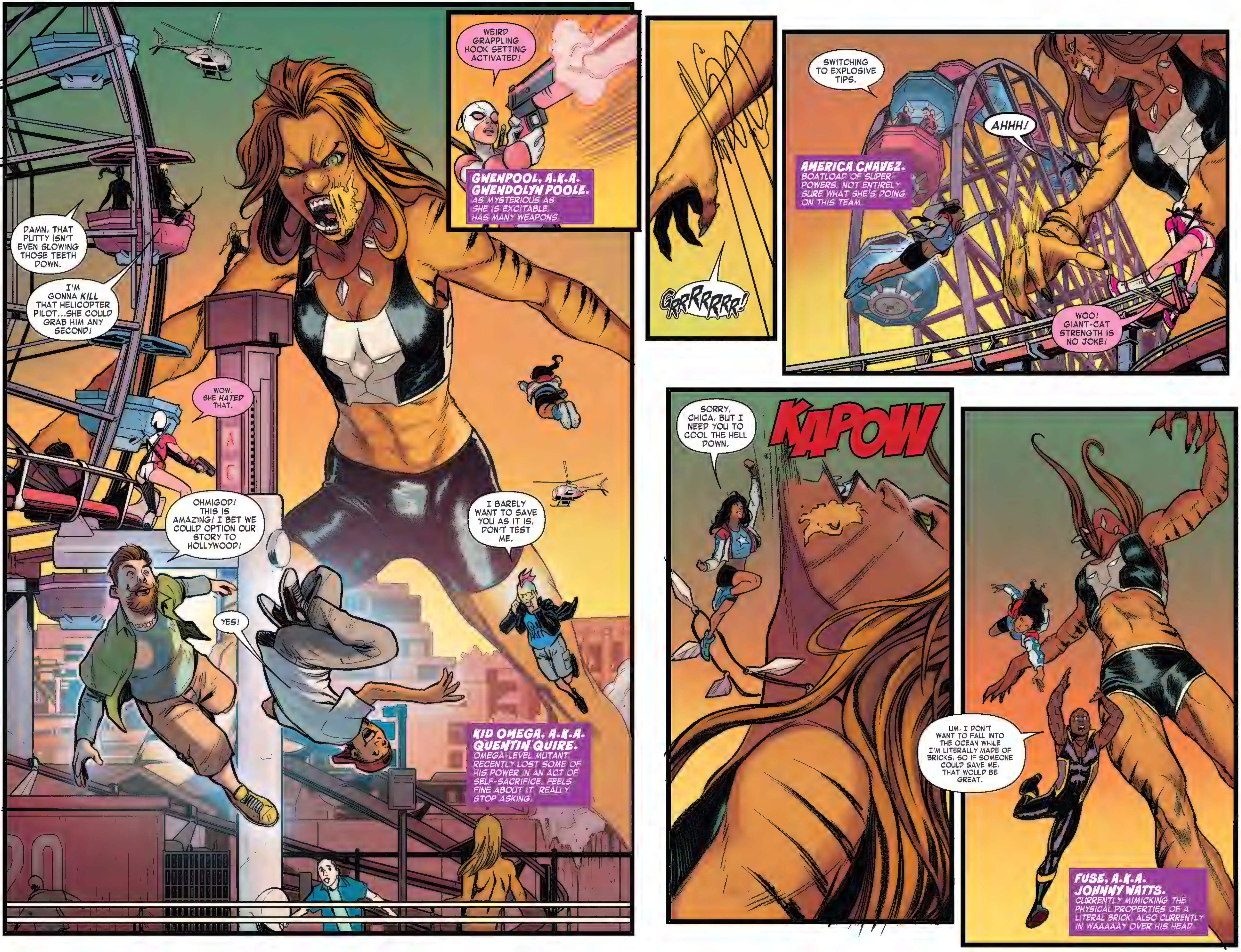
NEW OFFICIAL NICKNAME: HUFFLEPUFF

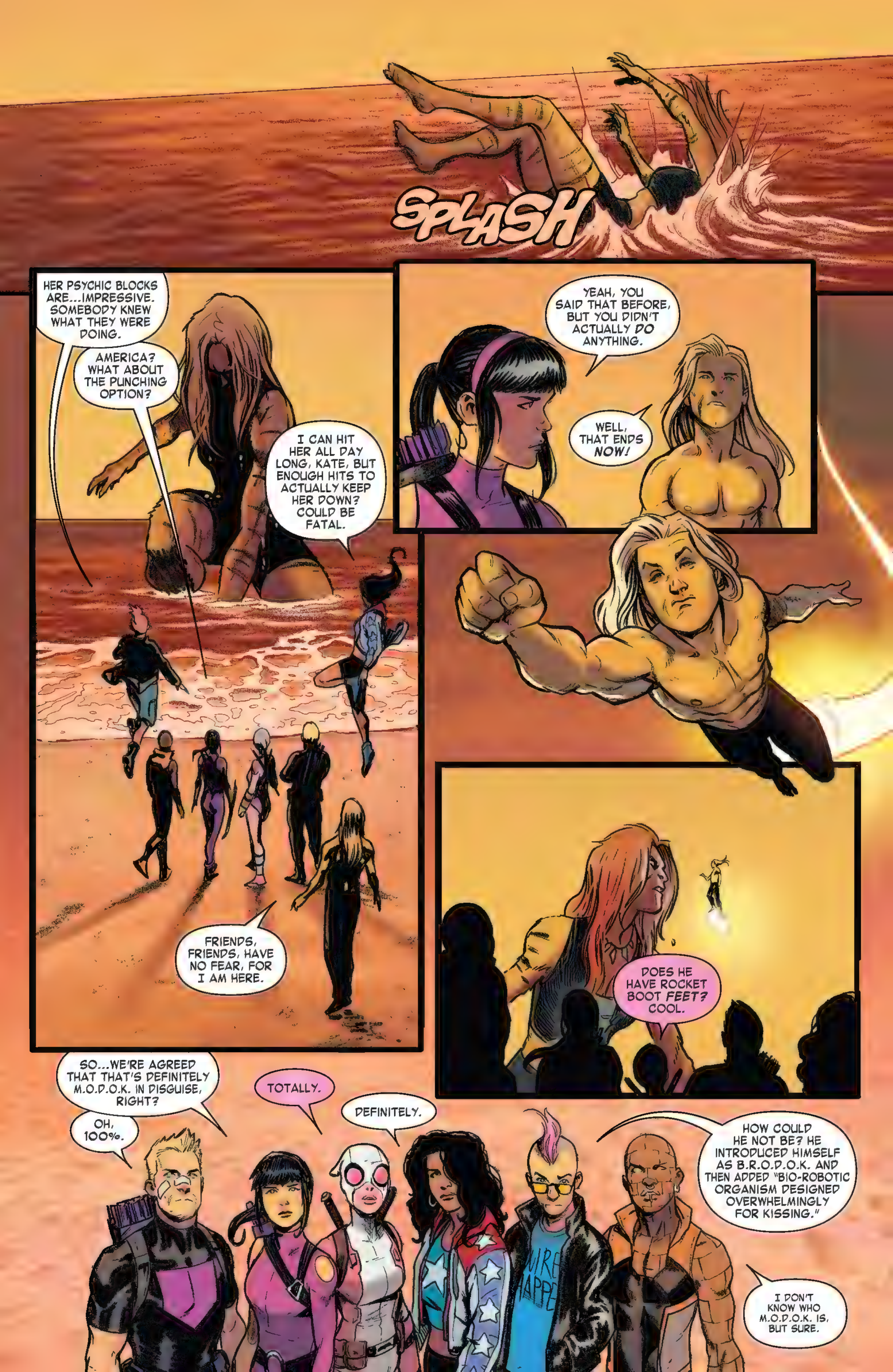
ROLE:

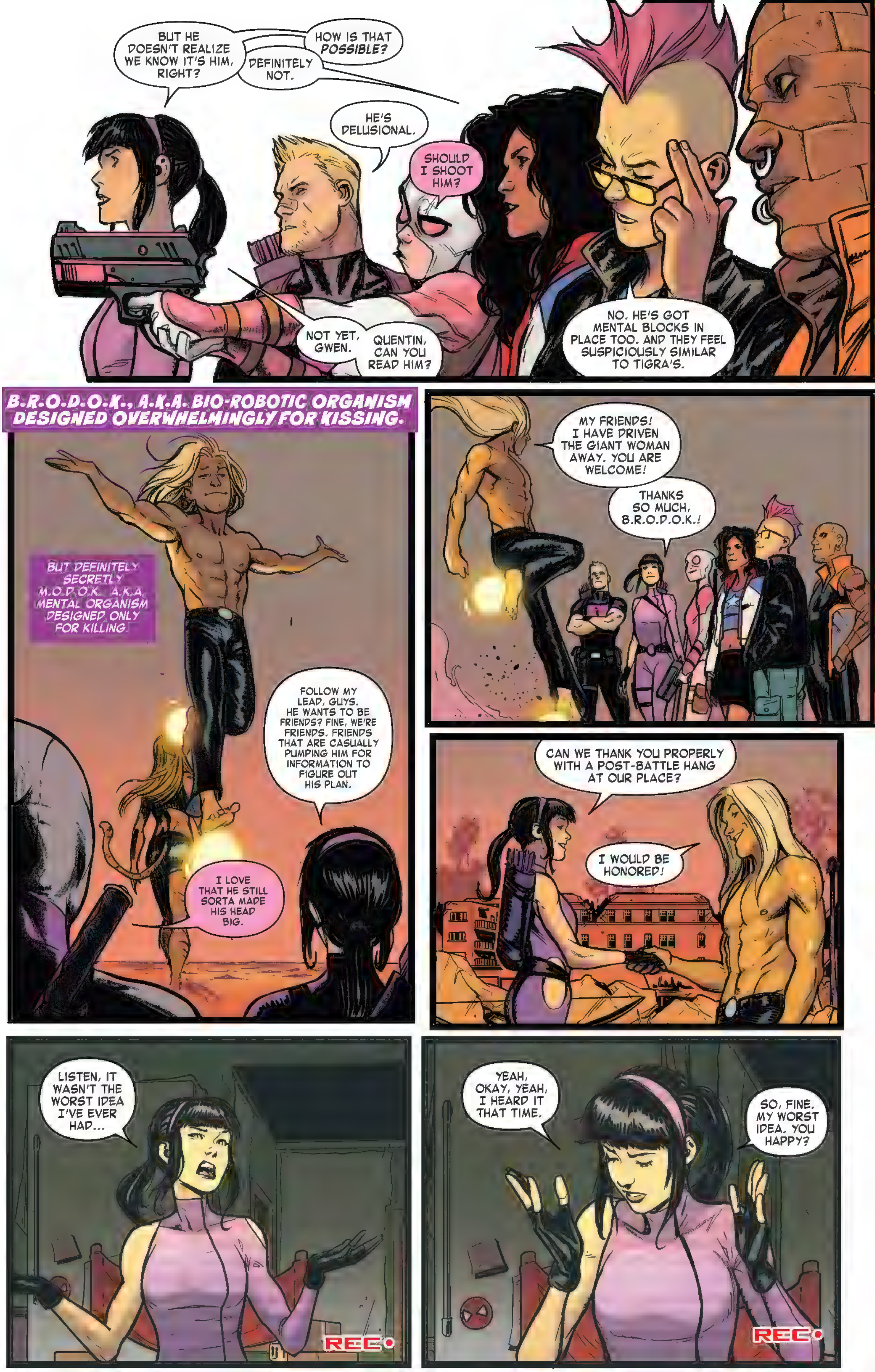
INVULNERABLE MUSCLE WHO'S ALSO AN ADORABLE HUFFLEPUFF

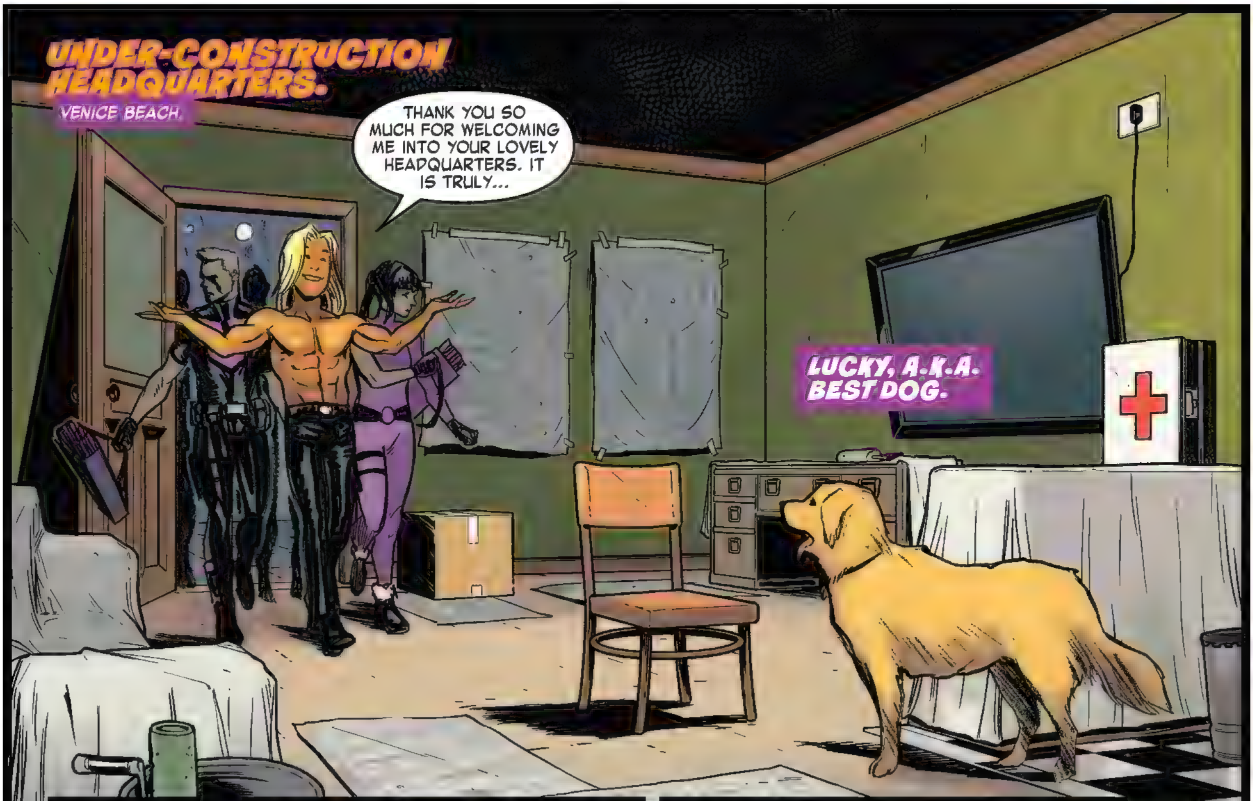
WEST COAST AVENGERS #2

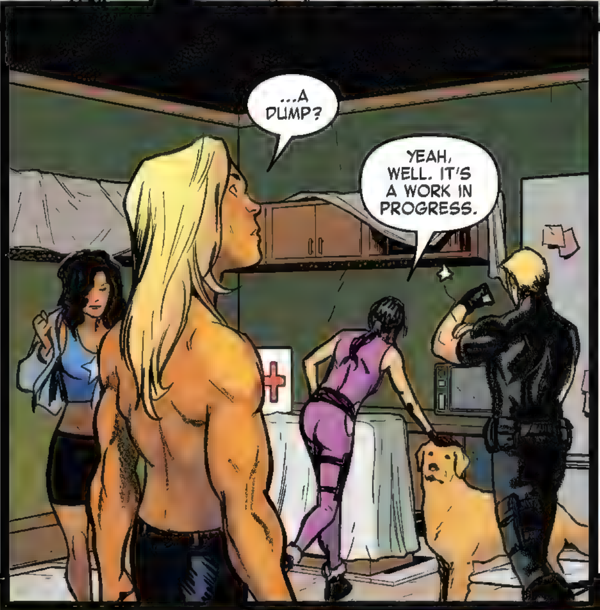

SANTA MONICA PIER.
HAWKEYE, A.K.A. CLINT BARTON. MAN WITH A PLAN. OR AT LEAST LOTS OF ARROWS.
MAN. WHEN WE GET TIGRA BACK TO BEING HERSELF AGAIN, SHE IS GOING TO BE SO PISSED ABOUT THIS. THE PUTTY ARROWS TAKE *FOREVER* TO GET OUT OF CLOTHES.
FUR HAS GOT TO BE A THOUSAND TIMES WORSE.
THIS IS WHAT I'M SAYING.
HAWKEYE, A.K.A. KATE BISHOP. FILLED WITH SASS. ALSO HAS ARROWS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK "B.R.O.D.O.K." IS UP TO? HE MADE THIS BIG ENTRANCE CLAIMING HE'D SAVE US ALL AND NOW HE'S JUST STANDING THERE ON THE BEACH LIKE HE'S CONSIDERING A *SWIM*.
FWIP
FWIP
DON'T KNOW, DON'T CARE. HE CAN'T BE TRUSTED.
WELL... *OBVIOUSLY*.
SPLAT
SPLAT

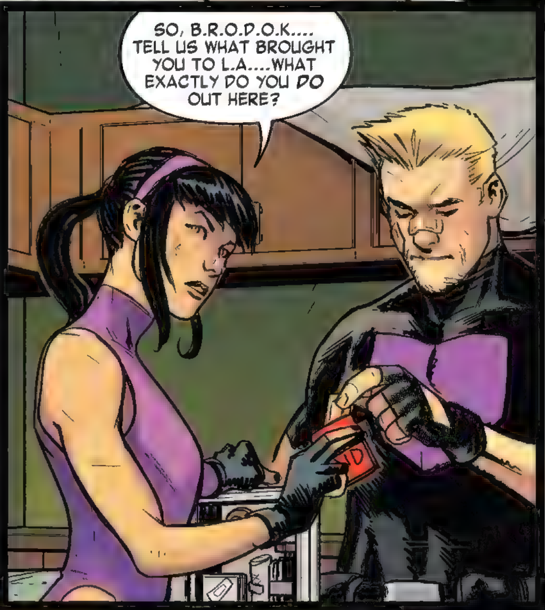

DAMN, THAT PUTTY ISN'T EVEN SLOWING THOSE TEETH DOWN.
I'M GONNA *KILL* THAT HELICOPTER PILOT...SHE COULD GRAB HIM ANY SECOND!
WOW. SHE *HATED* THAT.
OHMIGOD! THIS IS AMAZING! I BET WE COULD OPTION OUR STORY TO HOLLYWOOD!
YES!
I BARELY WANT TO SAVE YOU AS IT IS, DON'T TEST ME.
KID OMEGA, A.K.A. QUENTIN QUIRE. OMEGA-LEVEL MUTANT RECENTLY LOST SOME OF HIS POWER IN AN ACT OF SELF-SACRIFICE. FEELS FINE ABOUT IT. REALLY. STOP ASKING.
WEIRD GRAPPLING HOOK SETTING ACTIVATED!
GWENPOOL, A.K.A. GWENDOLYN POOLE. AS MYSTERIOUS AS SHE IS EXCITABLE. HAS MANY WEAPONS.
GRRRRRRR!
SWITCHING TO EXPLOSIVE TIPS.
AHHH!
AMERICA CHAVEZ. BOATLOAD OF SUPER-POWERS. NOT ENTIRELY SURE WHAT SHE'S DOING ON THIS TEAM.
WOO! GIANT-CAT STRENGTH IS NO JOKE!
SORRY, CHICA, BUT I NEED YOU TO COOL THE HELL DOWN.
KAPOW
UM, I DON'T WANT TO FALL INTO THE OCEAN WHILE I'M LITERALLY MADE OF BRICKS, SO IF SOMEONE COULD SAVE ME, THAT WOULD BE GREAT.
FUSE, A.K.A. JOHNNY WATTS. CURRENTLY MIMICKING THE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF A LITERAL BRICK. ALSO CURRENTLY IN WAAAAAY OVER HIS HEAD.

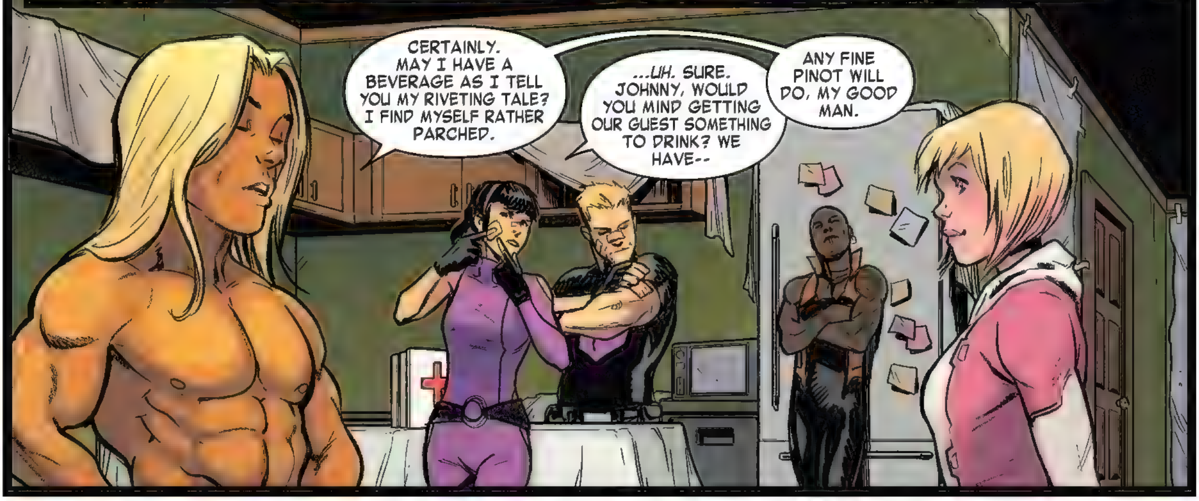

SPLASH
HER PSYCHIC BLOCKS ARE...IMPRESSIVE. SOMEBODY KNEW WHAT THEY WERE DOING.
AMERICA? WHAT ABOUT THE PUNCHING OPTION?
I CAN HIT HER ALL DAY LONG, KATE, BUT ENOUGH HITS TO ACTUALLY KEEP HER DOWN? COULD BE FATAL.
FRIENDS, FRIENDS, HAVE NO FEAR, FOR I AM HERE.
YEAH, YOU SAID THAT BEFORE, BUT YOU DIDN'T ACTUALLY *DO* ANYTHING.
WELL, THAT ENDS *NOW!*
DOES HE HAVE ROCKET BOOT *FEET?* COOL.
SO...WE'RE AGREED THAT THAT'S DEFINITELY M.O.D.O.K. IN DISGUISE, RIGHT?
OH, 100%.
TOTALLY.
DEFINITELY.
HOW COULD HE NOT BE? HE INTRODUCED HIMSELF AS B.R.O.D.O.K. AND THEN ADDED "BIO-ROBOTIC ORGANISM DESIGNED OVERWHELMINGLY FOR KISSING."
I DON'T KNOW WHO M.O.D.O.K. IS, BUT SURE.

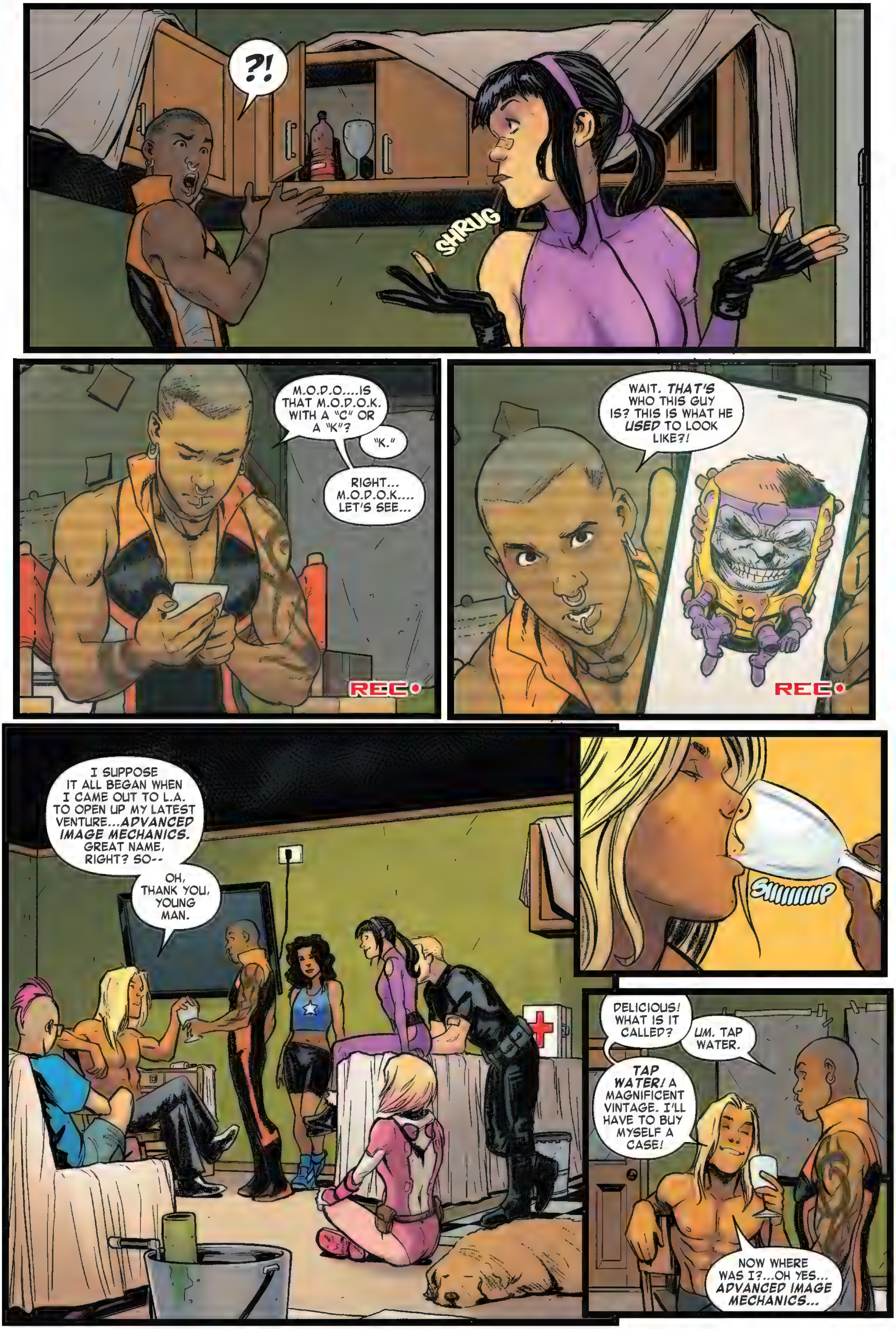

BUT HE DOESN'T REALIZE WE KNOW IT'S HIM, RIGHT?
HOW IS THAT *POSSIBLE?*
DEFINITELY NOT.
HE'S DELUSIONAL.
SHOULD I SHOOT HIM?
NOT YET, GWEN.
QUENTIN, CAN YOU READ HIM?
NO. HE'S GOT MENTAL BLOCKS IN PLACE TOO. AND THEY FEEL SUSPICIOUSLY SIMILAR TO TIGRA'S.
B.R.O.D.O.K., A.K.A. BIO-ROBOTIC ORGANISM DESIGNED OVERWHELMINGLY FOR KISSING.
BUT DEFINITELY SECRETLY M.O.D.O.K., A.K.A. MENTAL ORGANISM DESIGNED ONLY FOR KILLING.
FOLLOW MY LEAD, GUYS. HE WANTS TO BE FRIENDS? FINE, WE'RE FRIENDS. FRIENDS THAT ARE CASUALLY PUMPING HIM FOR INFORMATION TO FIGURE OUT HIS PLAN.
I LOVE THAT HE STILL SORTA MADE HIS HEAD BIG.
MY FRIENDS! I HAVE DRIVEN THE GIANT WOMAN AWAY. YOU ARE WELCOME!
THANKS SO MUCH, B.R.O.D.O.K.!
CAN WE THANK YOU PROPERLY WITH A POST-BATTLE HANG AT OUR PLACE?
I WOULD BE HONORED!
LISTEN, IT WASN'T THE WORST IDEA I'VE EVER HAD...
REC
YEAH, OKAY, YEAH, I HEARD IT THAT TIME.
SO, FINE. MY WORST IDEA. YOU HAPPY?
REC

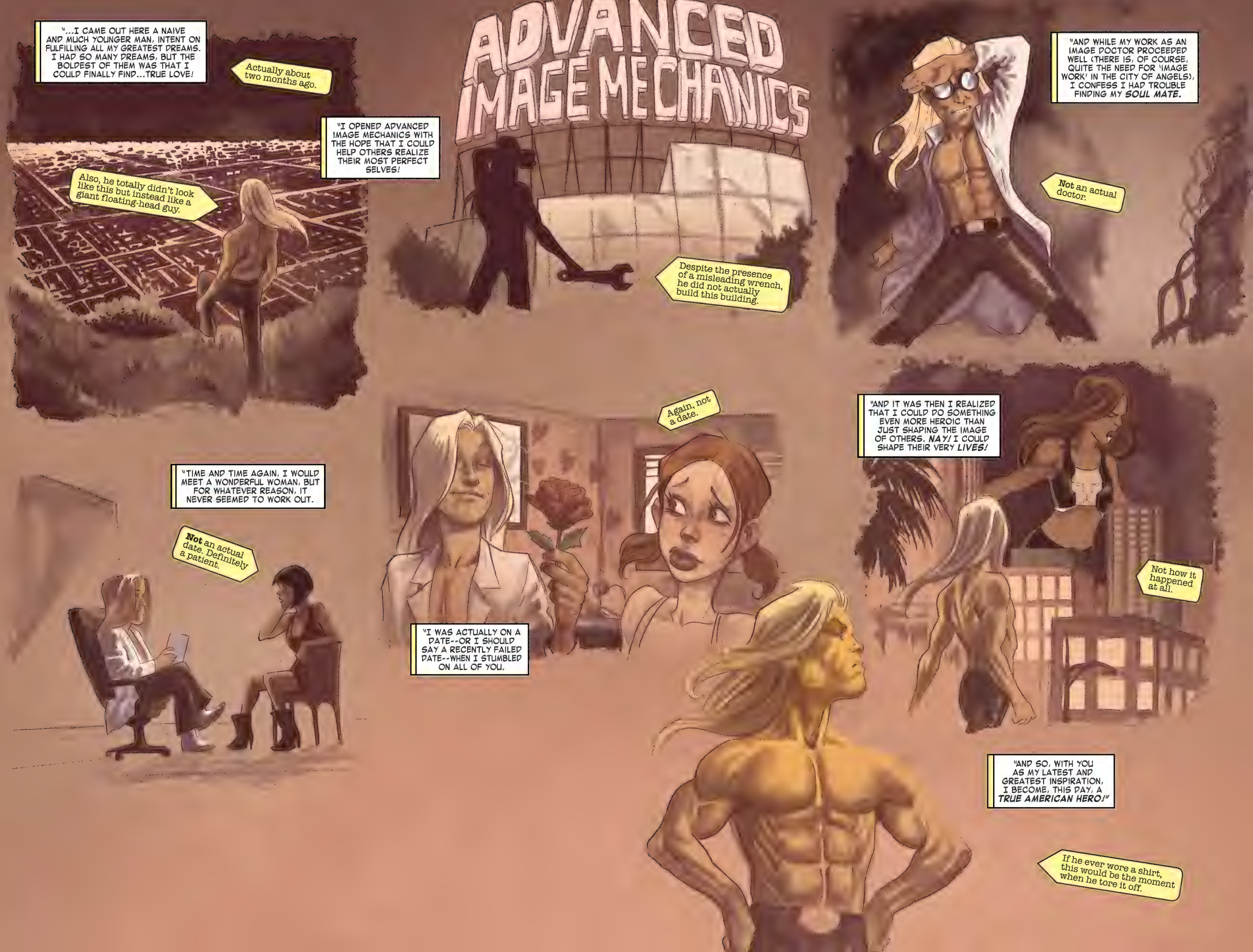

UNDER-CONSTRUCTION HEADQUARTERS.
VENICE BEACH.
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR WELCOMING ME INTO YOUR LOVELY HEADQUARTERS. IT IS TRULY...
LUCKY, A.K.A. BEST DOG.

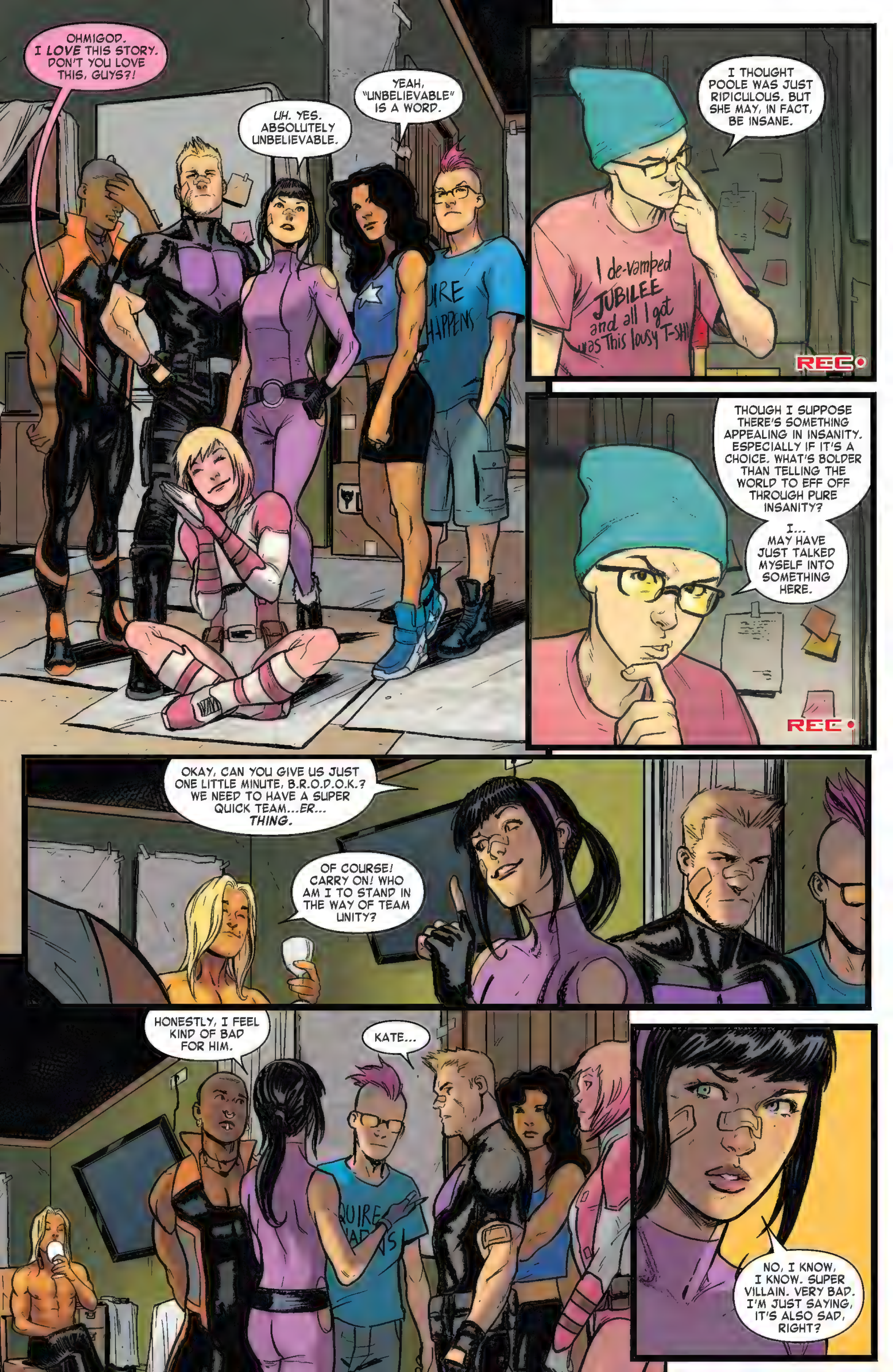

...A DUMP?
YEAH, WELL. IT'S A WORK IN PROGRESS.

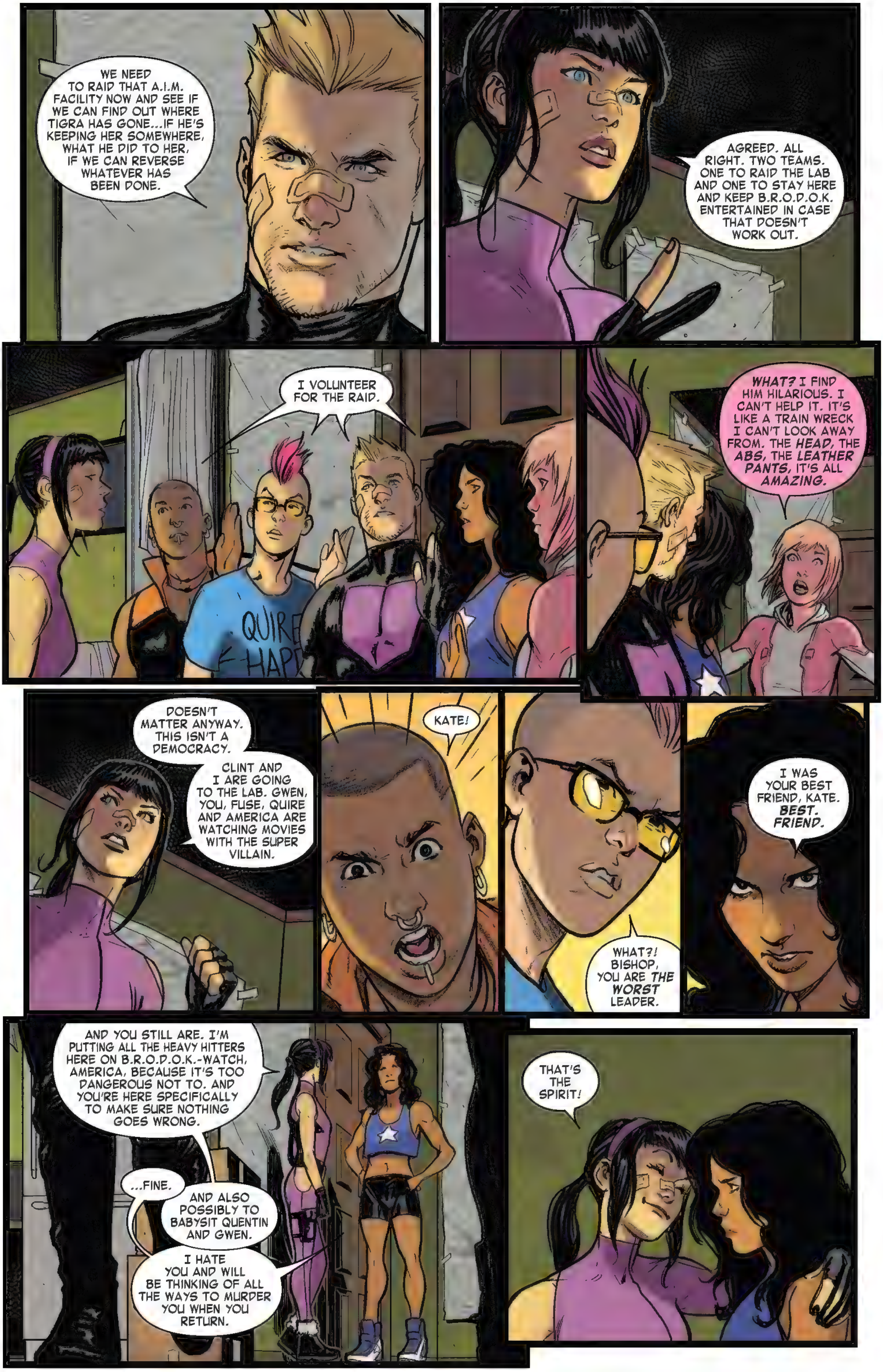

SO, B.R.O.D.O.K.... TELL US WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO L.A.... WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU DO OUT HERE?

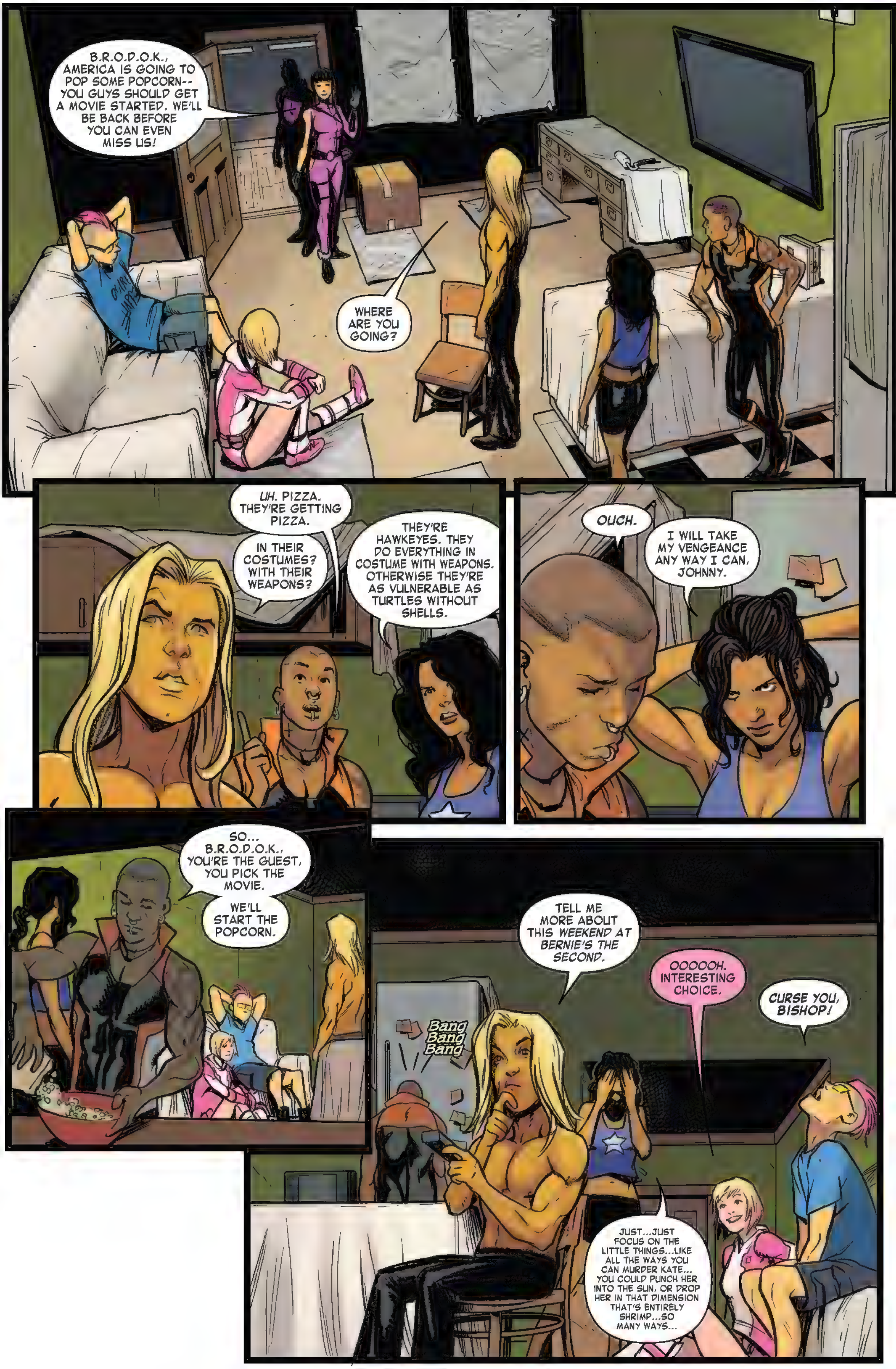

CERTAINLY. MAY I HAVE A BEVERAGE AS I TELL YOU MY RIVETING TALE? I FIND MYSELF RATHER PARCHED.
...UH. SURE. JOHNNY, WOULD YOU MIND GETTING OUR GUEST SOMETHING TO DRINK? WE HAVE--
ANY FINE PINOT WILL DO, MY GOOD MAN.

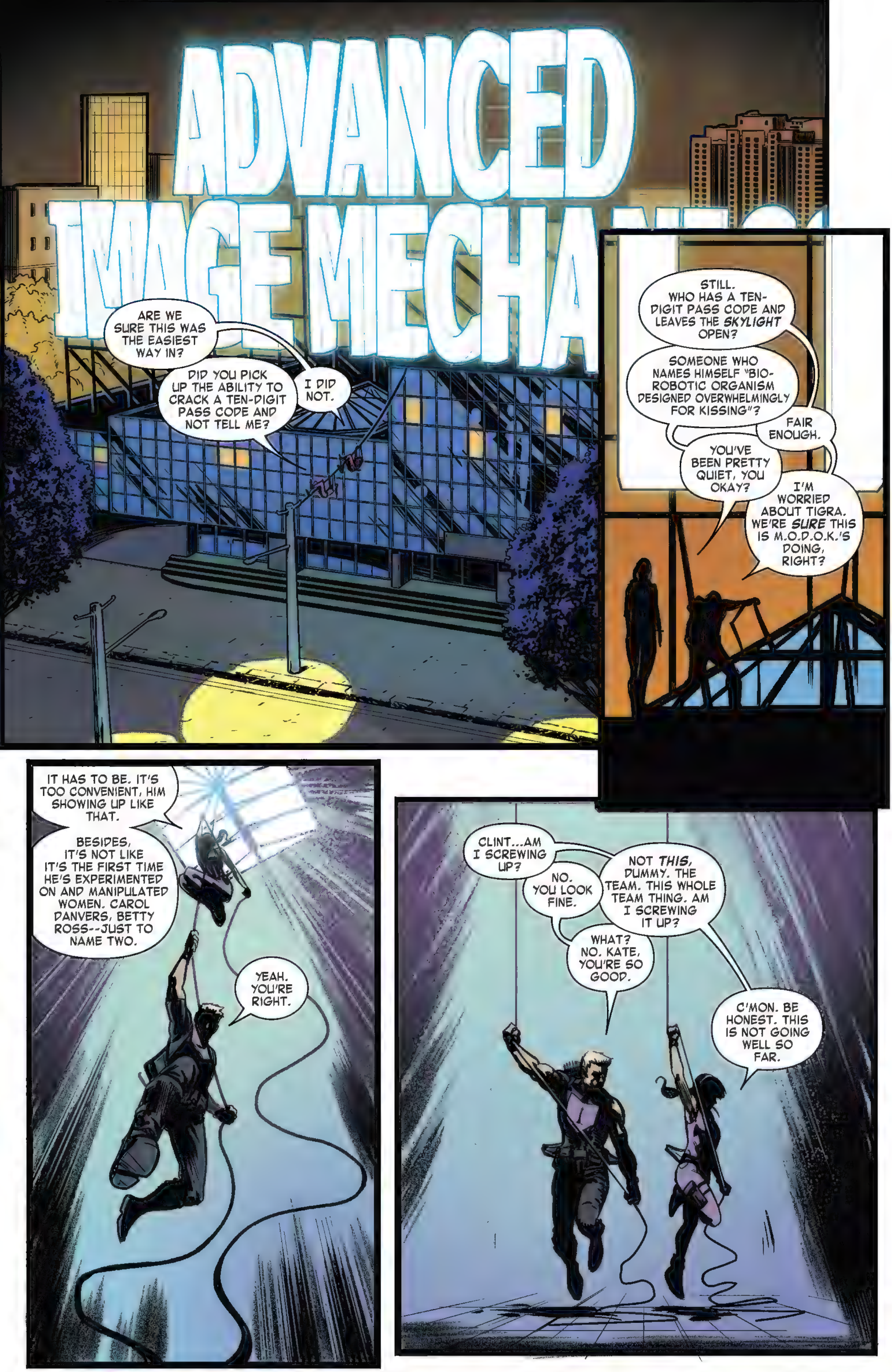

?!
SHRUG
M.O.D.O....IS THAT M.O.D.O.K. WITH A "C" OR A "K"?
"K."
RIGHT... M.O.D.O.K.... LET'S SEE...
REC
WAIT. *THAT'S* WHO THIS GUY IS? THIS IS WHAT HE *USED* TO LOOK LIKE?!
REC
I SUPPOSE IT ALL BEGAN WHEN I CAME OUT TO L.A. TO OPEN UP MY LATEST VENTURE...*ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS.* GREAT NAME, RIGHT? SO--
OH, THANK YOU, YOUNG MAN.
SIIIIIIP
DELICIOUS! WHAT IS IT CALLED?
UM. TAP WATER.
TAP WATER! A MAGNIFICENT VINTAGE. I'LL HAVE TO BUY MYSELF A CASE!
NOW WHERE WAS I?...OH YES... *ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS...*

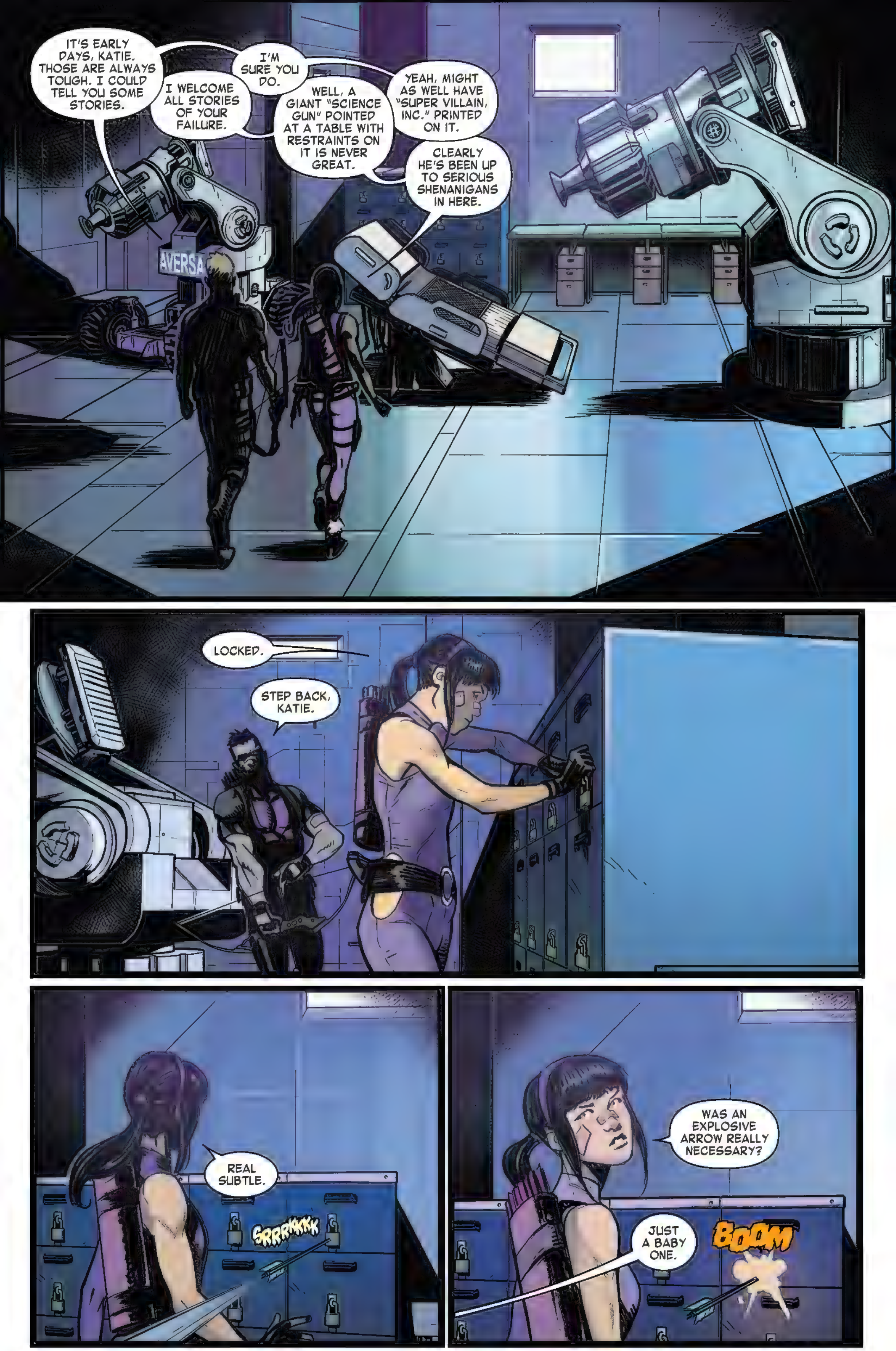

"...I CAME OUT HERE A NAIVE AND MUCH YOUNGER MAN, INTENT ON FULFILLING ALL MY GREATEST DREAMS. I HAD SO MANY DREAMS, BUT THE BOLDEST OF THEM WAS THAT I COULD FINALLY FIND...TRUE LOVE!
Actually about two months ago.
"I OPENED ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS WITH THE HOPE THAT I COULD HELP OTHERS REALIZE THEIR MOST PERFECT SELVES!
Also, he totally didn't look like this but instead like a giant floating-head guy.
ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS
Despite the presence of a misleading wrench, he did not actually build this building.
"AND WHILE MY WORK AS AN IMAGE DOCTOR PROCEEDED WELL (THERE IS, OF COURSE, QUITE THE NEED FOR 'IMAGE WORK' IN THE CITY OF ANGELS), I CONFESS I HAD TROUBLE FINDING MY ***SOUL MATE.***
Not an actual doctor.
"TIME AND TIME AGAIN, I WOULD MEET A WONDERFUL WOMAN, BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON, IT NEVER SEEMED TO WORK OUT.
Not an actual date. Definitely a patient.
"I WAS ACTUALLY ON A DATE--OR I SHOULD SAY A RECENTLY FAILED DATE--WHEN I STUMBLED ON ALL OF YOU.
Again, not a date.
"AND IT WAS THEN I REALIZED THAT I COULD DO SOMETHING EVEN MORE HEROIC THAN JUST SHAPING THE IMAGE OF OTHERS. ***NAY!*** I COULD SHAPE THEIR VERY ***LIVES!***
Not how it happened at all.
"AND SO, WITH YOU AS MY LATEST AND GREATEST INSPIRATION, I BECOME, THIS DAY, A ***TRUE AMERICAN HERO!"***
If he ever wore a shirt, this would be the moment when he tore it off.

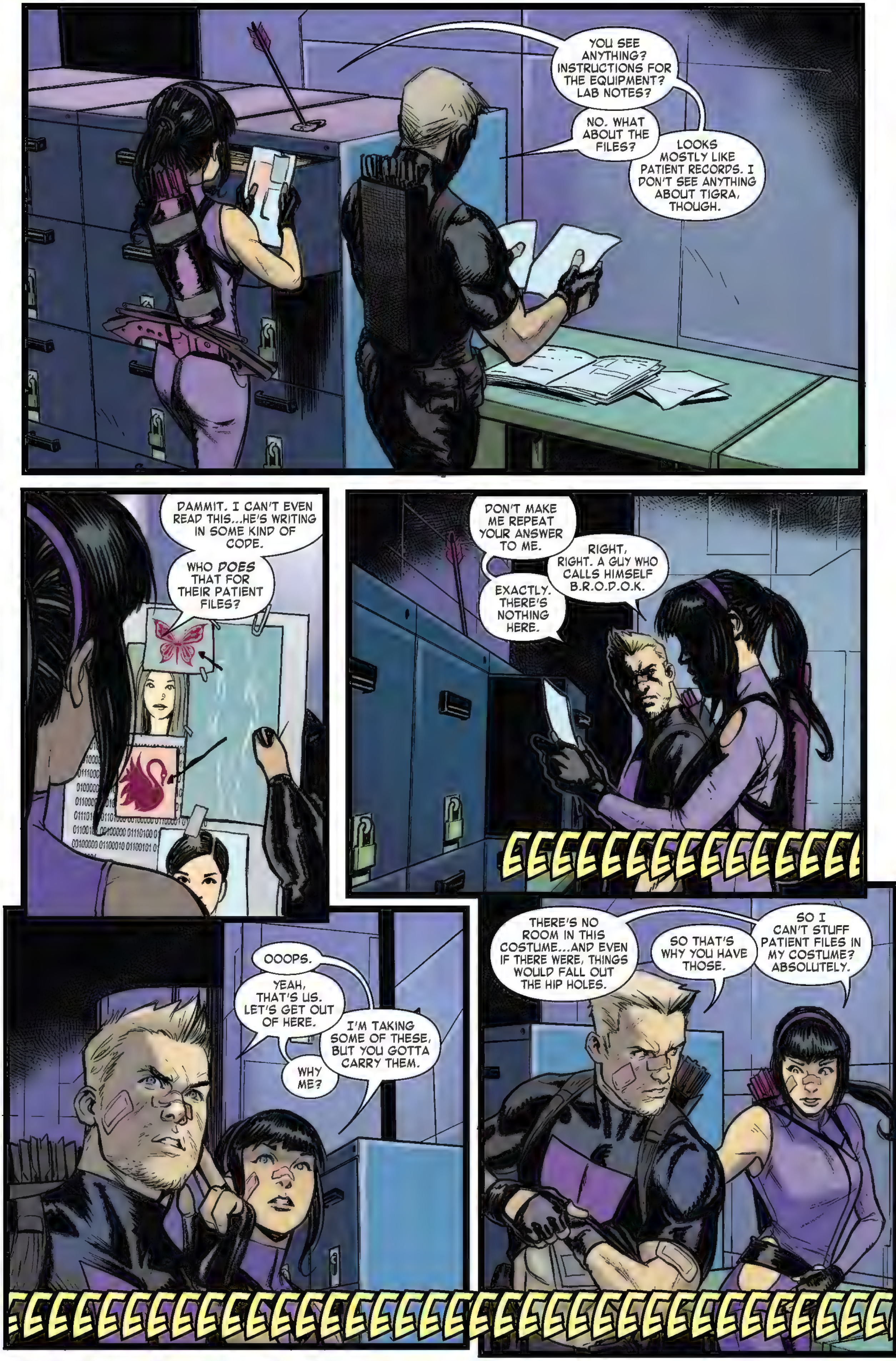

OHMIGOD. I *LOVE* THIS STORY. DON'T YOU LOVE THIS, GUYS?!
UH. YES. ABSOLUTELY UNBELIEVABLE.
YEAH, "UNBELIEVABLE" IS A WORD.
IRE HAPPENS
I THOUGHT POOLE WAS JUST RIDICULOUS. BUT SHE MAY, IN FACT, BE INSANE.
I de-vamped JUBILEE and all I got was This lousy T-SHI
REC●
THOUGH I SUPPOSE THERE'S SOMETHING APPEALING IN INSANITY. ESPECIALLY IF IT'S A CHOICE. WHAT'S BOLDER THAN TELLING THE WORLD TO EFF OFF THROUGH PURE INSANITY?
I... MAY HAVE JUST TALKED MYSELF INTO SOMETHING HERE.
REC●
OKAY, CAN YOU GIVE US JUST ONE LITTLE MINUTE, B.R.O.D.O.K.? WE NEED TO HAVE A SUPER QUICK TEAM... *ER... THING.*
OF COURSE! CARRY ON! WHO AM I TO STAND IN THE WAY OF TEAM UNITY?
HONESTLY, I FEEL KIND OF BAD FOR HIM.
KATE...
NO, I KNOW, I KNOW. SUPER VILLAIN. VERY BAD. I'M JUST SAYING, IT'S ALSO SAD, RIGHT?

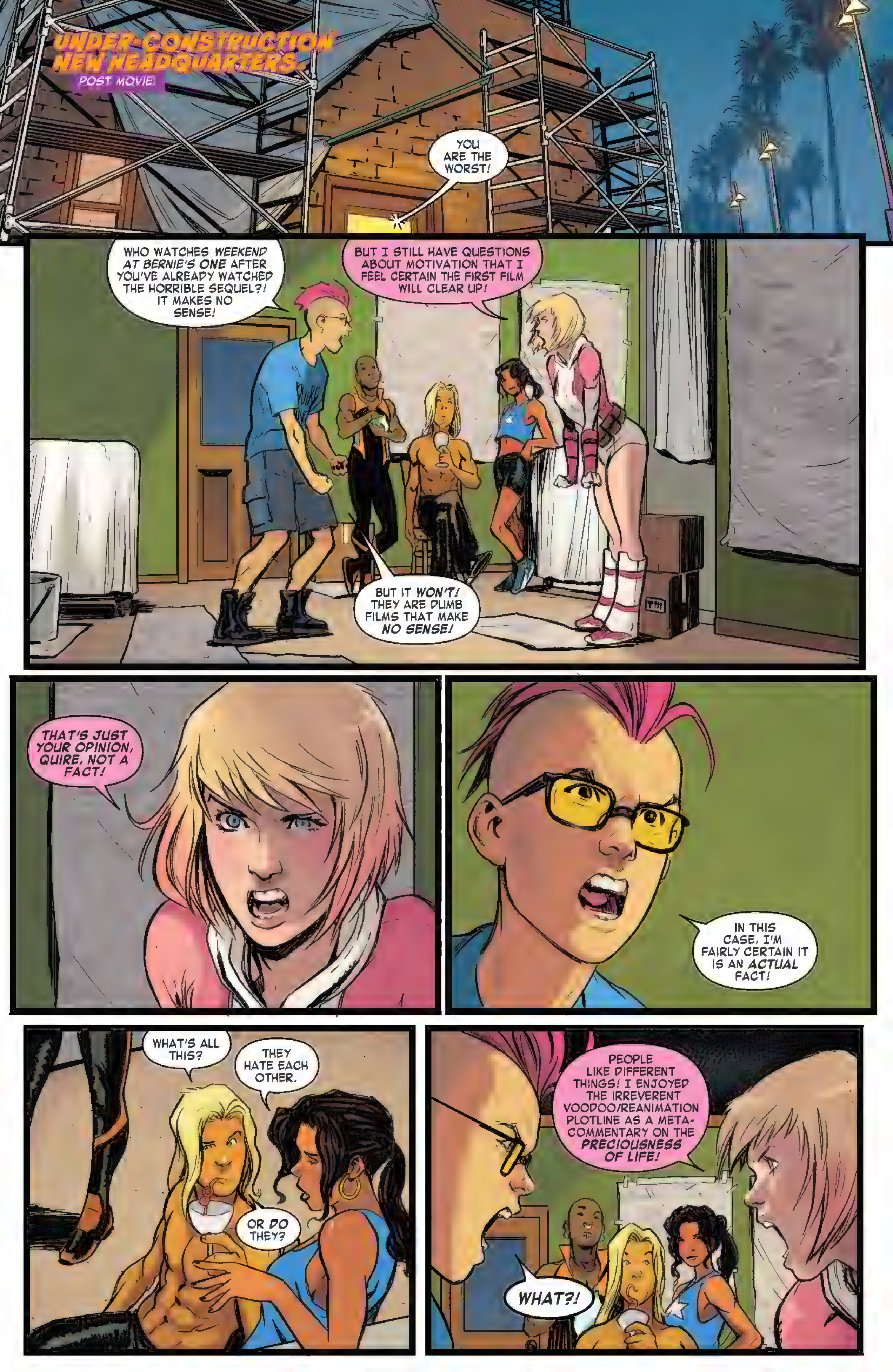

WE NEED TO RAID THAT A.I.M. FACILITY NOW AND SEE IF WE CAN FIND OUT WHERE TIGRA HAS GONE...IF HE'S KEEPING HER SOMEWHERE, WHAT HE DID TO HER, IF WE CAN REVERSE WHATEVER HAS BEEN DONE.
AGREED. ALL RIGHT. TWO TEAMS. ONE TO RAID THE LAB AND ONE TO STAY HERE AND KEEP B.R.O.D.O.K. ENTERTAINED IN CASE THAT DOESN'T WORK OUT.
I VOLUNTEER FOR THE RAID.
QUIRE HAPP
WHAT? I FIND HIM HILARIOUS. I CAN'T HELP IT. IT'S LIKE A TRAIN WRECK I CAN'T LOOK AWAY FROM. THE *HEAD,* THE *ABS,* THE *LEATHER PANTS,* IT'S ALL *AMAZING.*
DOESN'T MATTER ANYWAY. THIS ISN'T A DEMOCRACY.
CLINT AND I ARE GOING TO THE LAB. GWEN, YOU, FUSE, QUIRE AND AMERICA ARE WATCHING MOVIES WITH THE SUPER VILLAIN.
KATE!
WHAT?! BISHOP, YOU ARE *THE WORST* LEADER.
I WAS YOUR BEST FRIEND, KATE. *BEST. FRIEND.*
AND YOU STILL ARE. I'M PUTTING ALL THE HEAVY HITTERS HERE ON B.R.O.D.O.K.-WATCH, AMERICA, BECAUSE IT'S TOO DANGEROUS NOT TO. AND YOU'RE HERE SPECIFICALLY TO MAKE SURE NOTHING GOES WRONG.
...FINE.
AND ALSO POSSIBLY TO BABYSIT QUENTIN AND GWEN.
I HATE YOU AND WILL BE THINKING OF ALL THE WAYS TO MURDER YOU WHEN YOU RETURN.
THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

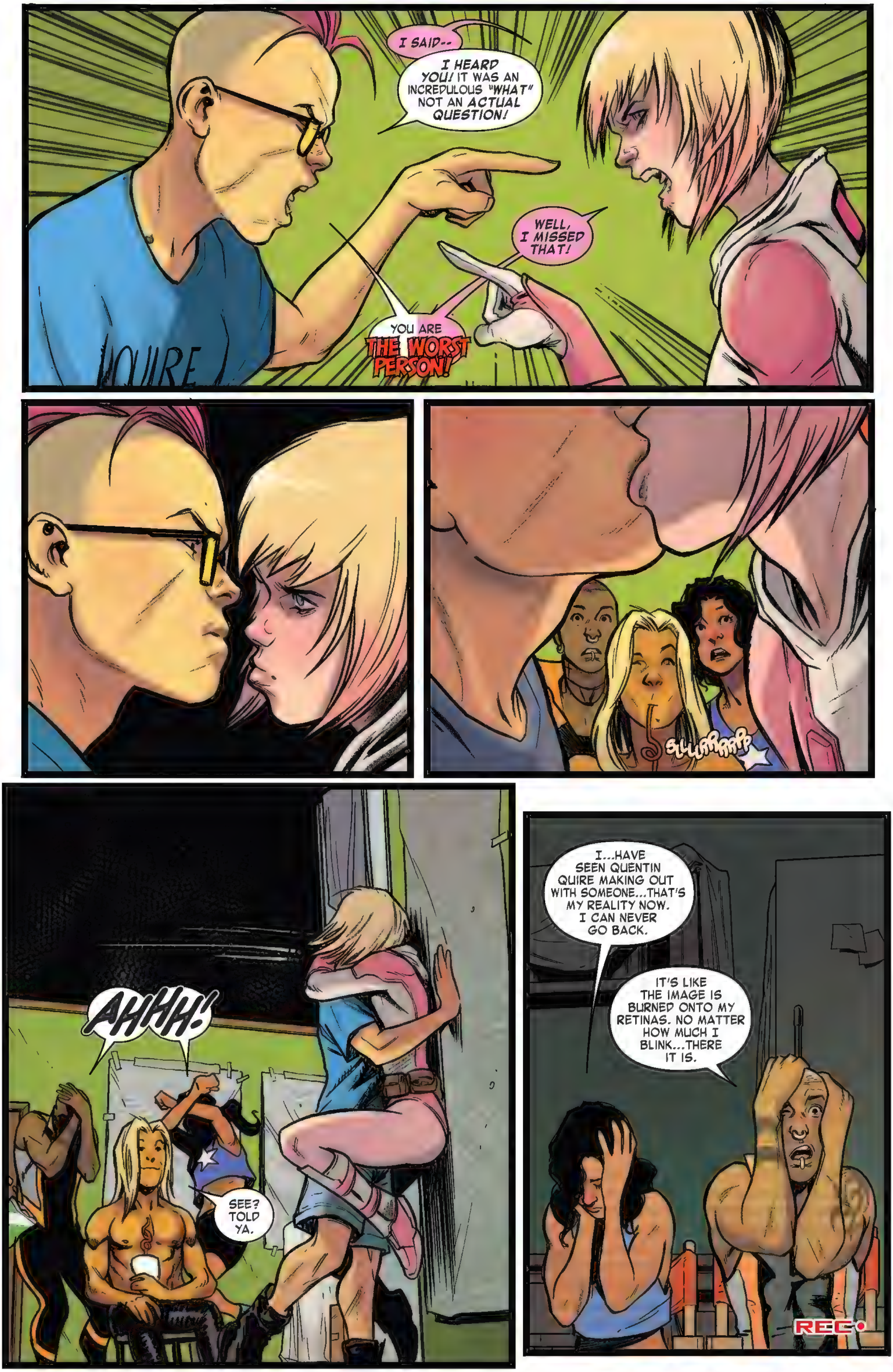

B.R.O.D.O.K., AMERICA IS GOING TO POP SOME POPCORN--YOU GUYS SHOULD GET A MOVIE STARTED. WE'LL BE BACK BEFORE YOU CAN EVEN MISS US!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
UH. PIZZA. THEY'RE GETTING PIZZA.
IN THEIR COSTUMES? WITH THEIR WEAPONS?
THEY'RE HAWKEYES. THEY DO EVERYTHING IN COSTUME WITH WEAPONS. OTHERWISE THEY'RE AS VULNERABLE AS TURTLES WITHOUT SHELLS.
OUCH.
I WILL TAKE MY VENGEANCE ANY WAY I CAN, JOHNNY.
SO... B.R.O.D.O.K., YOU'RE THE GUEST, YOU PICK THE MOVIE.
WE'LL START THE POPCORN.
TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S THE SECOND.
OOOOOH. INTERESTING CHOICE.
CURSE YOU, BISHOP!
Bang Bang Bang
JUST...JUST FOCUS ON THE LITTLE THINGS...LIKE ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN MURDER KATE... YOU COULD PUNCH HER INTO THE SUN, OR DROP HER IN THAT DIMENSION THAT'S ENTIRELY SHRIMP...SO MANY WAYS...

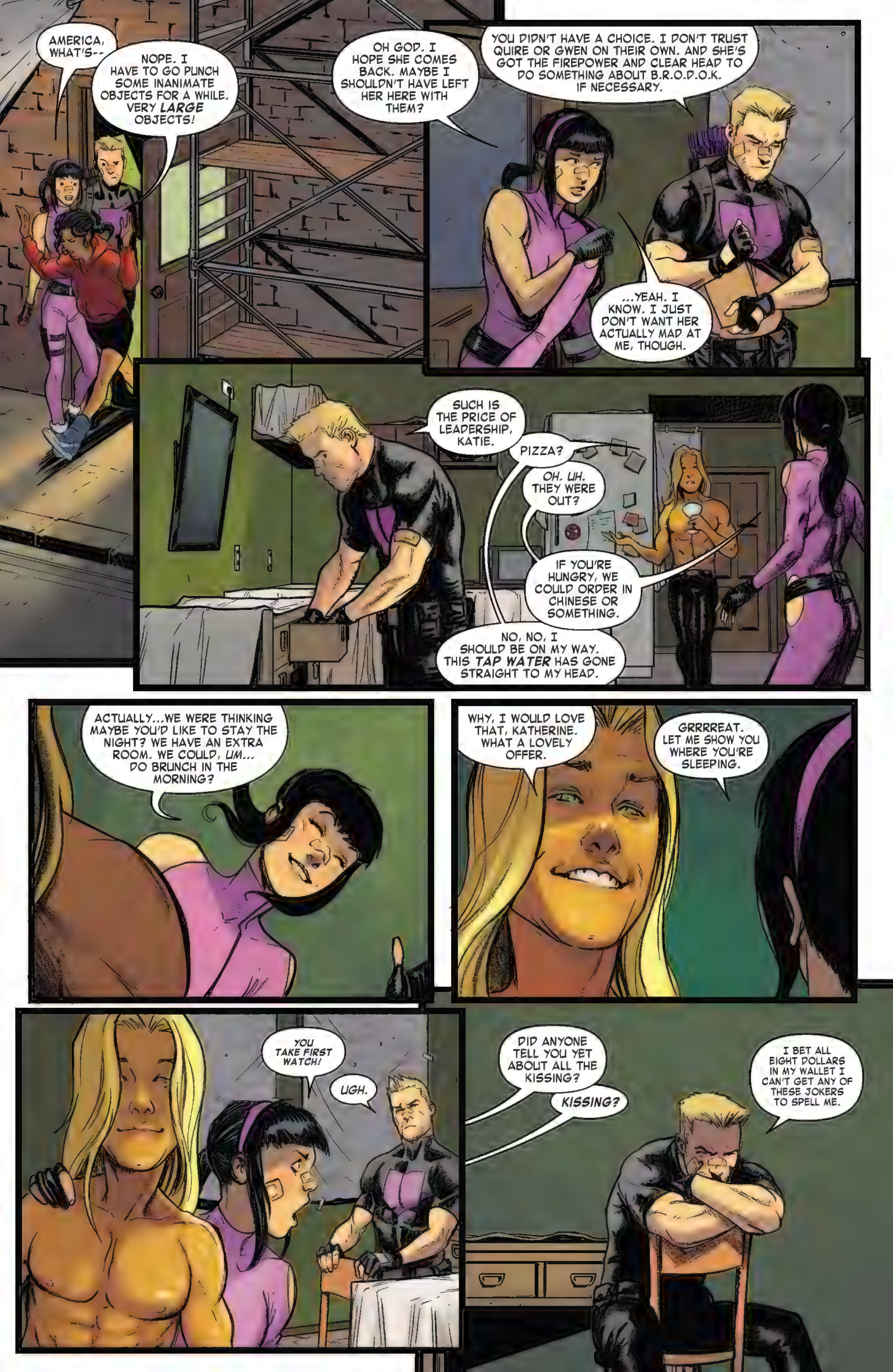

ADVANCED
IMAGE MECHA
ARE WE SURE THIS WAS THE EASIEST WAY IN?
I DID NOT.
DID YOU PICK UP THE ABILITY TO CRACK A TEN-DIGIT PASS CODE AND NOT TELL ME?
STILL. WHO HAS A TEN-DIGIT PASS CODE AND LEAVES THE *SKYLIGHT* OPEN?
SOMEONE WHO NAMES HIMSELF "BIO-ROBOTIC ORGANISM DESIGNED OVERWHELMINGLY FOR KISSING"?
FAIR ENOUGH.
YOU'VE BEEN PRETTY QUIET, YOU OKAY?
I'M WORRIED ABOUT TIGRA. WE'RE *SURE* THIS IS M.O.D.O.K.'S DOING, RIGHT?
IT HAS TO BE. IT'S TOO CONVENIENT, HIM SHOWING UP LIKE THAT.
BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S THE FIRST TIME HE'S EXPERIMENTED ON AND MANIPULATED WOMEN. CAROL DANVERS, BETTY ROSS--JUST TO NAME TWO.
YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT.
CLINT...AM I SCREWING UP?
NO. YOU LOOK FINE.
NOT *THIS*, DUMMY. THE TEAM. THIS WHOLE TEAM THING. AM I SCREWING IT UP?
WHAT? NO. KATE, YOU'RE SO GOOD.
C'MON. BE HONEST. THIS IS NOT GOING WELL SO FAR.

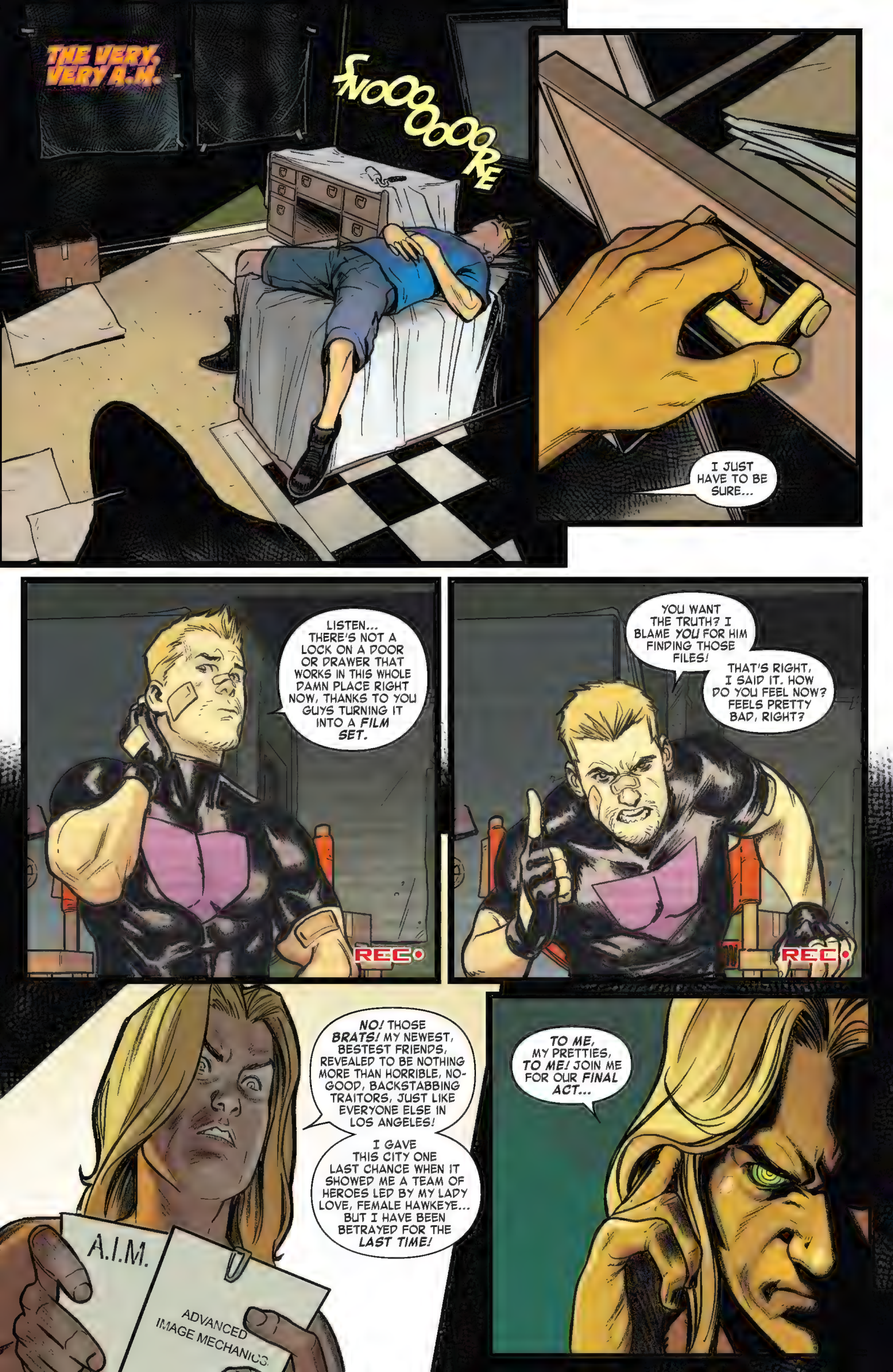

IT'S EARLY DAYS, KATIE. THOSE ARE ALWAYS TOUGH. I COULD TELL YOU SOME STORIES.
I WELCOME ALL STORIES OF YOUR FAILURE.
I'M SURE YOU DO.
WELL, A GIANT "SCIENCE GUN" POINTED AT A TABLE WITH RESTRAINTS ON IT IS NEVER GREAT.
YEAH, MIGHT AS WELL HAVE "SUPER VILLAIN, INC." PRINTED ON IT.
CLEARLY HE'S BEEN UP TO SERIOUS SHENANIGANS IN HERE.
AVERSA
LOCKED.
STEP BACK, KATIE.
REAL SUBTLE.
SRRRKKKK
WAS AN EXPLOSIVE ARROW REALLY NECESSARY?
JUST A BABY ONE.
BOOM

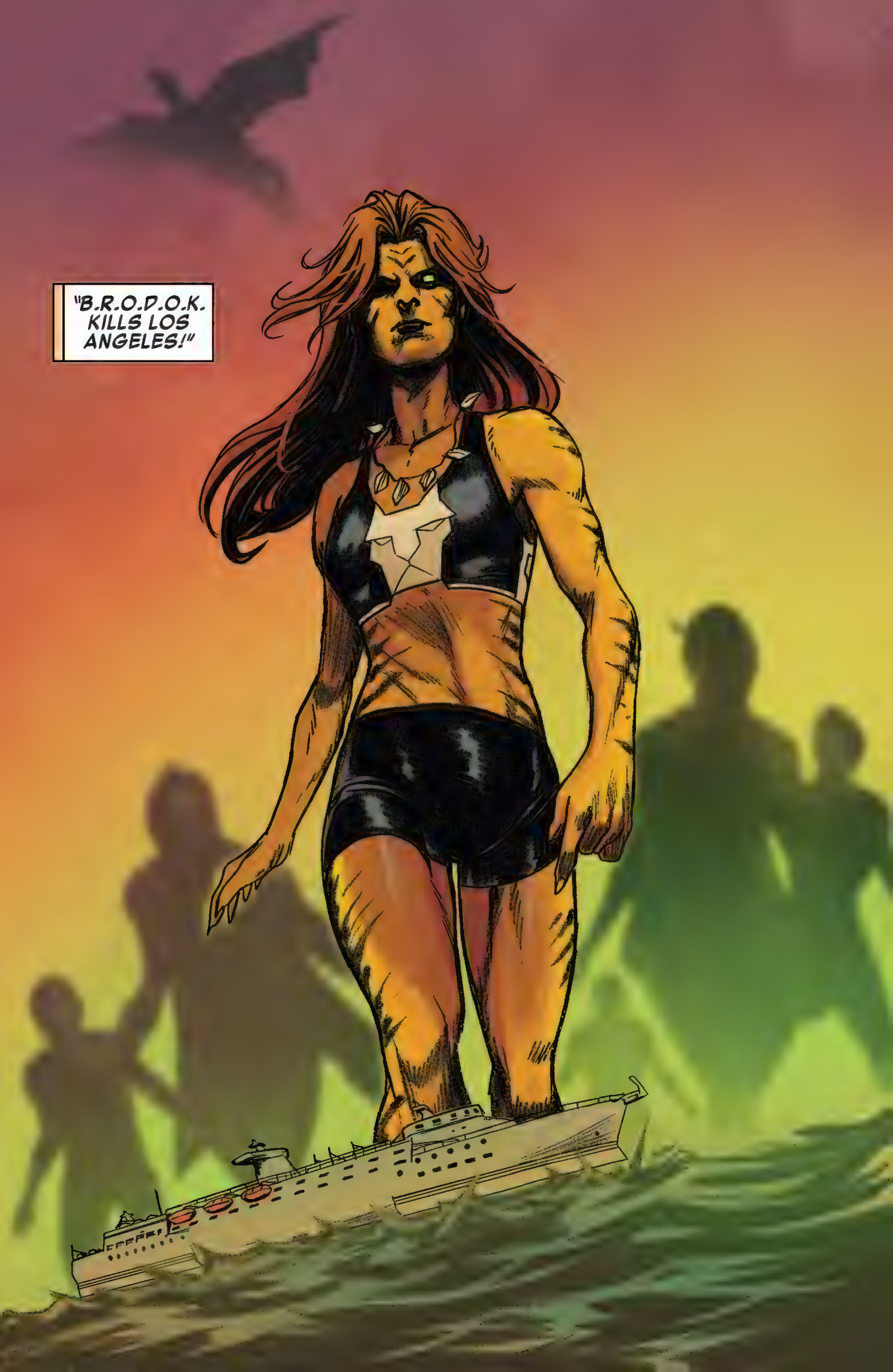

YOU SEE ANYTHING? INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EQUIPMENT? LAB NOTES?
NO. WHAT ABOUT THE FILES?
LOOKS MOSTLY LIKE PATIENT RECORDS. I DON'T SEE ANYTHING ABOUT TIGRA, THOUGH.
DAMMIT. I CAN'T EVEN READ THIS...HE'S WRITING IN SOME KIND OF CODE.
WHO *DOES* THAT FOR THEIR PATIENT FILES?
DON'T MAKE ME REPEAT YOUR ANSWER TO ME.
RIGHT, RIGHT. A GUY WHO CALLS HIMSELF B.R.O.D.O.K.
EXACTLY. THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
OOOPS.
YEAH, THAT'S US. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.
WHY ME?
I'M TAKING SOME OF THESE, BUT YOU GOTTA CARRY THEM.
THERE'S NO ROOM IN THIS COSTUME...AND EVEN IF THERE WERE, THINGS WOULD FALL OUT THE HIP HOLES.
SO THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE THOSE.
SO I CAN'T STUFF PATIENT FILES IN MY COSTUME? ABSOLUTELY.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE


UNDER-CONSTRUCTION NEW HEADQUARTERS.
POST MOVIE
YOU ARE THE WORST!
WHO WATCHES WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S ONE AFTER YOU'VE ALREADY WATCHED THE HORRIBLE SEQUEL?! IT MAKES NO SENSE!
BUT I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MOTIVATION THAT I FEEL CERTAIN THE FIRST FILM WILL CLEAR UP!
BUT IT WON'T! THEY ARE DUMB FILMS THAT MAKE NO SENSE!
THAT'S JUST YOUR OPINION, QUIRE, NOT A FACT!
IN THIS CASE, I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN IT IS AN ACTUAL FACT!
WHAT'S ALL THIS?
THEY HATE EACH OTHER.
OR DO THEY?
PEOPLE LIKE DIFFERENT THINGS! I ENJOYED THE IRREVERENT VOODOO/REANIMATION PLOTLINE AS A META-COMMENTARY ON THE PRECIOUSNESS OF LIFE!
WHAT?!

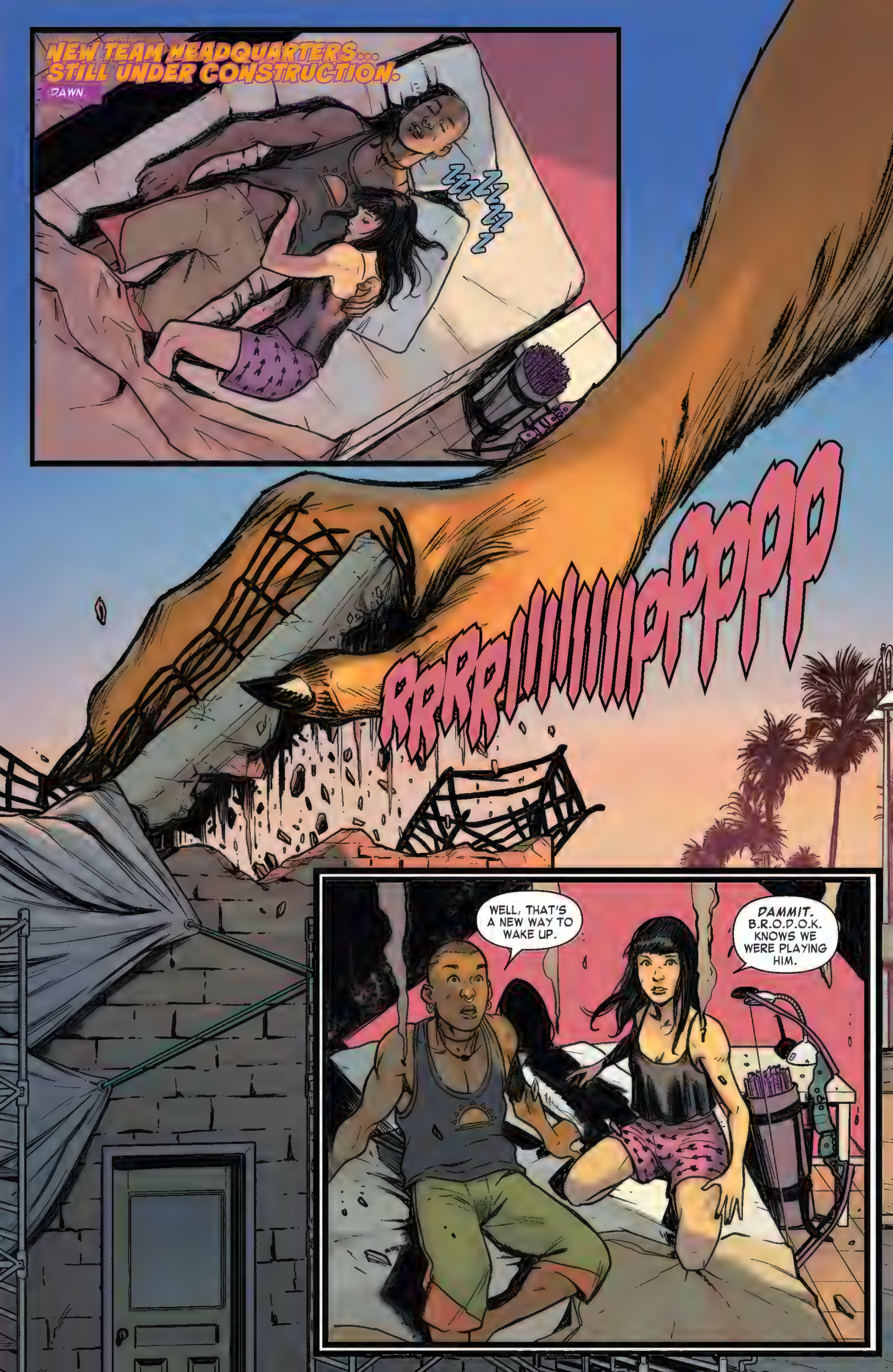

I SAID--
I HEARD YOU! IT WAS AN INCREDULOUS "WHAT" NOT AN ACTUAL QUESTION!
WELL, I MISSED THAT!
YOU ARE THE WORST PERSON!
SLLLURRRRP
AHHH!
SEE? TOLD YA.
I...HAVE SEEN QUENTIN QUIRE MAKING OUT WITH SOMEONE...THAT'S MY REALITY NOW. I CAN NEVER GO BACK.
IT'S LIKE THE IMAGE IS BURNED ONTO MY RETINAS. NO MATTER HOW MUCH I BLINK...THERE IT IS.
REC

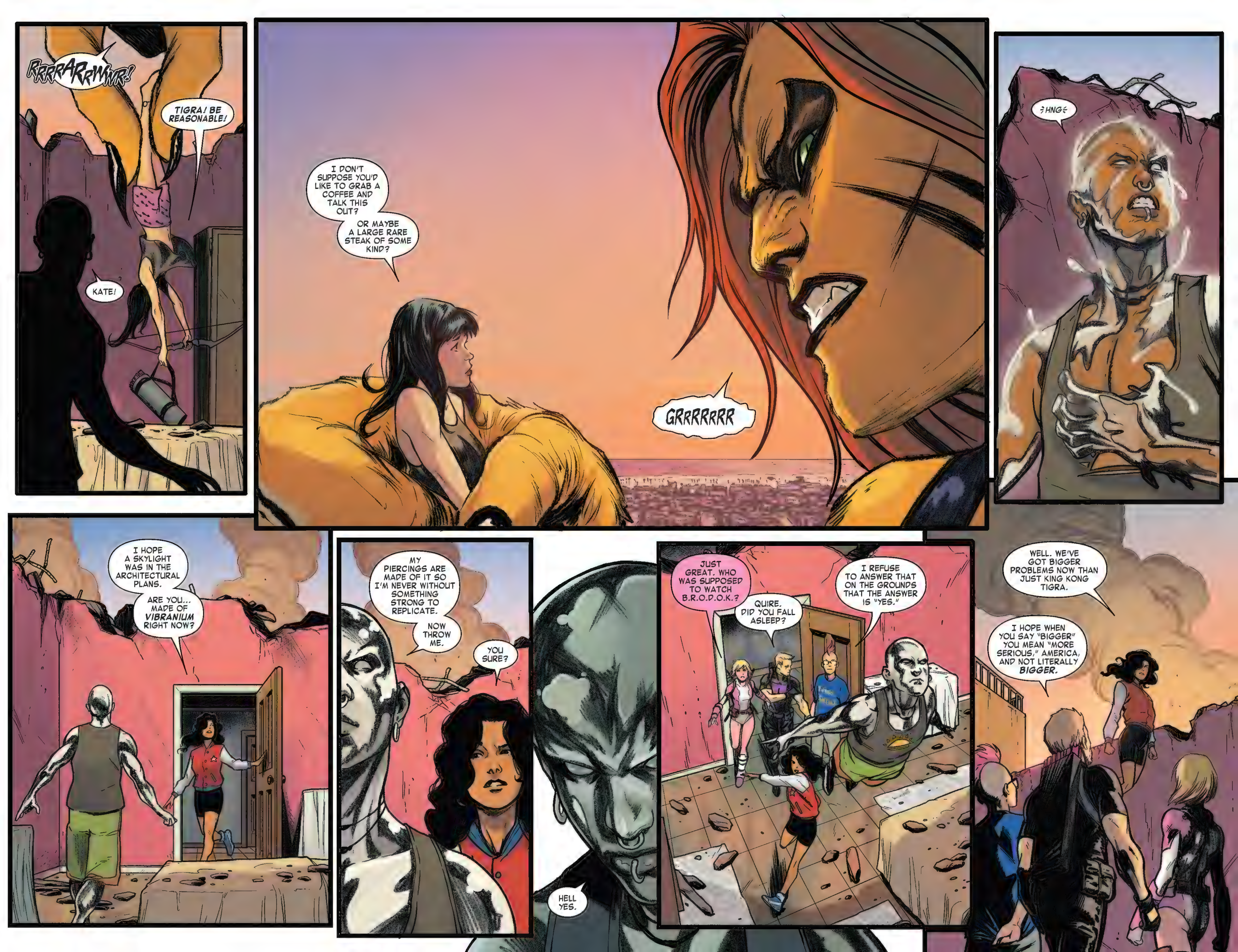

AMERICA, WHAT'S--
NOPE. I HAVE TO GO PUNCH SOME INANIMATE OBJECTS FOR A WHILE. VERY *LARGE* OBJECTS!
OH GOD. I HOPE SHE COMES BACK. MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT HER HERE WITH THEM?
YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE. I DON'T TRUST QUIRE OR GWEN ON THEIR OWN. AND SHE'S GOT THE FIREPOWER AND CLEAR HEAD TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT B.R.O.D.O.K. IF NECESSARY.
...YEAH. I KNOW. I JUST DON'T WANT HER ACTUALLY MAD AT ME, THOUGH.
SUCH IS THE PRICE OF LEADERSHIP, KATIE.
PIZZA?
OH. UH. THEY WERE OUT?
IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, WE COULD ORDER IN CHINESE OR SOMETHING.
NO, NO, I SHOULD BE ON MY WAY. THIS *TAP WATER* HAS GONE STRAIGHT TO MY HEAD.
ACTUALLY...WE WERE THINKING MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO STAY THE NIGHT? WE HAVE AN EXTRA ROOM. WE COULD, *UM*... DO BRUNCH IN THE MORNING?
WHY, I WOULD LOVE THAT, KATHERINE. WHAT A LOVELY OFFER.
GRRRREAT. LET ME SHOW YOU WHERE YOU'RE SLEEPING.
YOU TAKE FIRST WATCH!
UGH.
DID ANYONE TELL YOU YET ABOUT ALL THE KISSING?
KISSING?
I BET ALL EIGHT DOLLARS IN MY WALLET I CAN'T GET ANY OF THESE JOKERS TO SPELL ME.

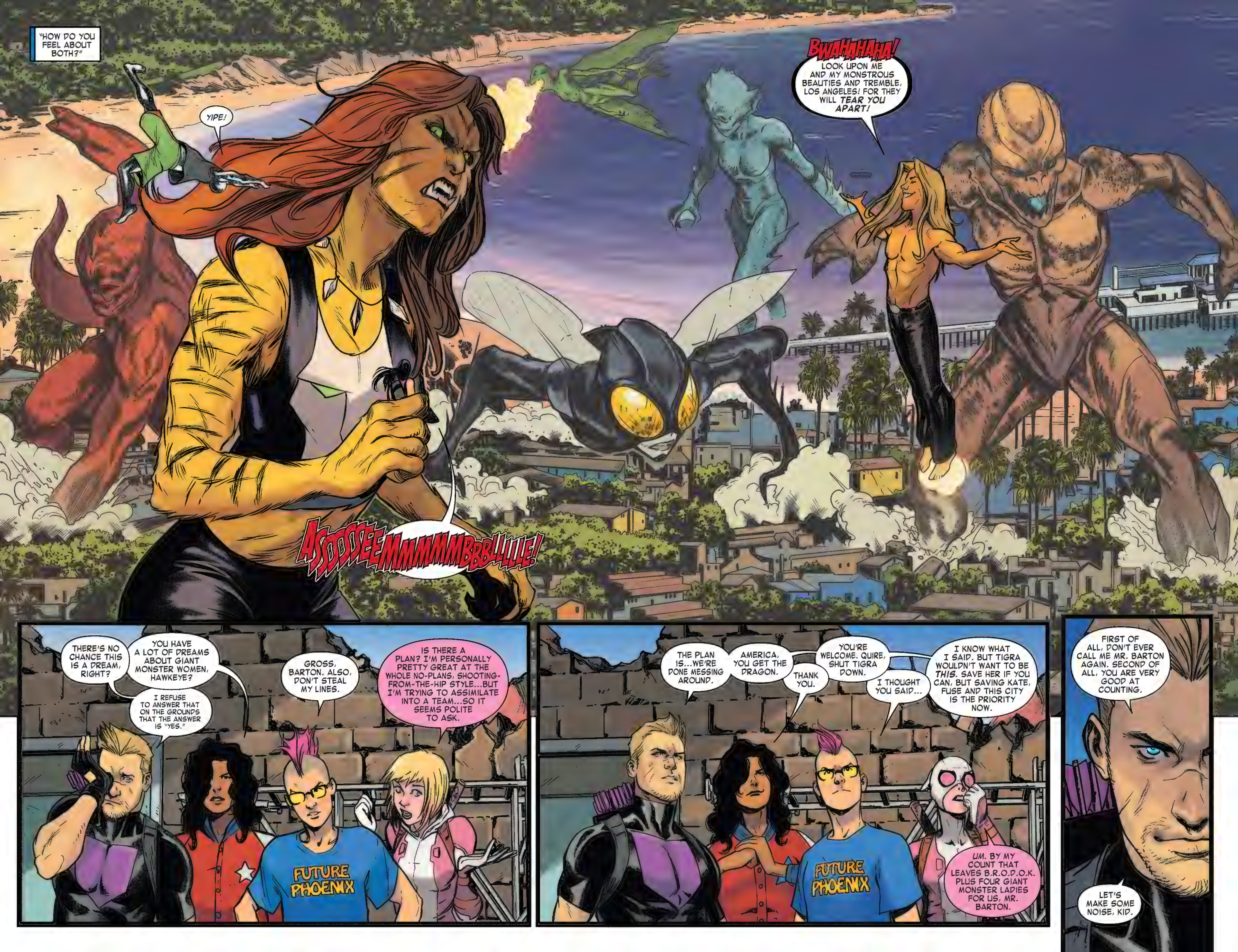

THE VERY, VERY A.M.
SNOOOOOOORE
I JUST HAVE TO BE SURE...
LISTEN... THERE'S NOT A LOCK ON A DOOR OR DRAWER THAT WORKS IN THIS WHOLE DAMN PLACE RIGHT NOW, THANKS TO YOU GUYS TURNING IT INTO A *FILM SET.*
REC
YOU WANT THE TRUTH? I BLAME *YOU* FOR HIM FINDING THOSE FILES!
THAT'S RIGHT, I SAID IT. HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW? FEELS PRETTY BAD, RIGHT?
REC
NO! THOSE BRATS! MY NEWEST, BESTEST FRIENDS, REVEALED TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN HORRIBLE, NO-GOOD, BACKSTABBING TRAITORS, JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE IN LOS ANGELES!
I GAVE THIS CITY ONE LAST CHANCE WHEN IT SHOWED ME A TEAM OF HEROES LED BY MY LADY LOVE, FEMALE HAWKEYE... BUT I HAVE BEEN BETRAYED FOR THE *LAST TIME!*
A.I.M.
ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS
TO ME, MY PRETTIES, *TO ME!* JOIN ME FOR OUR *FINAL ACT...*

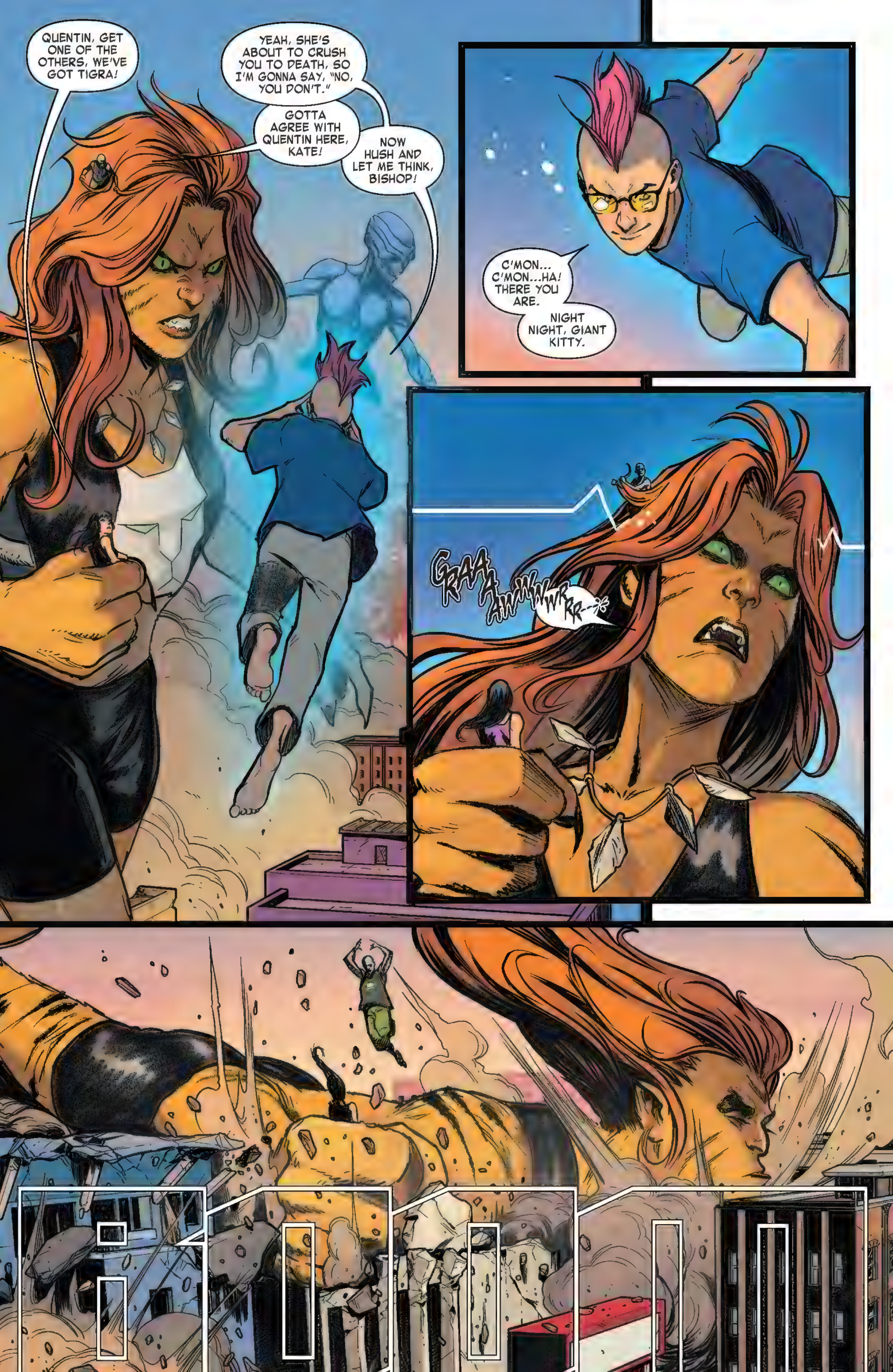

"B.R.O.D.O.K. KILLS LOS ANGELES!"

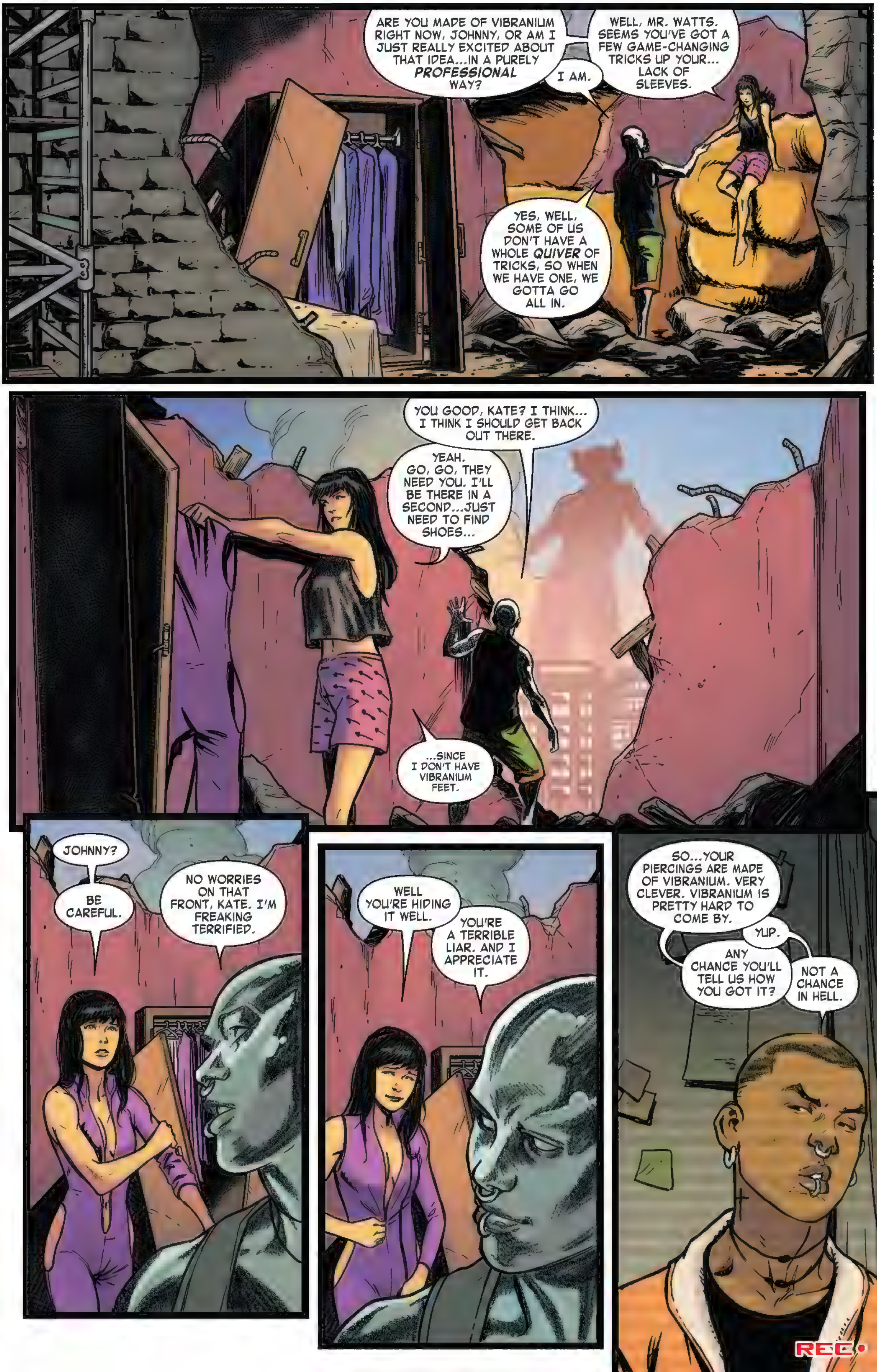
WEST COAST AVENGERS #3

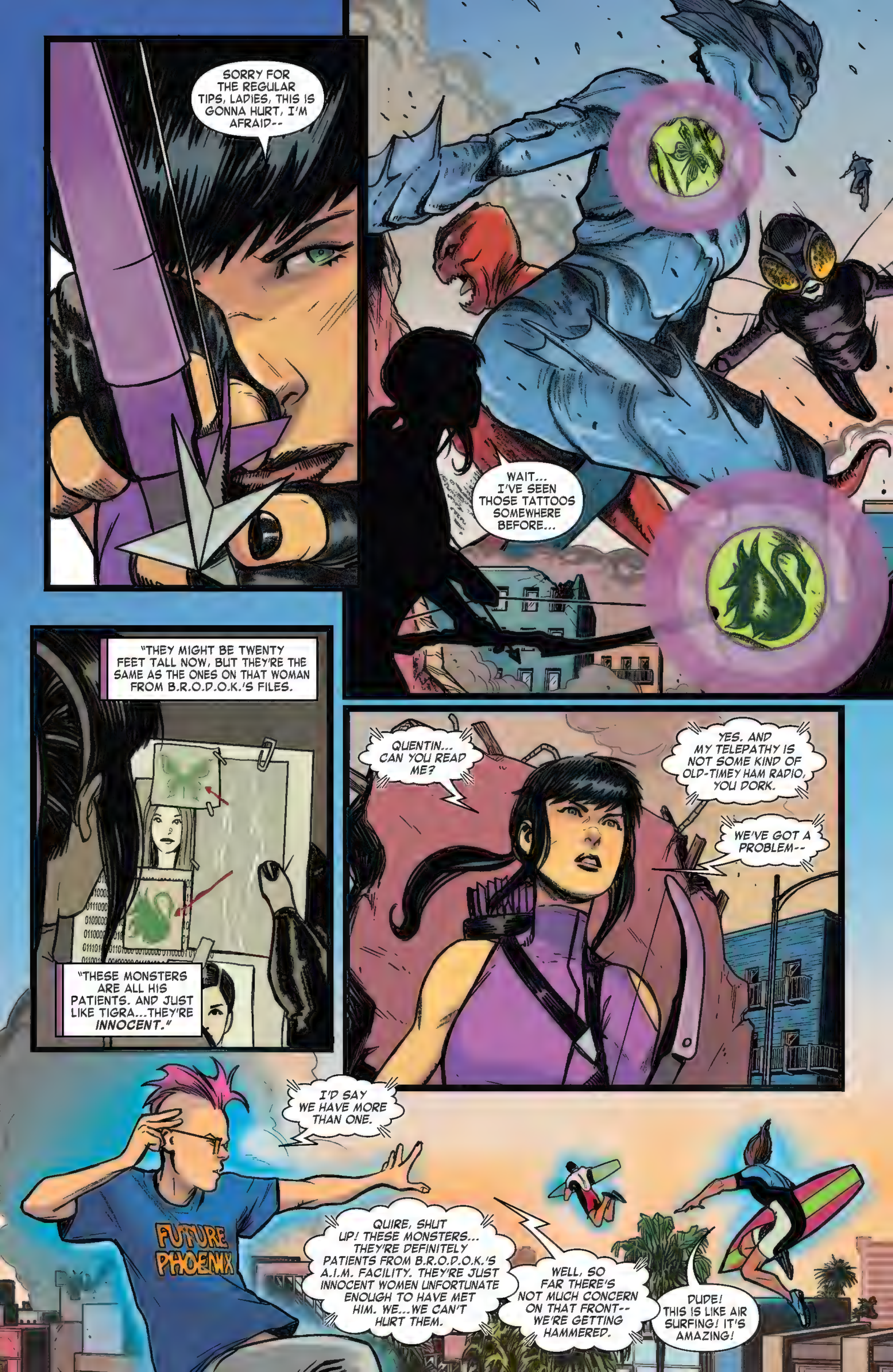

NEW TEAM HEADQUARTERS... STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION.
DAWN.
ZZZZZZZ
RRRIIIIIIIIPPPPP
WELL, THAT'S A NEW WAY TO WAKE UP.
DAMMIT. B.R.O.D.O.K. KNOWS WE WERE PLAYING HIM.

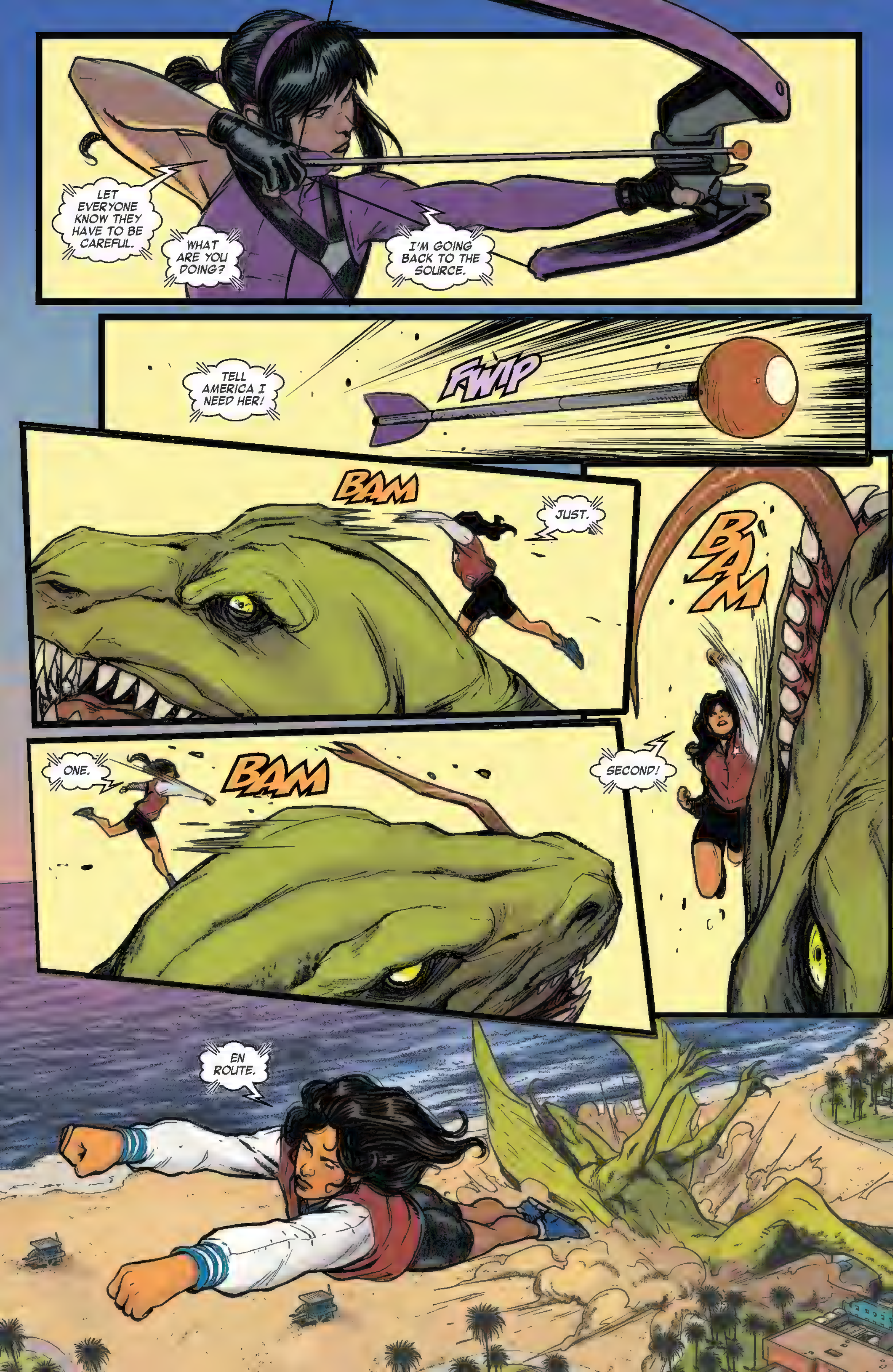

RRRRARRWWR!
TIGRA! BE REASONABLE!
KATE!
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D LIKE TO GRAB A COFFEE AND TALK THIS OUT?
OR MAYBE A LARGE RARE STEAK OF SOME KIND?
GRRRRRRR
HNG
I HOPE A SKYLIGHT WAS IN THE ARCHITECTURAL PLANS.
ARE YOU... MADE OF *VIBRANIUM* RIGHT NOW?
MY PIERCINGS ARE MADE OF IT SO I'M NEVER WITHOUT SOMETHING STRONG TO REPLICATE.
NOW THROW ME.
YOU SURE?
HELL YES.
JUST GREAT. WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO WATCH B.R.O.D.O.K.?
QUIRE. DID YOU FALL ASLEEP?
I REFUSE TO ANSWER THAT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE ANSWER IS "YES."
WELL. WE'VE GOT BIGGER PROBLEMS NOW THAN JUST KING KONG TIGRA.
I HOPE WHEN YOU SAY "BIGGER" YOU MEAN "MORE SERIOUS," AMERICA, AND NOT LITERALLY *BIGGER*.

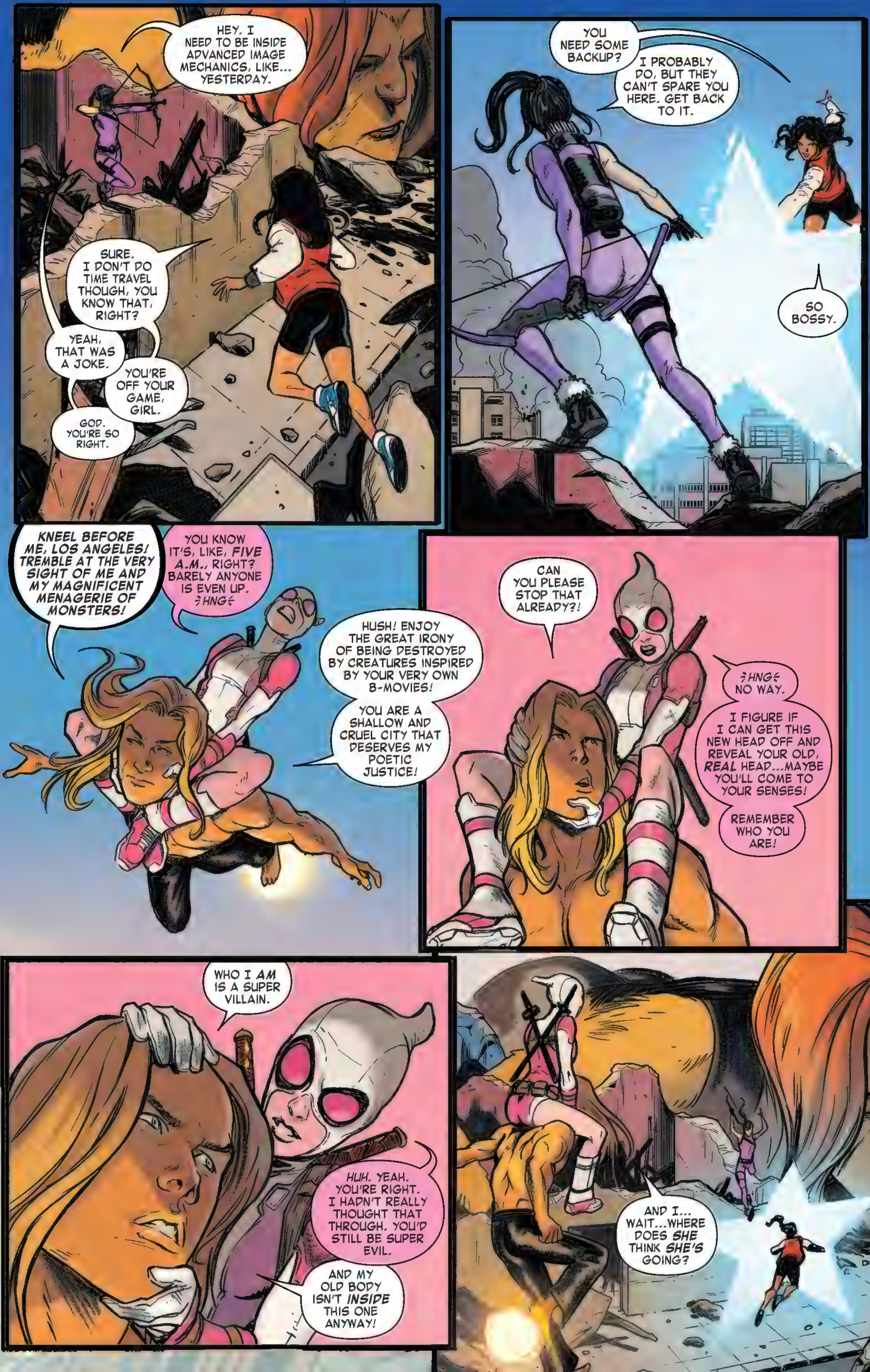

"HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BOTH?"
YIPE!
BWAHAHAHA!
LOOK UPON ME AND MY MONSTROUS BEAUTIES AND TREMBLE, LOS ANGELES! FOR THEY WILL *TEAR YOU APART!*
ASSSSSEEMMMMMBBBLLLLLE!
THERE'S NO CHANCE THIS IS A DREAM, RIGHT?
YOU HAVE A LOT OF DREAMS ABOUT GIANT MONSTER WOMEN, HAWKEYE?
I REFUSE TO ANSWER THAT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE ANSWER IS "YES."
GROSS, BARTON. ALSO, DON'T STEAL MY LINES.
IS THERE A PLAN? I'M PERSONALLY PRETTY GREAT AT THE WHOLE NO-PLANS, SHOOTING-FROM-THE-HIP STYLE...BUT I'M TRYING TO ASSIMILATE INTO A TEAM...SO IT SEEMS POLITE TO ASK.
FUTURE PHOENIX
THE PLAN IS...WE'RE DONE MESSING AROUND.
AMERICA, YOU GET THE DRAGON.
THANK YOU.
YOU'RE WELCOME. QUIRE, SHUT TIGRA DOWN.
I THOUGHT YOU SAID...
I KNOW WHAT I SAID. BUT TIGRA WOULDN'T WANT TO BE *THIS.* SAVE HER IF YOU CAN, BUT SAVING KATE, FUSE AND THIS CITY IS THE PRIORITY NOW.
UM. BY MY COUNT THAT LEAVES B.R.O.D.O.K. PLUS FOUR GIANT MONSTER LADIES FOR US, MR. BARTON.
FUTURE PHOENIX
FIRST OF ALL, DON'T EVER CALL ME MR. BARTON AGAIN. SECOND OF ALL, YOU ARE VERY GOOD AT COUNTING.
LET'S MAKE SOME NOISE, KID.

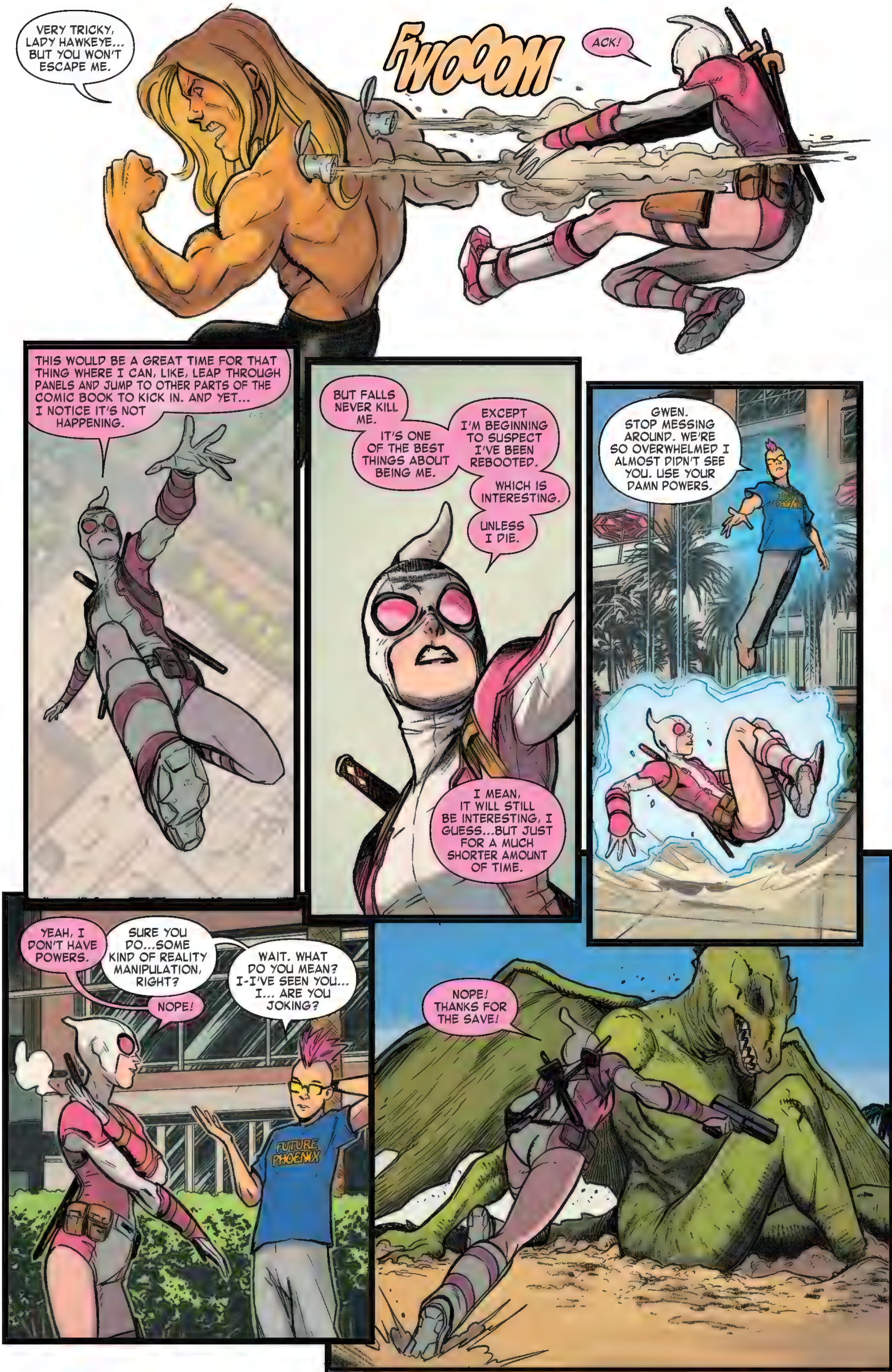

QUENTIN, GET ONE OF THE OTHERS, WE'VE GOT TIGRA!
YEAH, SHE'S ABOUT TO CRUSH YOU TO DEATH, SO I'M GONNA SAY, "NO, YOU DON'T."
GOTTA AGREE WITH QUENTIN HERE, KATE!
NOW HUSH AND LET ME THINK, BISHOP!
C'MON... C'MON...HA! THERE YOU ARE.
NIGHT NIGHT, GIANT KITTY.
GRAAAAWWWWRRR

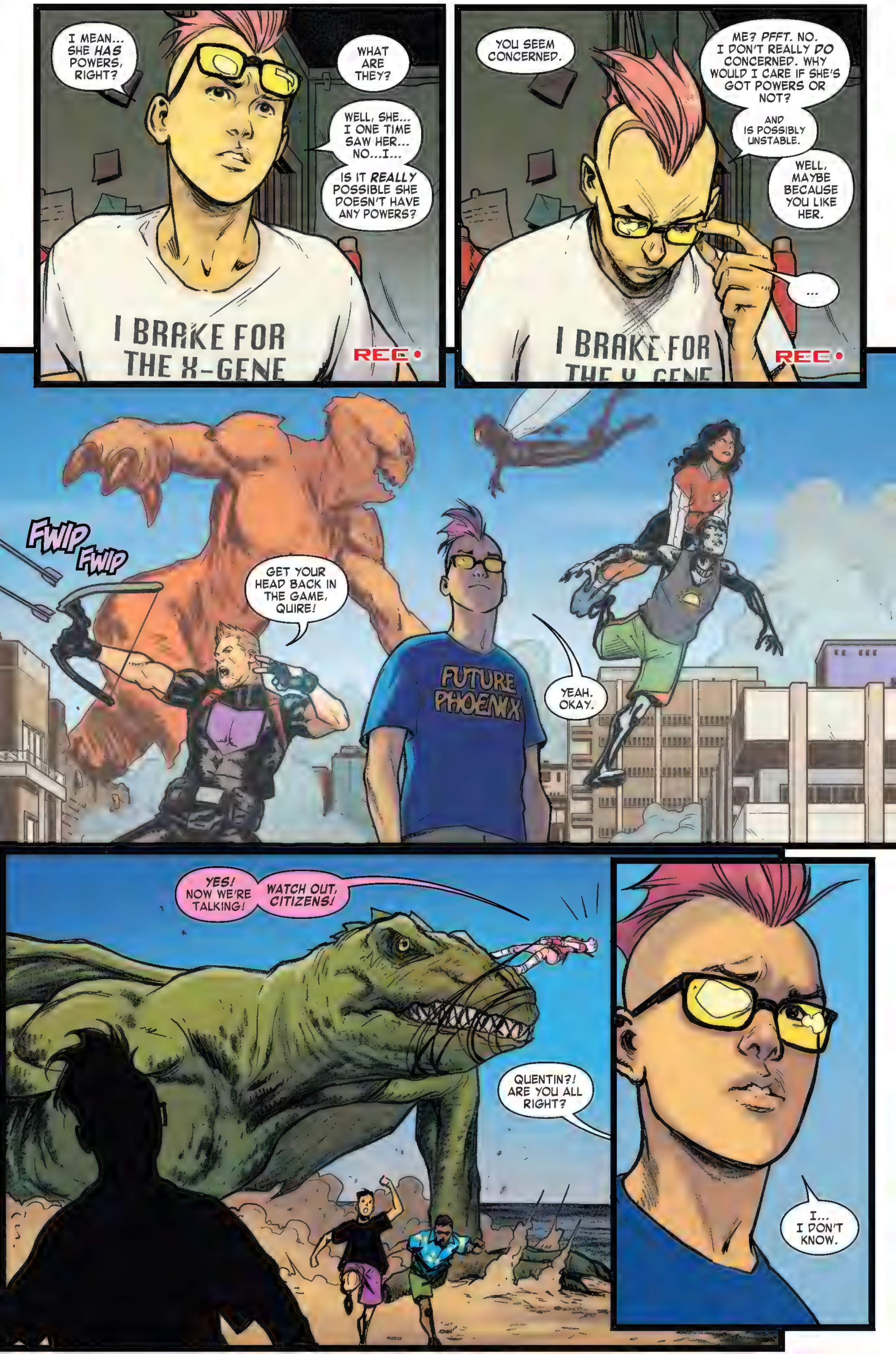

ARE YOU MADE OF VIBRANIUM RIGHT NOW, JOHNNY, OR AM I JUST REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THAT IDEA...IN A PURELY **PROFESSIONAL** WAY?
I AM.
WELL, MR. WATTS. SEEMS YOU'VE GOT A FEW GAME-CHANGING TRICKS UP YOUR... LACK OF SLEEVES.
YES, WELL, SOME OF US DON'T HAVE A WHOLE **QUIVER** OF TRICKS, SO WHEN WE HAVE ONE, WE GOTTA GO ALL IN.
YOU GOOD, KATE? I THINK... I THINK I SHOULD GET BACK OUT THERE.
YEAH. GO, GO, THEY NEED YOU. I'LL BE THERE IN A SECOND...JUST NEED TO FIND SHOES...
...SINCE I DON'T HAVE VIBRANIUM FEET.
JOHNNY?
BE CAREFUL.
NO WORRIES ON THAT FRONT, KATE. I'M FREAKING TERRIFIED.
WELL YOU'RE HIDING IT WELL.
YOU'RE A TERRIBLE LIAR. AND I APPRECIATE IT.
SO...YOUR PIERCINGS ARE MADE OF VIBRANIUM. VERY CLEVER. VIBRANIUM IS PRETTY HARD TO COME BY.
YUP.
ANY CHANCE YOU'LL TELL US HOW YOU GOT IT?
NOT A CHANCE IN HELL.

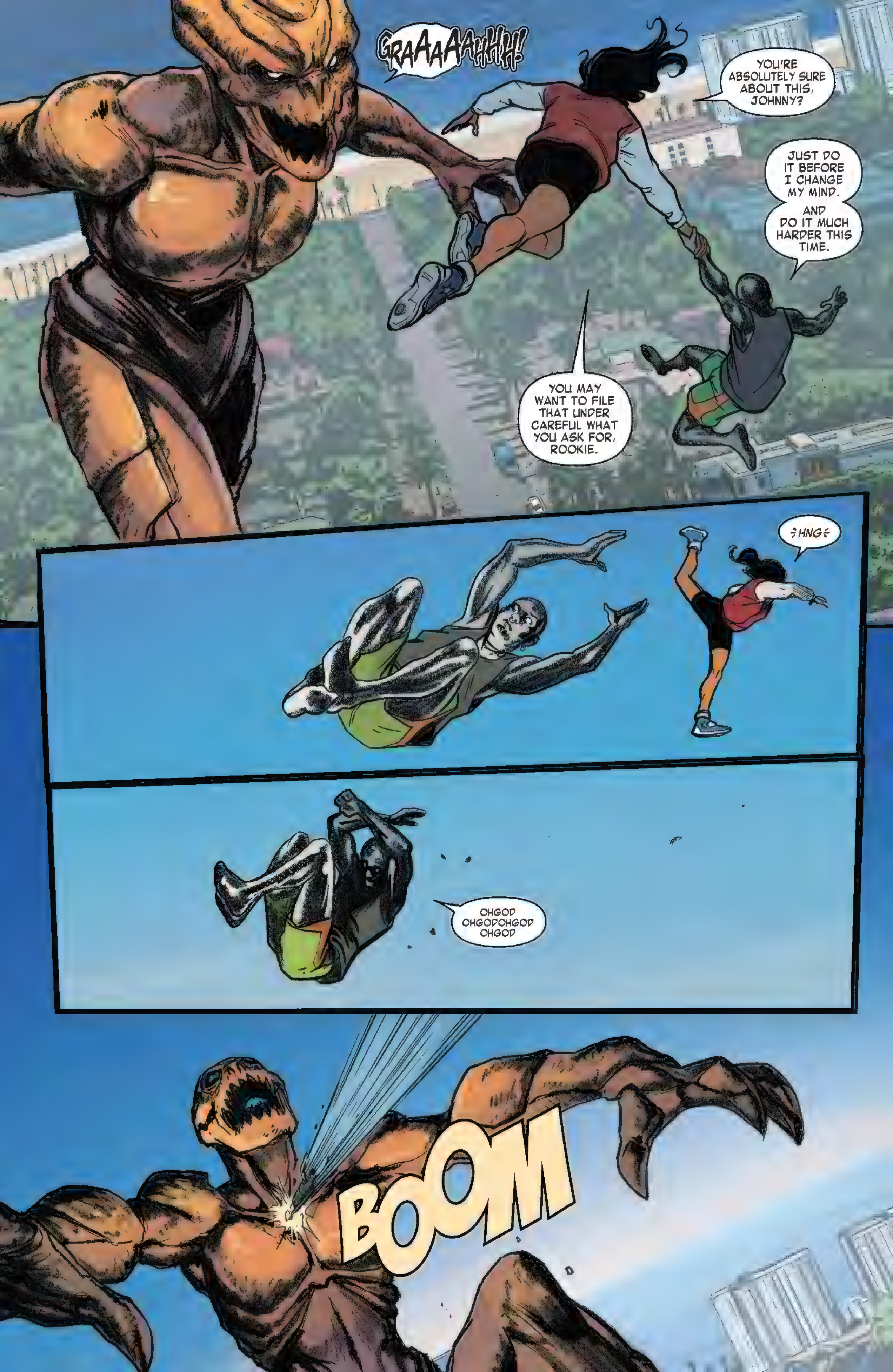

SORRY FOR THE REGULAR TIPS, LADIES, THIS IS GONNA HURT, I'M AFRAID--
WAIT... I'VE SEEN THOSE TATTOOS SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
"THEY MIGHT BE TWENTY FEET TALL NOW, BUT THEY'RE THE SAME AS THE ONES ON THAT WOMAN FROM B.R.O.D.O.K.'S FILES.
"THESE MONSTERS ARE ALL HIS PATIENTS. AND JUST LIKE TIGRA...THEY'RE *INNOCENT*."
QUENTIN... CAN YOU READ ME?
YES. AND MY TELEPATHY IS NOT SOME KIND OF OLD-TIMEY HAM RADIO, YOU DORK.
WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM--
I'D SAY WE HAVE MORE THAN ONE.
FUTURE PHOENIX
QUIRE, SHUT UP! THESE MONSTERS... THEY'RE DEFINITELY PATIENTS FROM B.R.O.D.O.K.'S A.I.M. FACILITY. THEY'RE JUST INNOCENT WOMEN UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE MET HIM. WE...WE CAN'T HURT THEM.
WELL, SO FAR THERE'S NOT MUCH CONCERN ON THAT FRONT-- WE'RE GETTING HAMMERED.
DUDE! THIS IS LIKE AIR SURFING! IT'S AMAZING!

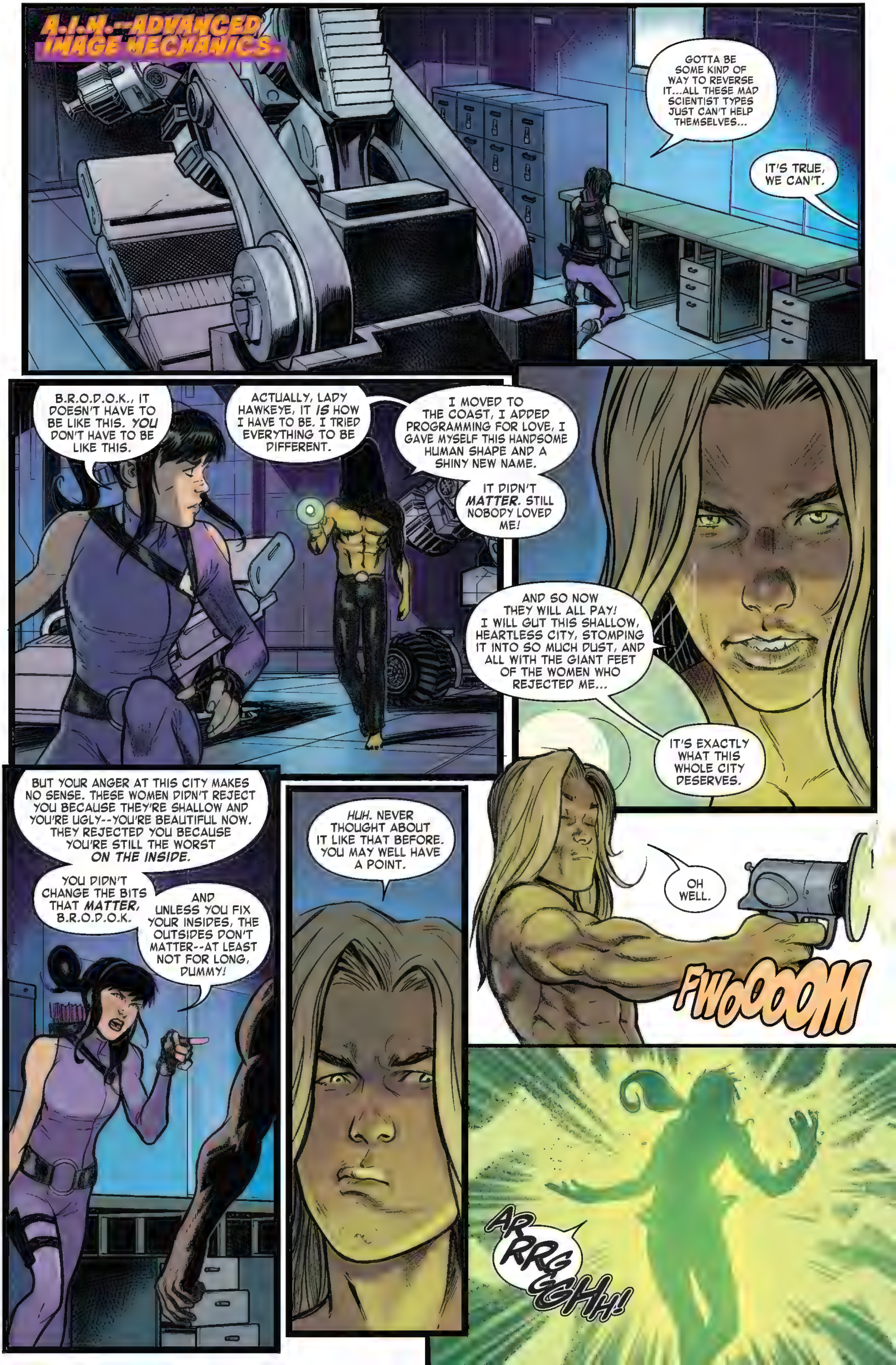

LET EVERYONE KNOW THEY HAVE TO BE CAREFUL.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M GOING BACK TO THE SOURCE.
TELL AMERICA I NEED HER!
FWIP
BAM
JUST.
BAM
ONE.
BAM
SECOND!
EN ROUTE.

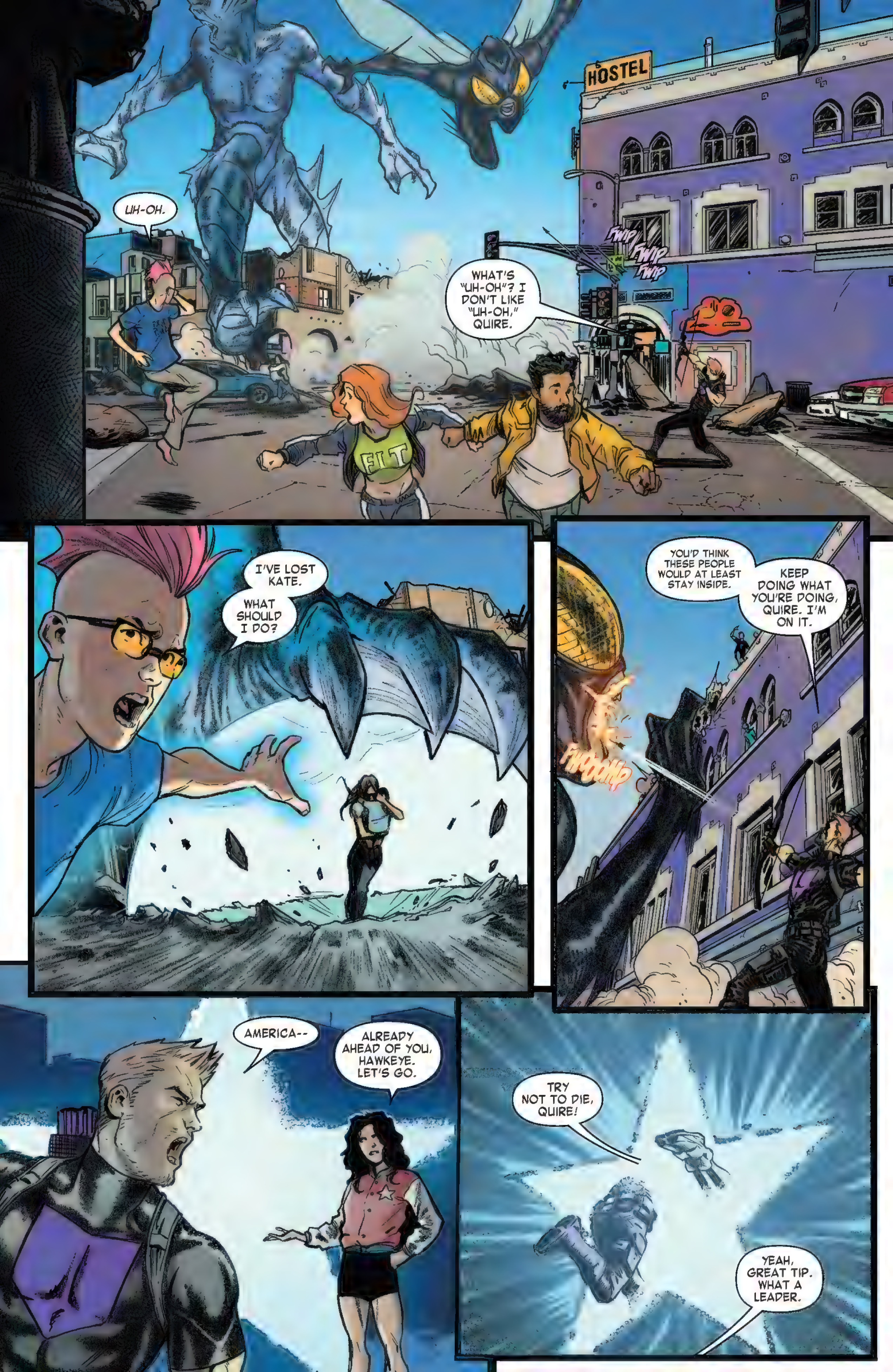

HEY. I NEED TO BE INSIDE ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS, LIKE... YESTERDAY.
SURE. I DON'T DO TIME TRAVEL THOUGH, YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?
YEAH, THAT WAS A JOKE.
YOU'RE OFF YOUR GAME, GIRL.
GOD. YOU'RE SO RIGHT.
YOU NEED SOME BACKUP?
I PROBABLY DO, BUT THEY CAN'T SPARE YOU HERE. GET BACK TO IT.
SO BOSSY.
KNEEL BEFORE ME, LOS ANGELES! TREMBLE AT THE VERY SIGHT OF ME AND MY MAGNIFICENT MENAGERIE OF MONSTERS!
YOU KNOW IT'S, LIKE, *FIVE A.M.*, RIGHT? BARELY ANYONE IS EVEN UP. *≶HNG≷*
HUSH! ENJOY THE GREAT IRONY OF BEING DESTROYED BY CREATURES INSPIRED BY YOUR VERY OWN B-MOVIES!
YOU ARE A SHALLOW AND CRUEL CITY THAT DESERVES MY POETIC JUSTICE!
CAN YOU PLEASE STOP THAT ALREADY?!
≶HNG≷ NO WAY.
I FIGURE IF I CAN GET THIS NEW HEAD OFF AND REVEAL YOUR OLD, *REAL* HEAD...MAYBE YOU'LL COME TO YOUR SENSES!
REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE!
WHO I *AM* IS A SUPER VILLAIN.
HUH. YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT. I HADN'T REALLY THOUGHT THAT THROUGH. YOU'D STILL BE SUPER EVIL.
AND MY OLD BODY ISN'T *INSIDE* THIS ONE ANYWAY!
AND I... WAIT...WHERE DOES *SHE* THINK *SHE'S* GOING?

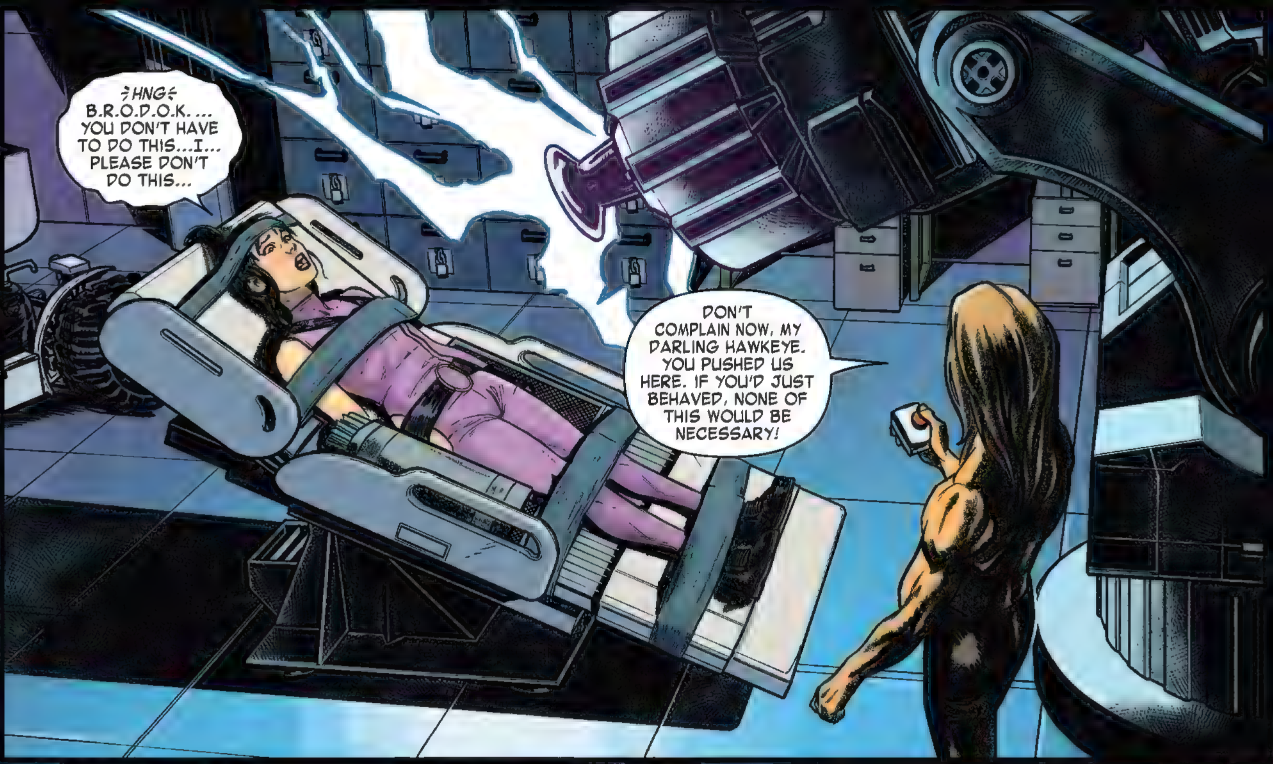

VERY TRICKY, LADY HAWKEYE... BUT YOU WON'T ESCAPE ME.
FWOOOM
ACK!
THIS WOULD BE A GREAT TIME FOR THAT THING WHERE I CAN, LIKE, LEAP THROUGH PANELS AND JUMP TO OTHER PARTS OF THE COMIC BOOK TO KICK IN. AND YET... I NOTICE IT'S NOT HAPPENING.
BUT FALLS NEVER KILL ME.
IT'S ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING ME.
EXCEPT I'M BEGINNING TO SUSPECT I'VE BEEN REBOOTED.
WHICH IS INTERESTING.
UNLESS I DIE.
I MEAN, IT WILL STILL BE INTERESTING, I GUESS...BUT JUST FOR A MUCH SHORTER AMOUNT OF TIME.
GWEN. STOP MESSING AROUND. WE'RE SO OVERWHELMED I ALMOST DIDN'T SEE YOU. USE YOUR DAMN POWERS.
YEAH, I DON'T HAVE POWERS.
SURE YOU DO...SOME KIND OF REALITY MANIPULATION, RIGHT?
NOPE!
WAIT. WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I-I'VE SEEN YOU... I... ARE YOU JOKING?
FUTURE PHOENIX
NOPE! THANKS FOR THE SAVE!

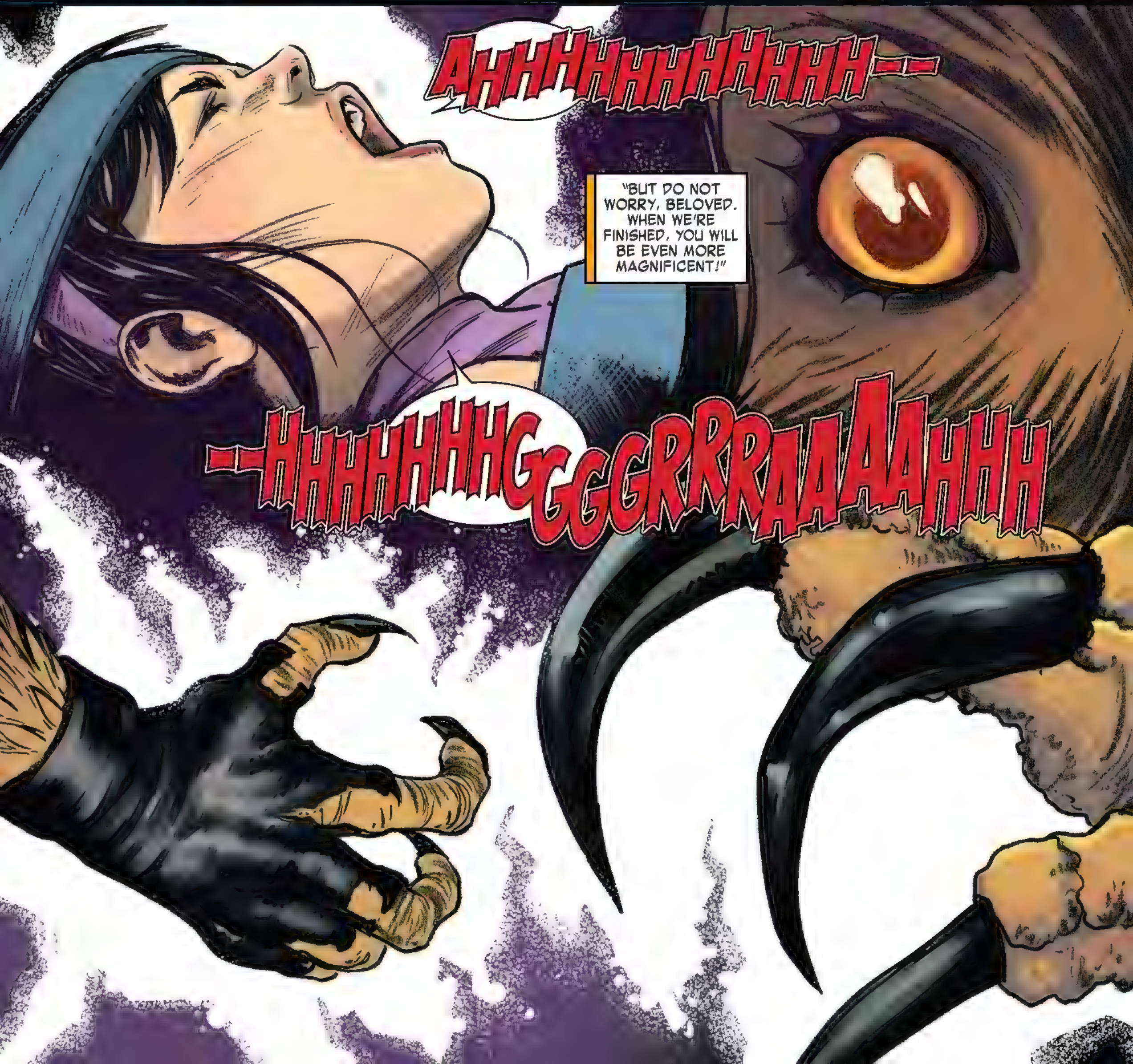

I MEAN... SHE *HAS* POWERS, RIGHT?
WHAT ARE THEY?
WELL, SHE... I ONE TIME SAW HER... NO...I...
IS IT *REALLY* POSSIBLE SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY POWERS?
I BRAKE FOR THE X-GENE
REC
YOU SEEM CONCERNED.
ME? *PFFT.* NO. I DON'T REALLY *DO* CONCERNED. WHY WOULD I CARE IF SHE'S GOT POWERS OR NOT?
AND IS POSSIBLY UNSTABLE.
WELL, MAYBE BECAUSE YOU LIKE HER.
...
I BRAKE FOR THE X-GENE
REC
FWIP FWIP
GET YOUR HEAD BACK IN THE GAME, QUIRE!
FUTURE PHOENIX
YEAH. OKAY.
YES! NOW WE'RE TALKING!
WATCH OUT, CITIZENS!
QUENTIN?! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I... I DON'T KNOW.

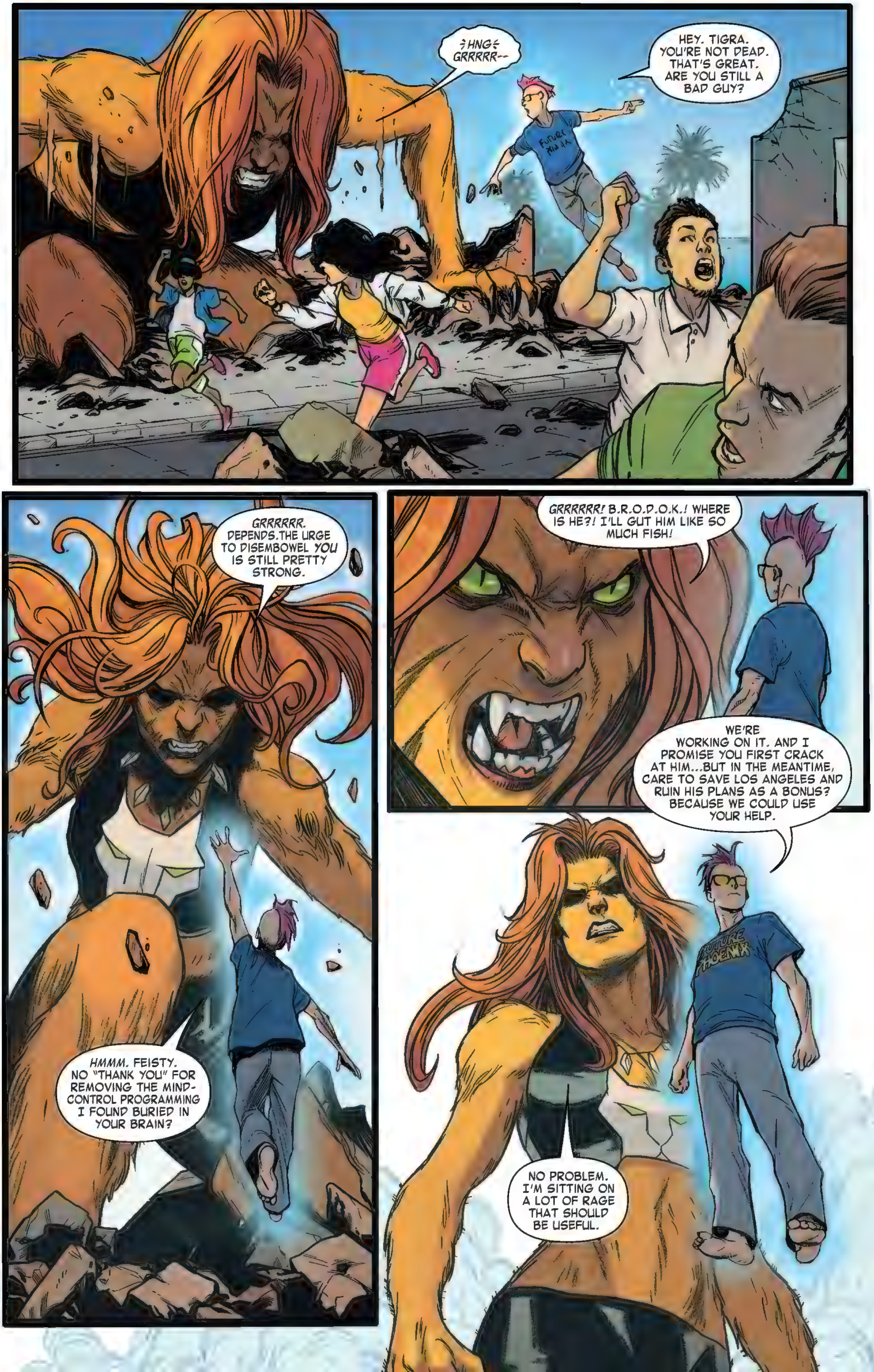

GRAAAAAHHH!
YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY SURE ABOUT THIS, JOHNNY?
JUST DO IT BEFORE I CHANGE MY MIND.
AND DO IT MUCH HARDER THIS TIME.
YOU MAY WANT TO FILE THAT UNDER CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR, ROOKIE.
HNG
OHGOD OHGODOHGOD OHGOD
BOOM

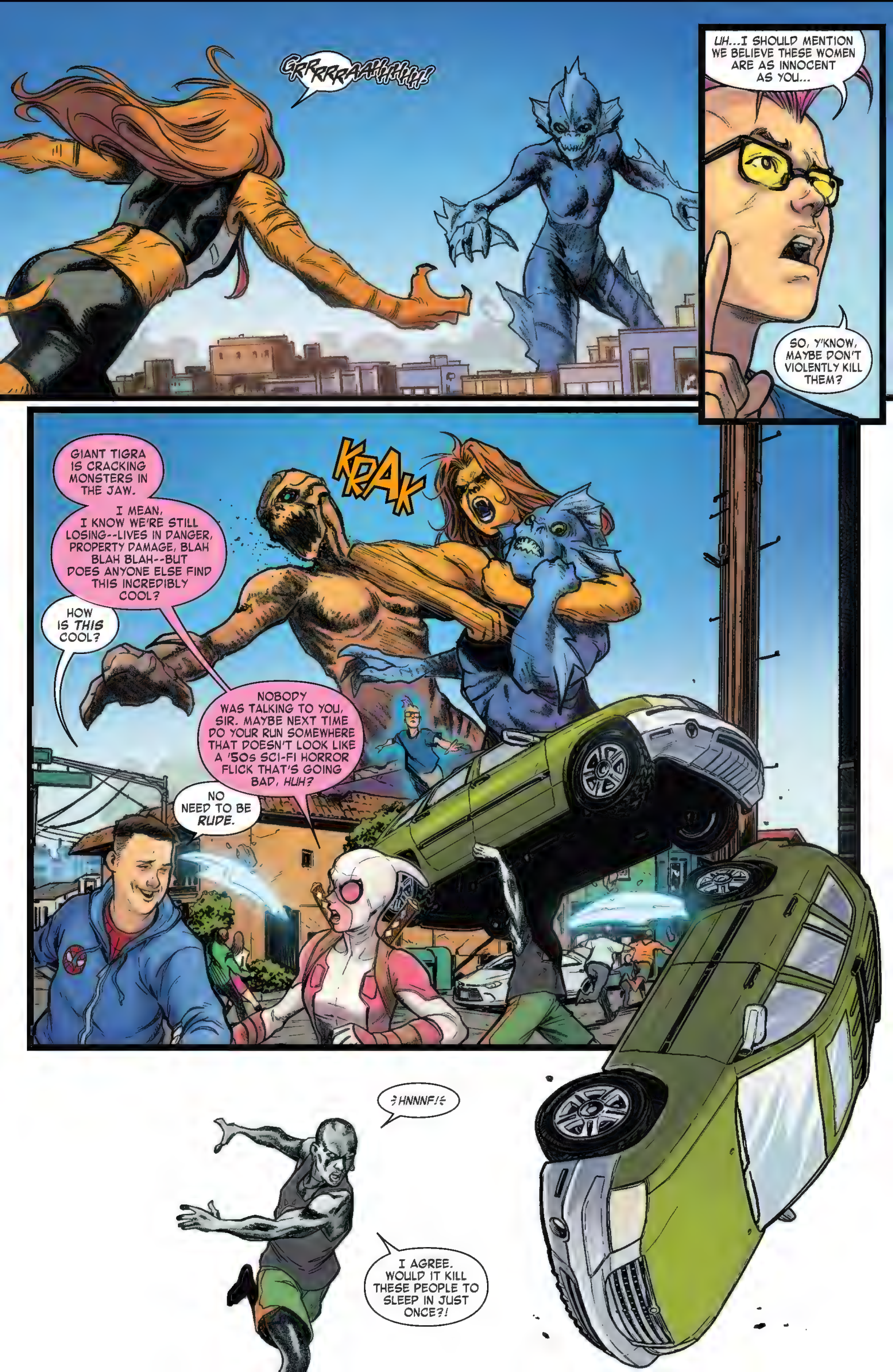

A.I.M.--ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS.
GOTTA BE SOME KIND OF WAY TO REVERSE IT...ALL THESE MAD SCIENTIST TYPES JUST CAN'T HELP THEMSELVES...
IT'S TRUE, WE CAN'T.
B.R.O.D.O.K., IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS. *YOU* DON'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS.
ACTUALLY, LADY HAWKEYE, IT *IS* HOW I HAVE TO BE. I TRIED EVERYTHING TO BE DIFFERENT.
I MOVED TO THE COAST, I ADDED PROGRAMMING FOR LOVE, I GAVE MYSELF THIS HANDSOME HUMAN SHAPE AND A SHINY NEW NAME.
IT DIDN'T *MATTER*. STILL NOBODY LOVED ME!
AND SO NOW THEY WILL ALL PAY! I WILL GUT THIS SHALLOW, HEARTLESS CITY, STOMPING IT INTO SO MUCH DUST, AND ALL WITH THE GIANT FEET OF THE WOMEN WHO REJECTED ME...
IT'S EXACTLY WHAT THIS WHOLE CITY DESERVES.
BUT YOUR ANGER AT THIS CITY MAKES NO SENSE. THESE WOMEN DIDN'T REJECT YOU BECAUSE THEY'RE SHALLOW AND YOU'RE UGLY--YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL NOW. THEY REJECTED YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE STILL THE WORST *ON THE INSIDE*.
YOU DIDN'T CHANGE THE BITS THAT *MATTER*, B.R.O.D.O.K.
AND UNLESS YOU FIX YOUR INSIDES, THE OUTSIDES DON'T MATTER--AT LEAST NOT FOR LONG, DUMMY!
HUH. NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT LIKE THAT BEFORE. YOU MAY WELL HAVE A POINT.
OH WELL.
FWOOOOM
ARRRGGHH!

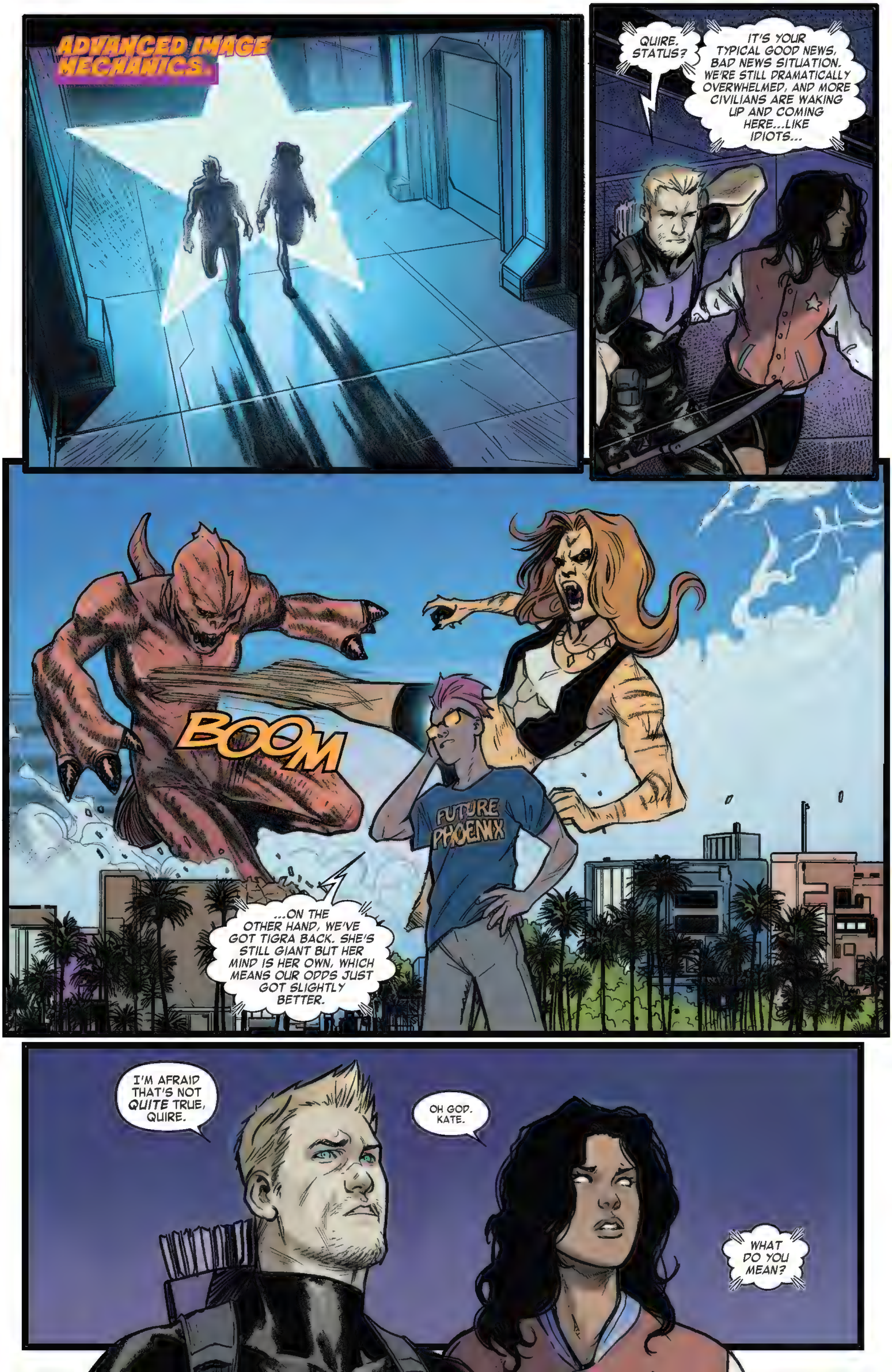

HOSTEL
UH-OH.
FWIP FWIP FWIP
WHAT'S "UH-OH"? I DON'T LIKE "UH-OH," QUIRE.
FIT
I'VE LOST KATE.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
YOU'D THINK THESE PEOPLE WOULD AT LEAST STAY INSIDE.
KEEP DOING WHAT YOU'RE DOING, QUIRE. I'M ON IT.
FWOOMP
AMERICA--
ALREADY AHEAD OF YOU, HAWKEYE. LET'S GO.
TRY NOT TO DIE, QUIRE!
YEAH, GREAT TIP. WHAT A LEADER.

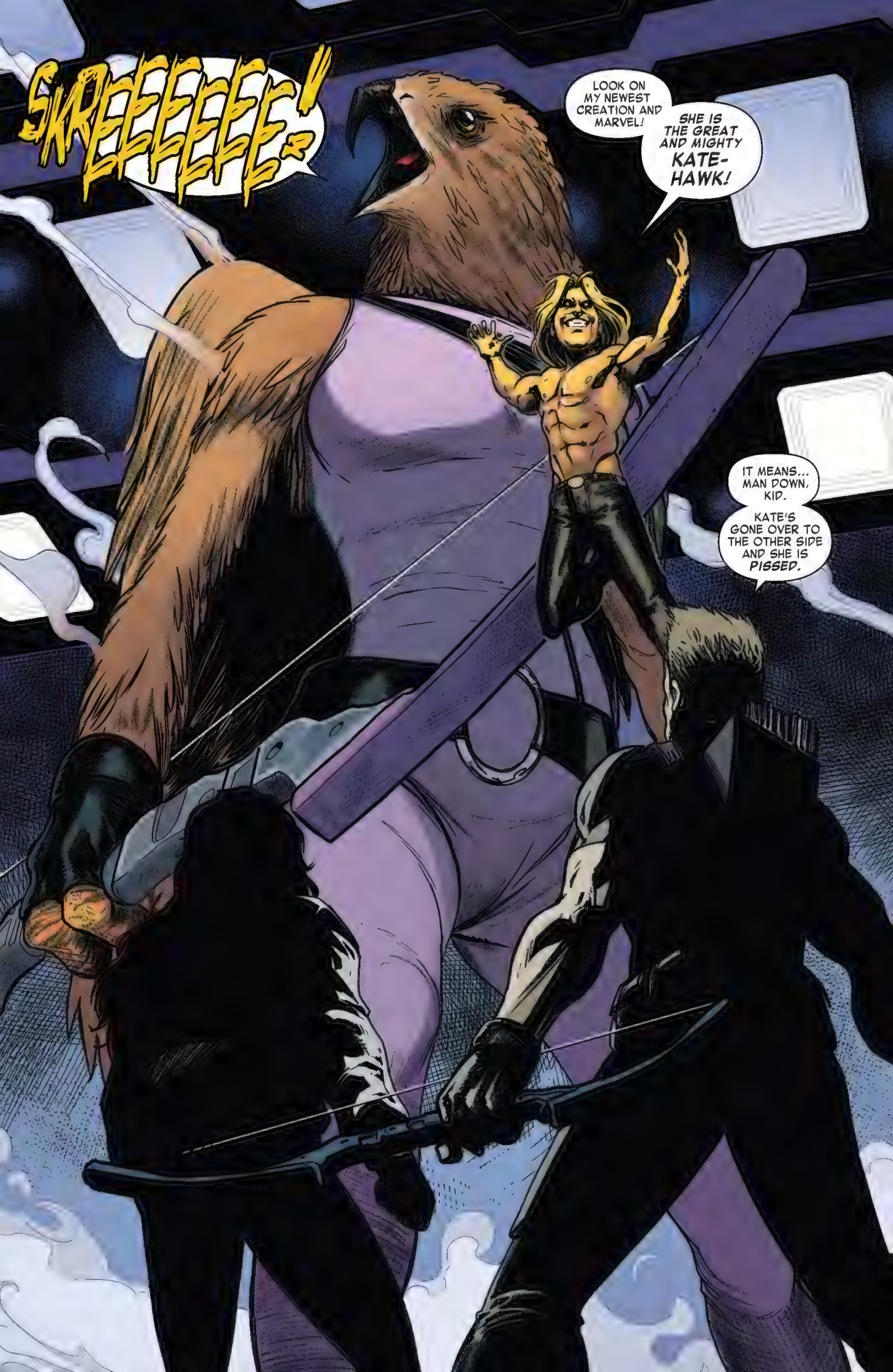

⸗HNG⸗ B.R.O.D.O.K. ... YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS...I... PLEASE DON'T DO THIS...
DON'T COMPLAIN NOW, MY DARLING HAWKEYE. YOU PUSHED US HERE. IF YOU'D JUST BEHAVED, NONE OF THIS WOULD BE NECESSARY!


AHHHHHHHHHHH--
"BUT DO NOT WORRY, BELOVED. WHEN WE'RE FINISHED, YOU WILL BE EVEN MORE MAGNIFICENT!"
--HHHHHHHGGGRRRRAAAAAHHH

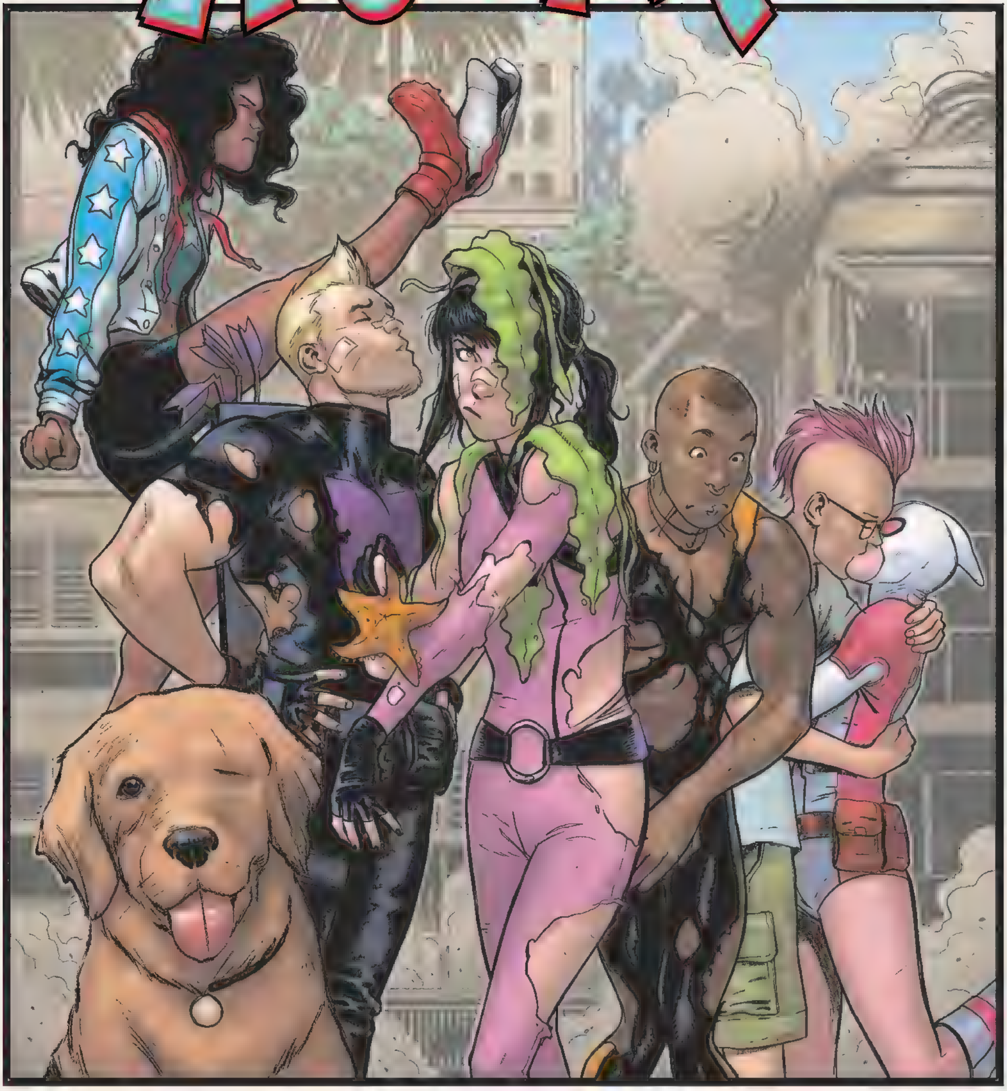

HNG GRRRRR--
HEY. TIGRA. YOU'RE NOT DEAD. THAT'S GREAT. ARE YOU STILL A BAD GUY?
GRRRRRR. DEPENDS. THE URGE TO DISEMBOWEL *YOU* IS STILL PRETTY STRONG.
HMMM. FEISTY. NO "THANK YOU" FOR REMOVING THE MIND-CONTROL PROGRAMMING I FOUND BURIED IN YOUR BRAIN?
GRRRRRR! B.R.O.D.O.K.! WHERE IS HE?! I'LL GUT HIM LIKE SO MUCH FISH!
WE'RE WORKING ON IT. AND I PROMISE YOU FIRST CRACK AT HIM...BUT IN THE MEANTIME, CARE TO SAVE LOS ANGELES AND RUIN HIS PLANS AS A BONUS? BECAUSE WE COULD USE YOUR HELP.
FUTURE PHOENIX
NO PROBLEM. I'M SITTING ON A LOT OF RAGE THAT SHOULD BE USEFUL.


GRRRRRAAHHHHH!
UH...I SHOULD MENTION WE BELIEVE THESE WOMEN ARE AS INNOCENT AS YOU...
SO, Y'KNOW, MAYBE DON'T VIOLENTLY KILL THEM?
KRAK
GIANT TIGRA IS CRACKING MONSTERS IN THE JAW.
I MEAN, I KNOW WE'RE STILL LOSING--LIVES IN DANGER, PROPERTY DAMAGE, BLAH BLAH BLAH--BUT DOES ANYONE ELSE FIND THIS INCREDIBLY COOL?
HOW IS *THIS* COOL?
NOBODY WAS TALKING TO YOU, SIR. MAYBE NEXT TIME DO YOUR RUN SOMEWHERE THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A '50s SCI-FI HORROR FLICK THAT'S GOING BAD, *HUH?*
NO NEED TO BE *RUDE.*
HNNNF!
I AGREE. WOULD IT KILL THESE PEOPLE TO SLEEP IN JUST ONCE?!


ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS.
QUIRE. STATUS?
IT'S YOUR TYPICAL GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS SITUATION. WE'RE STILL DRAMATICALLY OVERWHELMED, AND MORE CIVILIANS ARE WAKING UP AND COMING HERE...LIKE IDIOTS...
BOOM
FUTURE PHOENIX
...ON THE OTHER HAND, WE'VE GOT TIGRA BACK. SHE'S STILL GIANT BUT HER MIND IS HER OWN, WHICH MEANS OUR ODDS JUST GOT SLIGHTLY BETTER.
I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT QUITE TRUE, QUIRE.
OH GOD. KATE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?


SKREEEEEEEE!
LOOK ON MY NEWEST CREATION AND MARVEL!
SHE IS THE GREAT AND MIGHTY KATE-HAWK!
IT MEANS... MAN DOWN, KID.
KATE'S GONE OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE AND SHE IS *PISSED*.

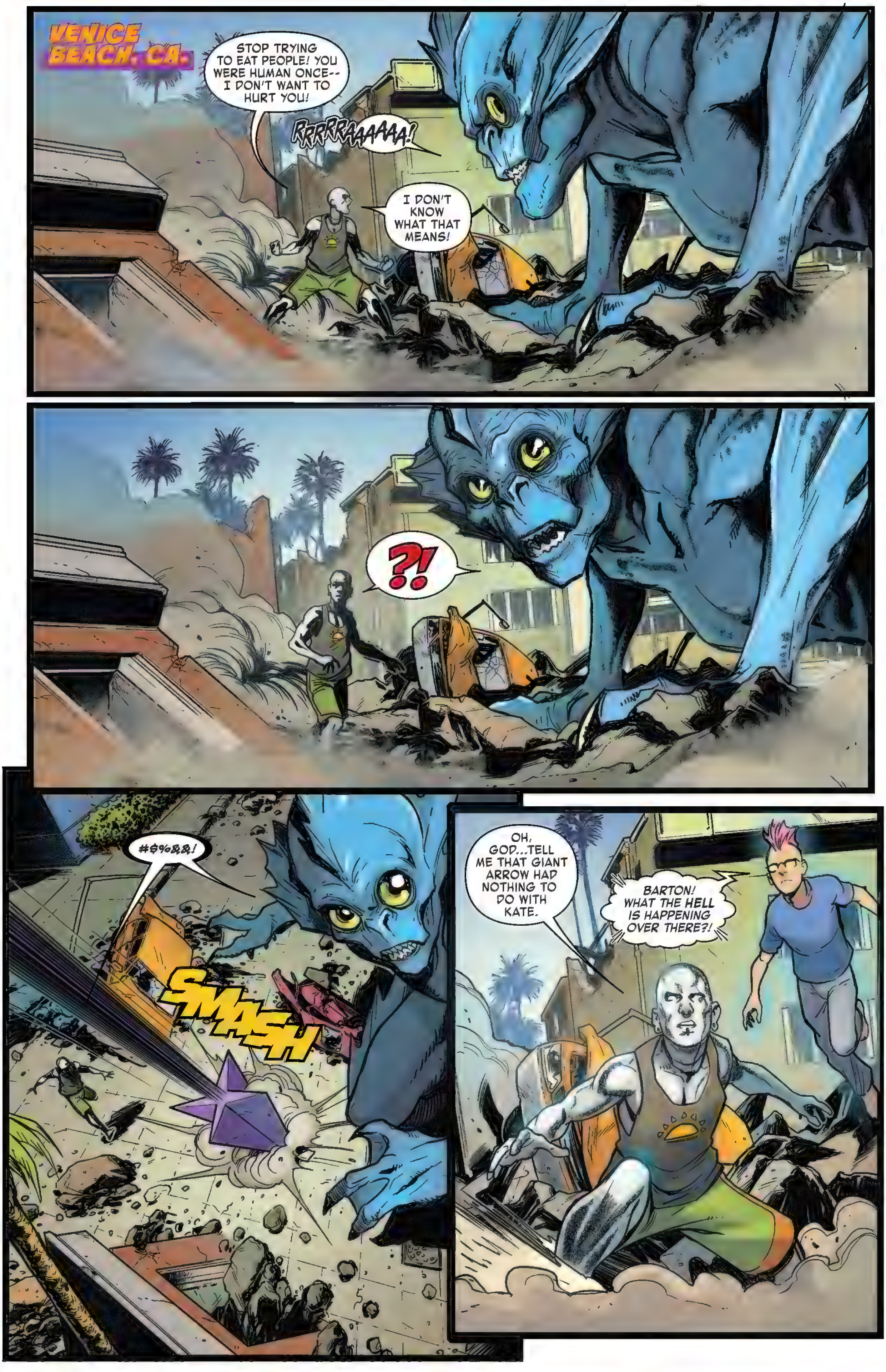
ARE THESE THE NEW West Coast AVENGERS?

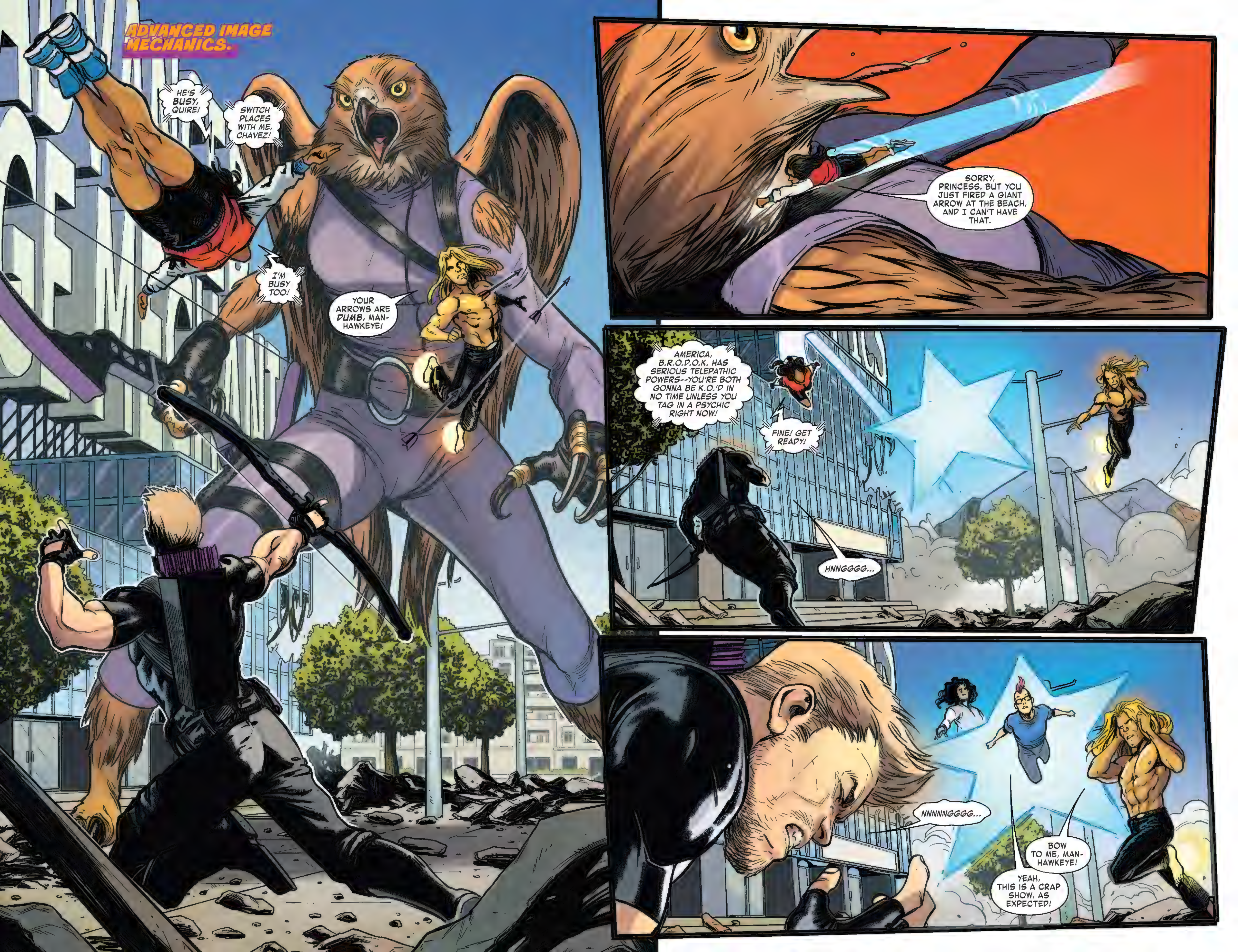


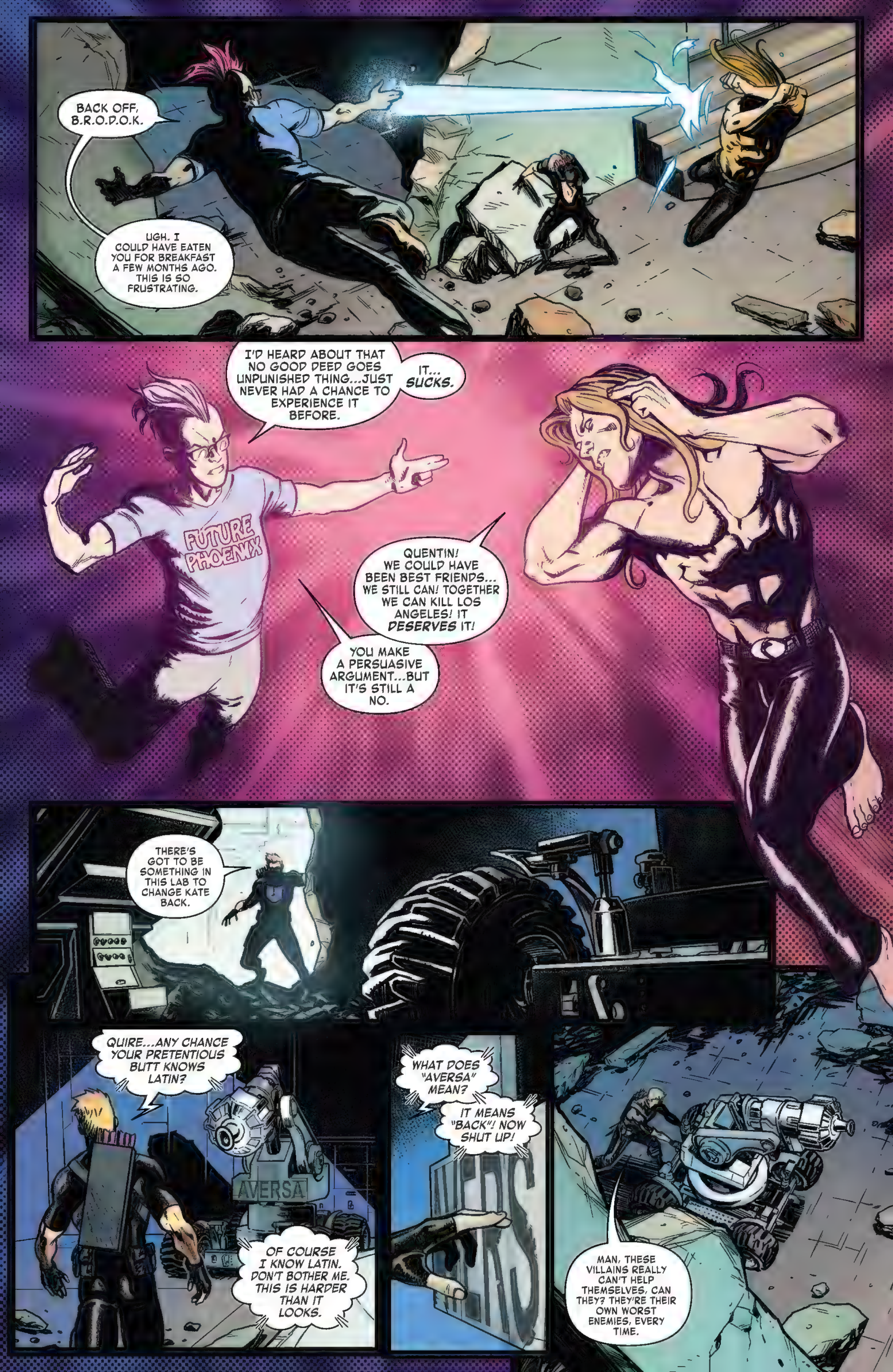
THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

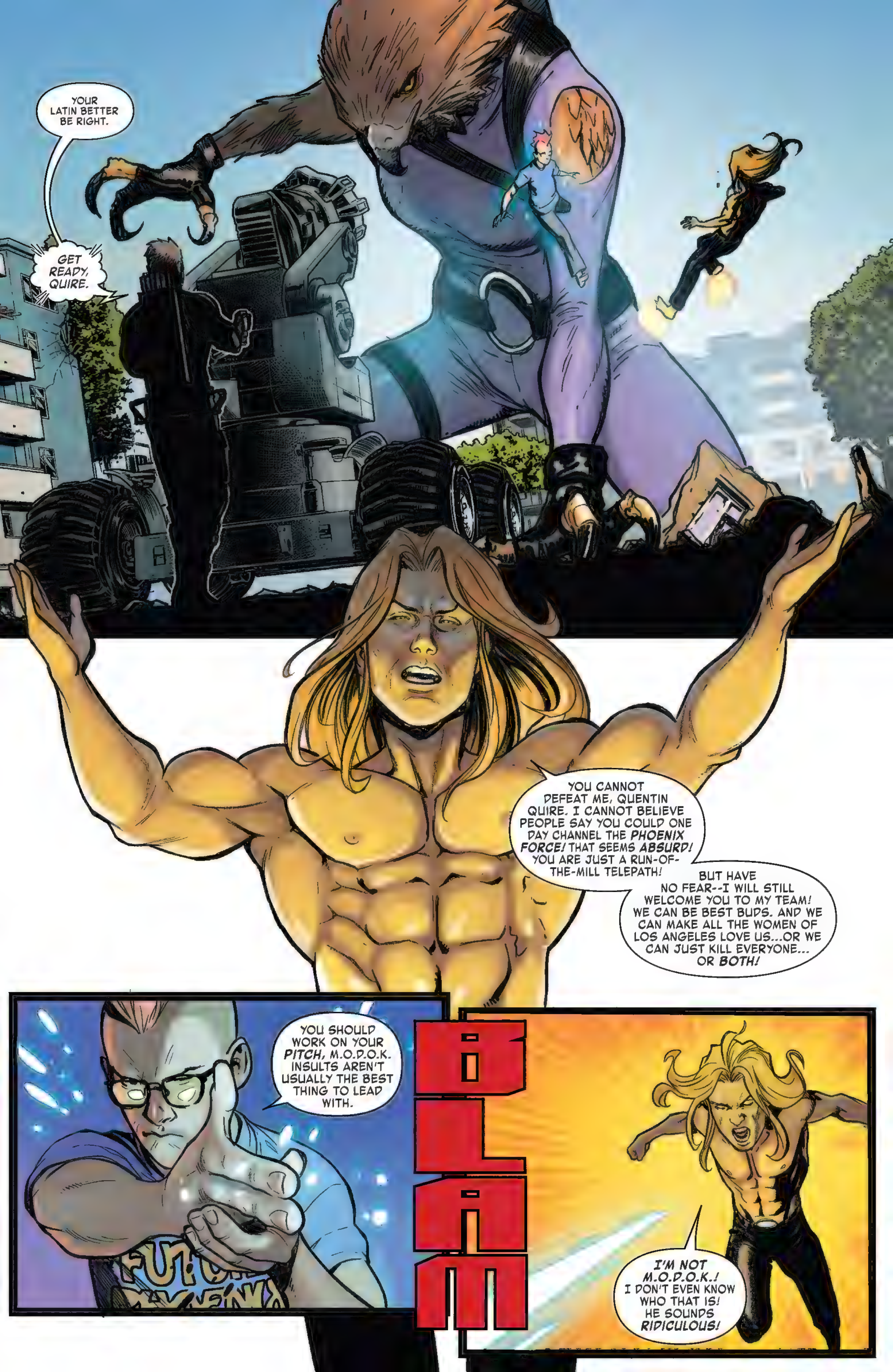
Supers in Santa Monica? Say it ain't so! An untested new team claiming to be Avengers has some Californians wishing that a certain P.I. never moved west!

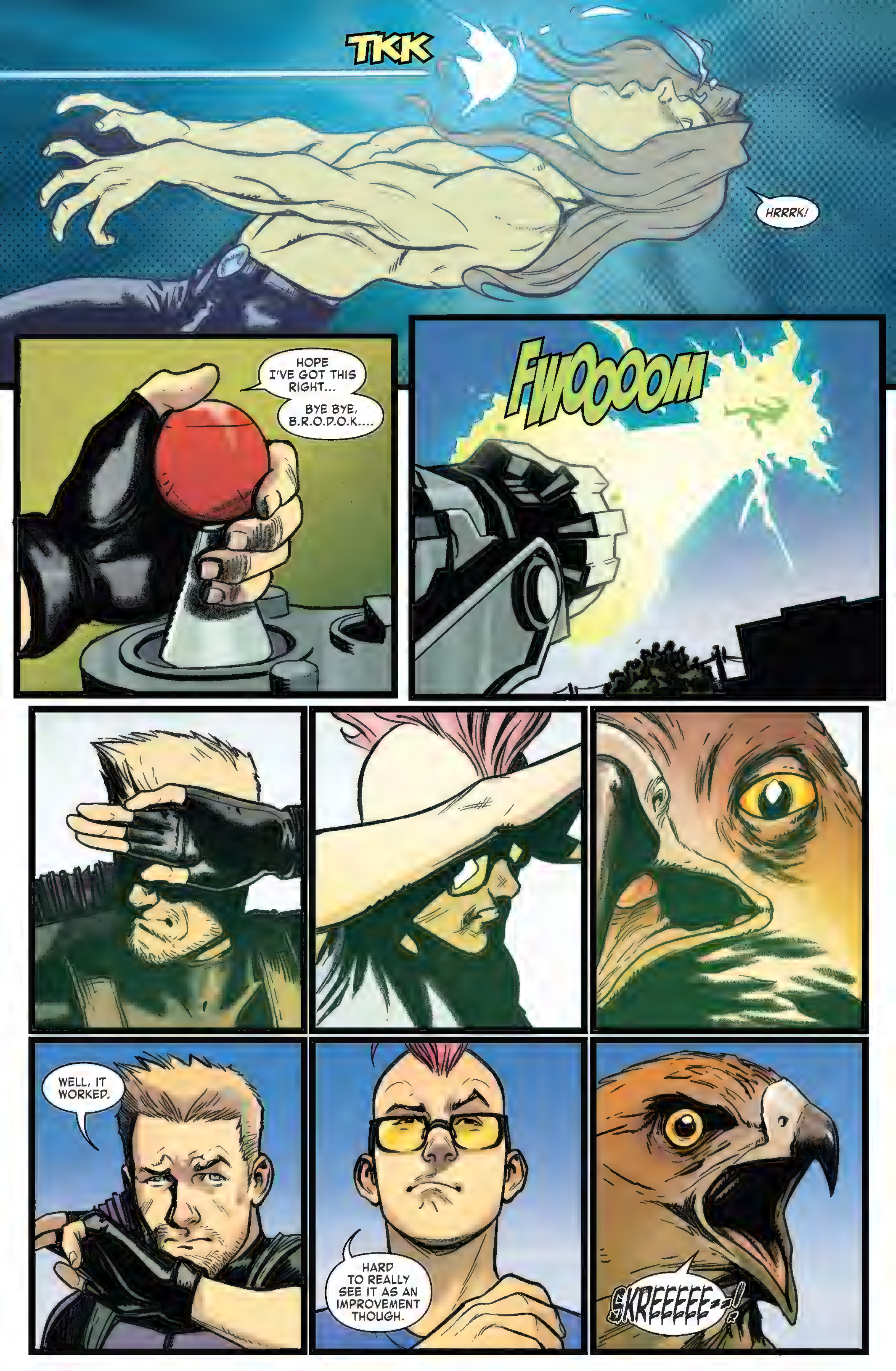
Witnesses identified former West Coast Avengers founder Hawkeye (Clint Barton) as well as his protégé Hawkeye (Kate Bishop) as the leaders of what, according to one bystander, "Looked like maybe it could be the West Coast Avengers?" Also identified were X-Men dropout Quentin Quire, known troublemaker Gwenpool, and

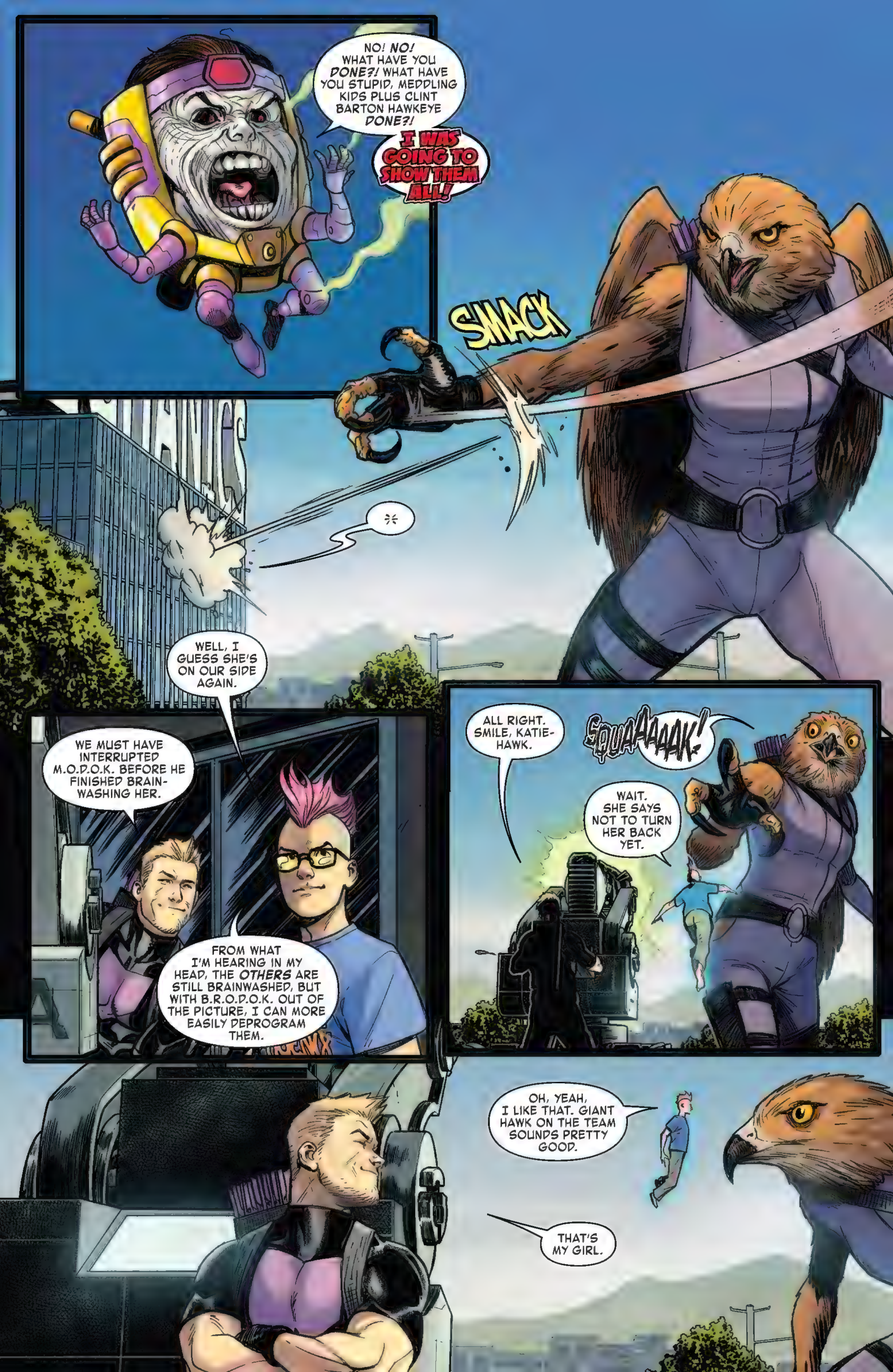

VENICE BEACH, CA.
STOP TRYING TO EAT PEOPLE! YOU WERE HUMAN ONCE-- I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!
RRRRRAAAAAA!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!
?!
#$%&&!
SMASH
OH, GOD...TELL ME THAT GIANT ARROW HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH KATE.
BARTON! WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING OVER THERE?!

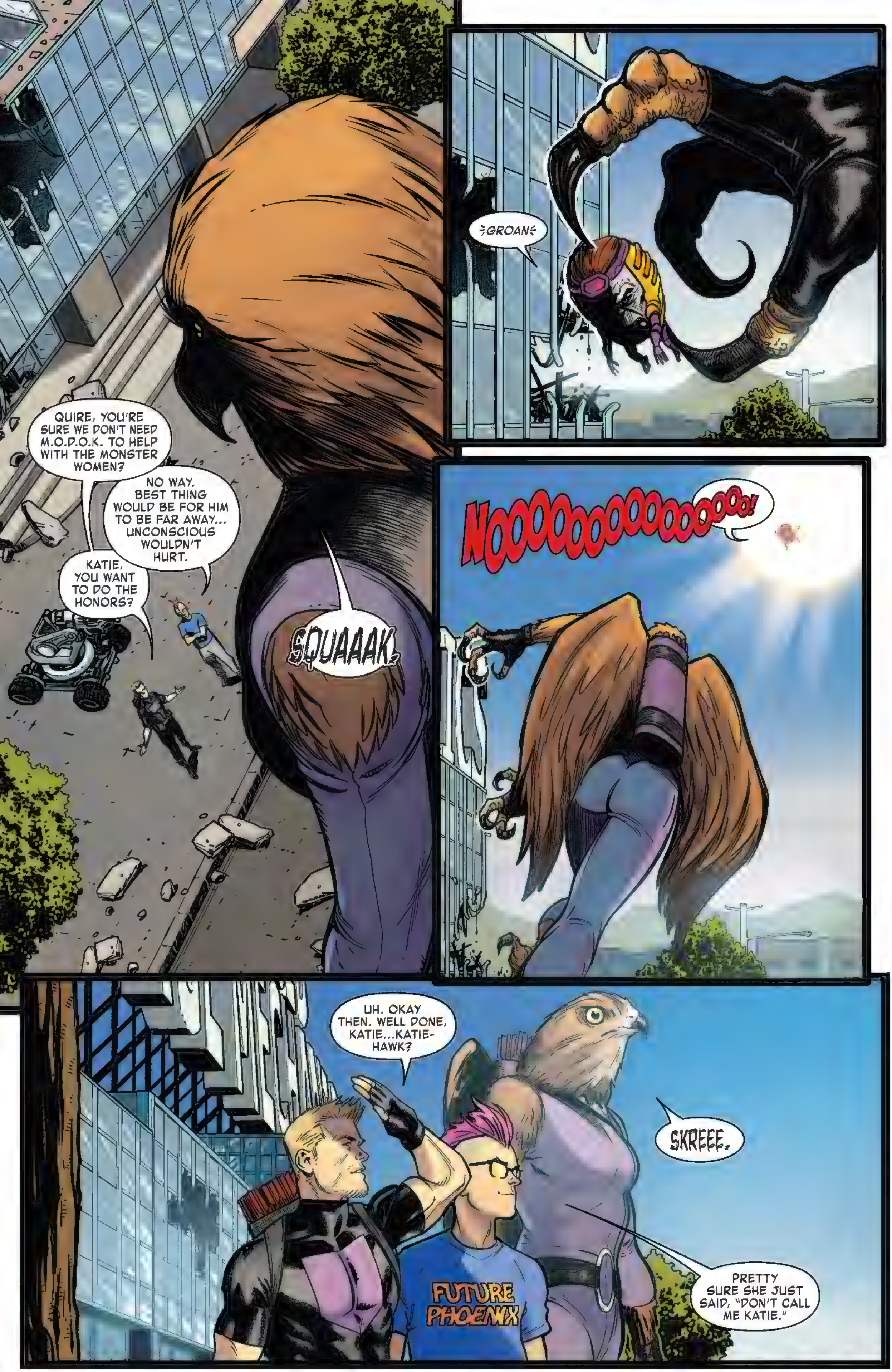

ADVANCED IMAGE MECHANICS.
HE'S BUSY, QUIRE!
SWITCH PLACES WITH ME, CHAVEZ!
I'M BUSY TOO!
YOUR ARROWS ARE DUMB, MAN-HAWKEYE!
SORRY, PRINCESS. BUT YOU JUST FIRED A GIANT ARROW AT THE BEACH, AND I CAN'T HAVE THAT.
AMERICA, B.R.O.D.O.K. HAS SERIOUS TELEPATHIC POWERS--YOU'RE BOTH GONNA BE K.O.'D IN NO TIME UNLESS YOU TAG IN A PSYCHIC RIGHT NOW!
FINE! GET READY!
HNNGGGG...
NNNNNGGGG...
BOW TO ME, MAN-HAWKEYE!
YEAH, THIS IS A CRAP SHOW, AS EXPECTED!

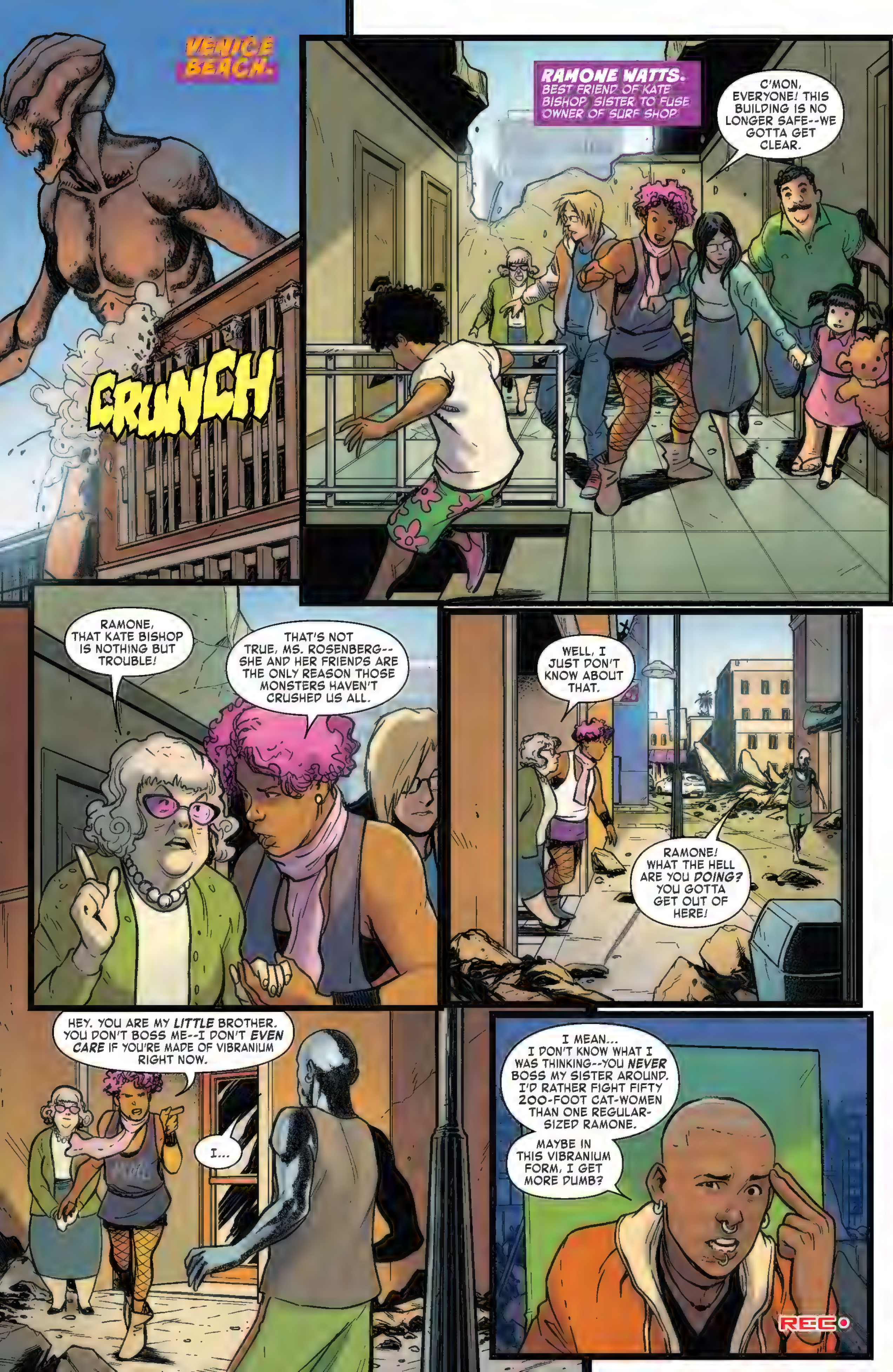

BACK OFF, B.R.O.D.O.K.
UGH. I COULD HAVE EATEN YOU FOR BREAKFAST A FEW MONTHS AGO. THIS IS SO FRUSTRATING.
I'D HEARD ABOUT THAT NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED THING...JUST NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE IT BEFORE.
IT... *SUCKS.*
FUTURE PHOENIX
QUENTIN! WE COULD HAVE BEEN BEST FRIENDS... WE STILL CAN! TOGETHER WE CAN KILL LOS ANGELES! IT *DESERVES* IT!
YOU MAKE A PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT...BUT IT'S STILL A NO.
THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING IN THIS LAB TO CHANGE KATE BACK.
QUIRE...ANY CHANCE YOUR PRETENTIOUS BUTT KNOWS LATIN?
AVERSA
OF COURSE I KNOW LATIN. DON'T BOTHER ME. THIS IS HARDER THAN IT LOOKS.
WHAT DOES "AVERSA" MEAN?
IT MEANS "BACK"! NOW SHUT UP!
AVERS
MAN, THESE VILLAINS REALLY CAN'T HELP THEMSELVES, CAN THEY? THEY'RE THEIR OWN WORST ENEMIES, EVERY TIME.

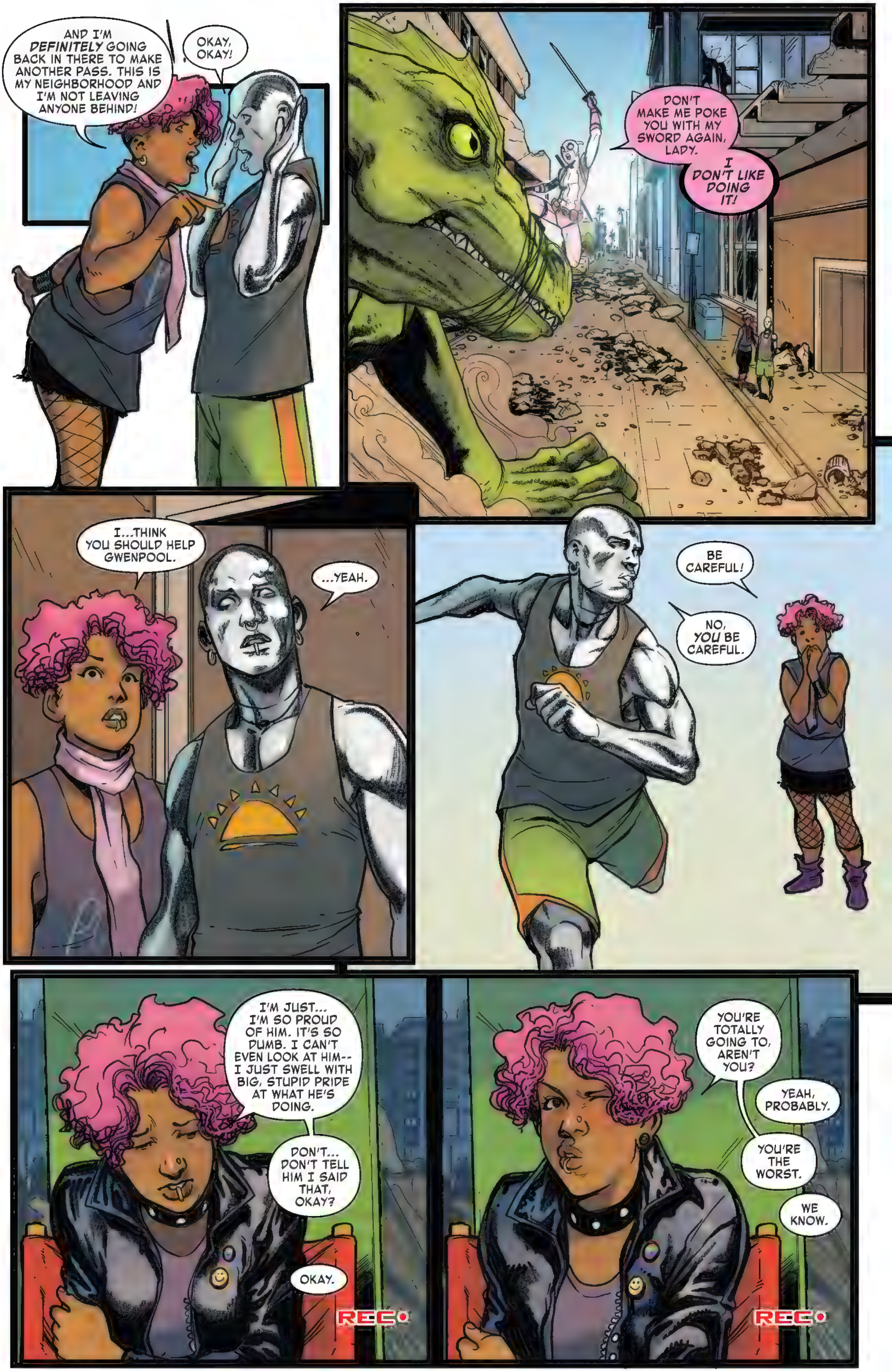

YOUR LATIN BETTER BE RIGHT.
GET READY, QUIRE.
YOU CANNOT DEFEAT ME, QUENTIN QUIRE. I CANNOT BELIEVE PEOPLE SAY YOU COULD ONE DAY CHANNEL THE *PHOENIX FORCE!* THAT SEEMS *ABSURD!* YOU ARE JUST A RUN-OF-THE-MILL TELEPATH!
BUT HAVE NO FEAR--I WILL STILL WELCOME YOU TO MY TEAM! WE CAN BE BEST BUDS. AND WE CAN MAKE ALL THE WOMEN OF LOS ANGELES LOVE US...OR WE CAN JUST KILL EVERYONE... OR *BOTH!*
YOU SHOULD WORK ON YOUR *PITCH,* M.O.D.O.K. INSULTS AREN'T USUALLY THE BEST THING TO LEAD WITH.
BLAM
I'M NOT M.O.D.O.K.! I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO THAT IS! HE SOUNDS *RIDICULOUS!*

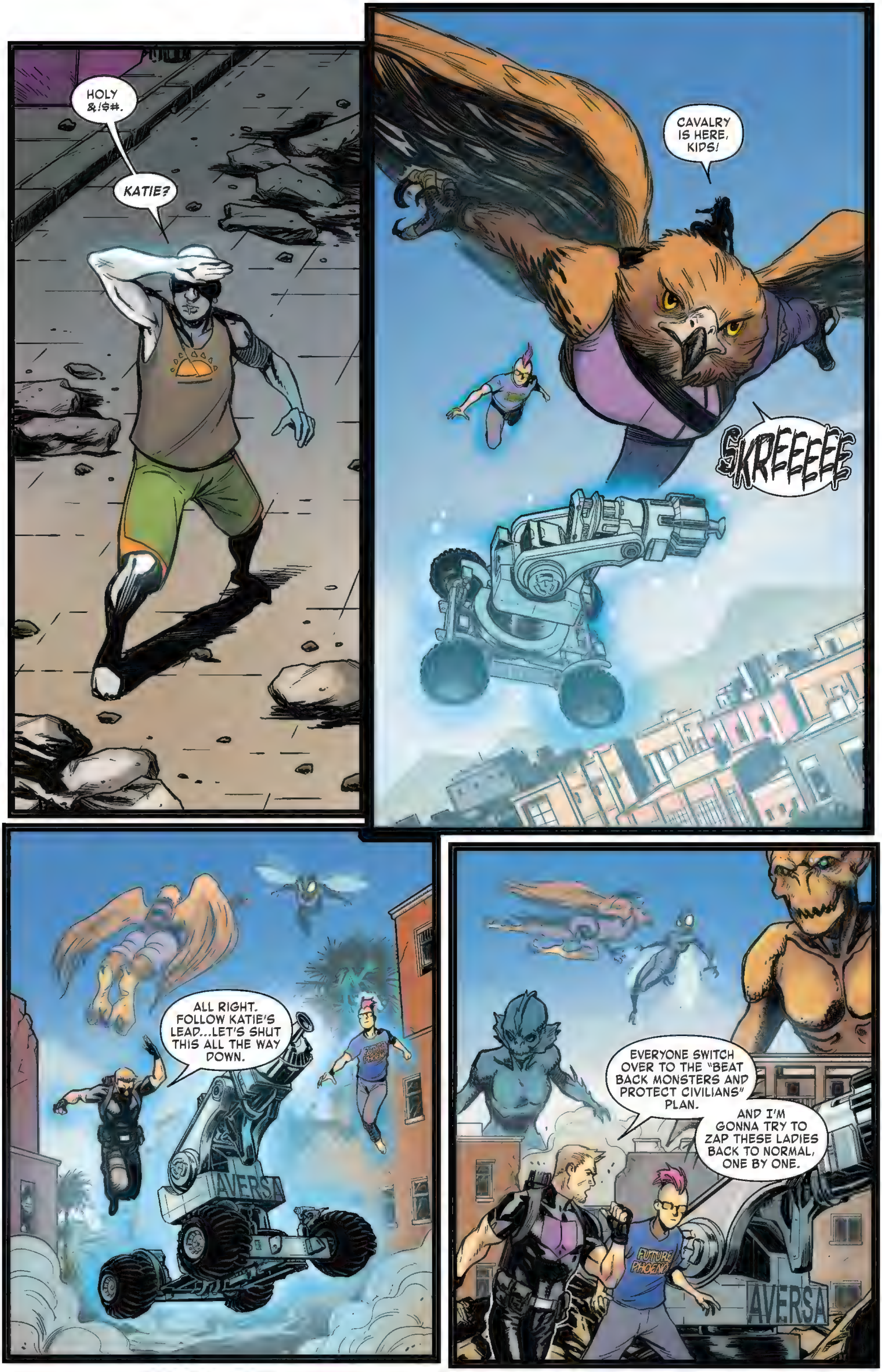

TKK
HRRRK!
HOPE I'VE GOT THIS RIGHT...
BYE BYE, B.R.O.D.O.K....
FWOOOOM
WELL, IT WORKED.
HARD TO REALLY SEE IT AS AN IMPROVEMENT THOUGH.
SKREEEEE--!

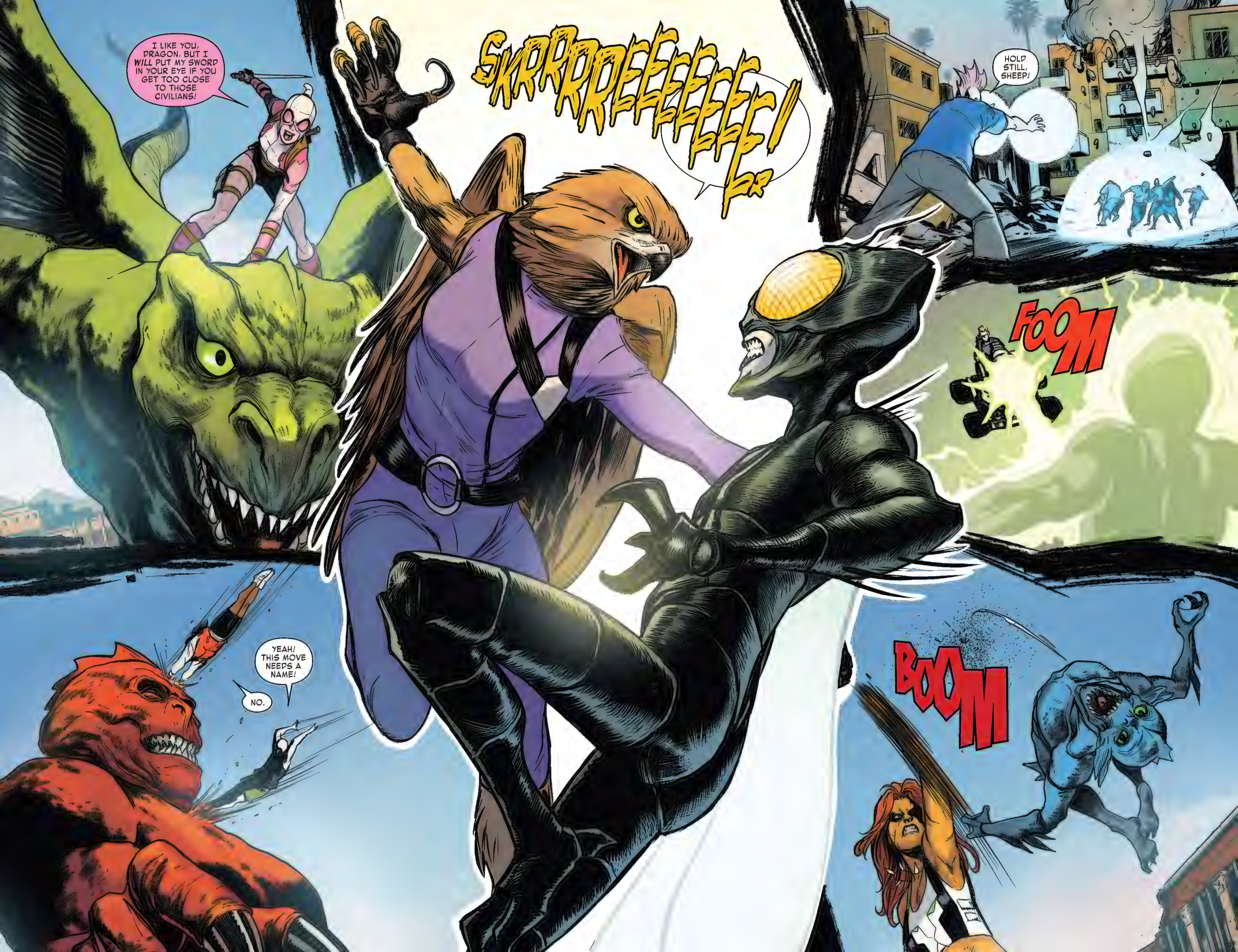

NO! *NO!* WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE?!* WHAT HAVE YOU STUPID, MEDDLING KIDS PLUS CLINT BARTON HAWKEYE *DONE?!*
I WAS GOING TO SHOW THEM ALL!
SMACK
*
WELL, I GUESS SHE'S ON OUR SIDE AGAIN.
WE MUST HAVE INTERRUPTED M.O.D.O.K. BEFORE HE FINISHED BRAIN-WASHING HER.
FROM WHAT I'M HEARING IN MY HEAD, THE *OTHERS* ARE STILL BRAINWASHED, BUT WITH B.R.O.D.O.K. OUT OF THE PICTURE, I CAN MORE EASILY DEPROGRAM THEM.
ALL RIGHT. SMILE, KATIE-HAWK.
SQUAAAAAK!
WAIT. SHE SAYS NOT TO TURN HER BACK YET.
OH, YEAH, I LIKE THAT. GIANT HAWK ON THE TEAM SOUNDS PRETTY GOOD.
THAT'S MY GIRL.

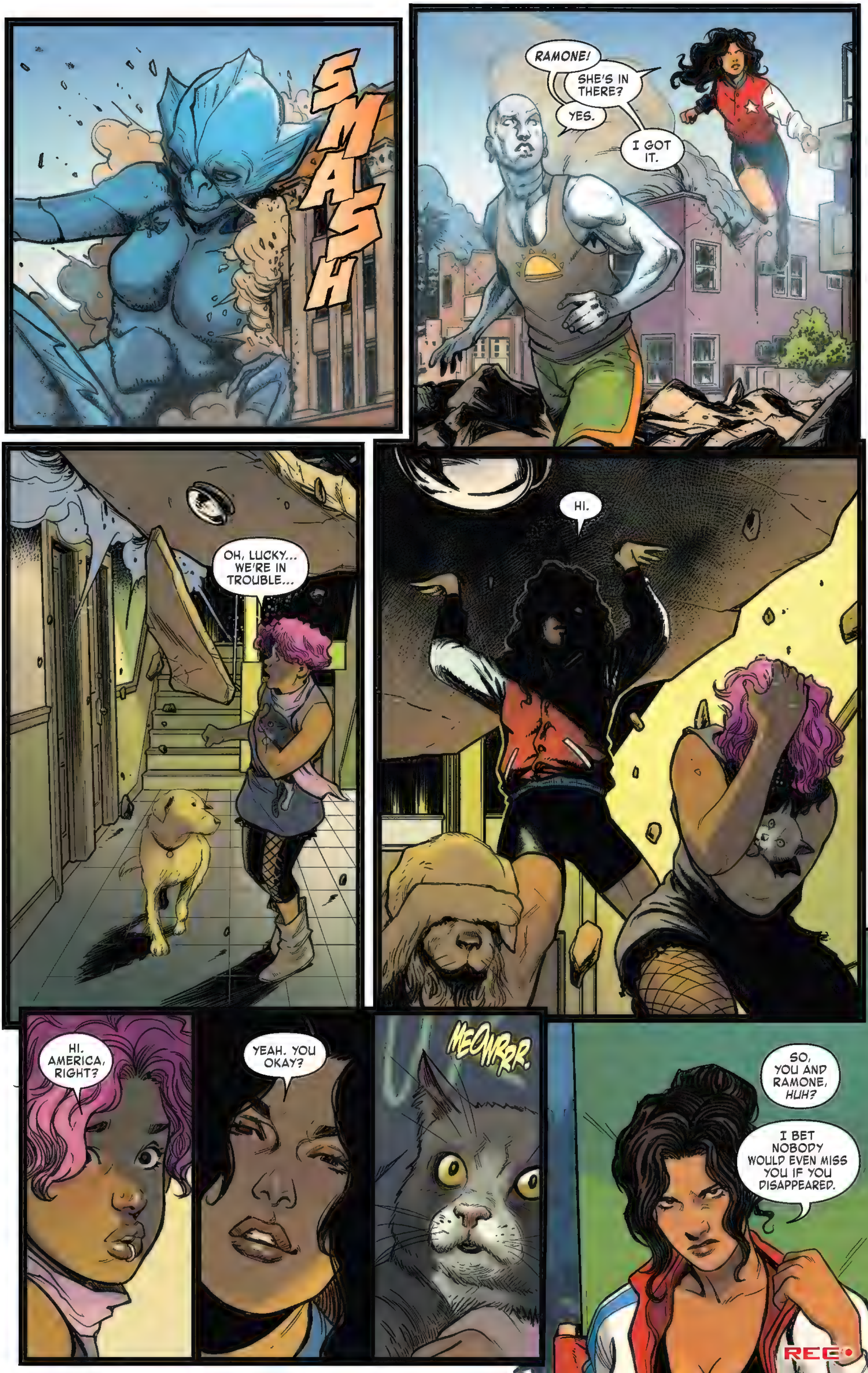

QUIRE, YOU'RE SURE WE DON'T NEED M.O.D.O.K. TO HELP WITH THE MONSTER WOMEN?
NO WAY. BEST THING WOULD BE FOR HIM TO BE FAR AWAY... UNCONSCIOUS WOULDN'T HURT.
KATIE, YOU WANT TO DO THE HONORS?
SQUAAAK.
GROAN
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!
UH. OKAY THEN. WELL DONE, KATIE...KATIE-HAWK?
SKREEE.
FUTURE PHOENIX
PRETTY SURE SHE JUST SAID, "DON'T CALL ME KATIE."

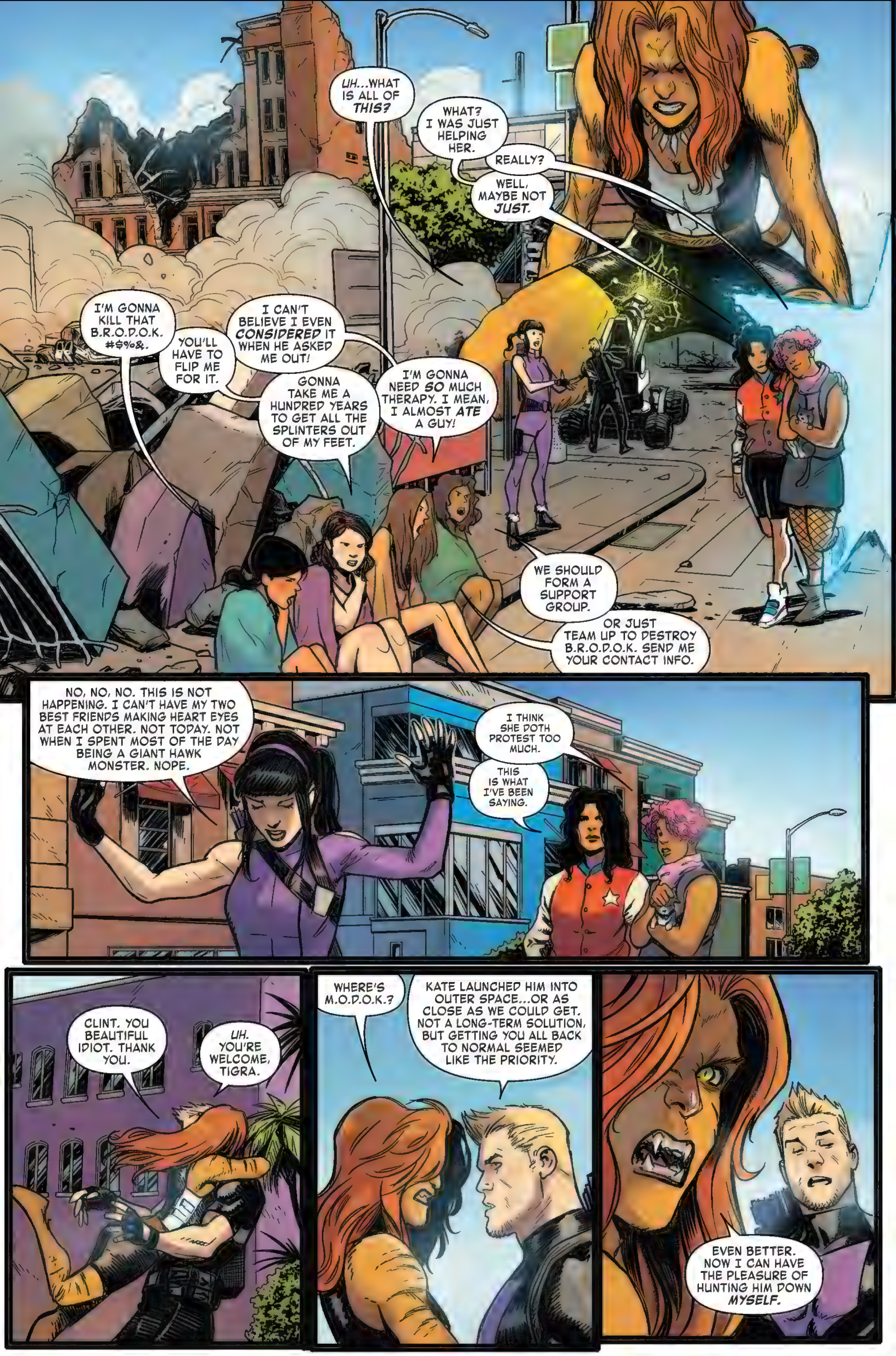

VENICE BEACH.
CRUNCH
RAMONE WATTS. BEST FRIEND OF KATE BISHOP. SISTER TO FUSE. OWNER OF SURF SHOP.
C'MON, EVERYONE! THIS BUILDING IS NO LONGER SAFE--WE GOTTA GET CLEAR.
RAMONE, THAT KATE BISHOP IS NOTHING BUT TROUBLE!
THAT'S NOT TRUE, MS. ROSENBERG--SHE AND HER FRIENDS ARE THE ONLY REASON THOSE MONSTERS HAVEN'T CRUSHED US ALL.
WELL, I JUST DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.
RAMONE! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING? YOU GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE!
HEY. YOU ARE MY LITTLE BROTHER. YOU DON'T BOSS ME--I DON'T EVEN CARE IF YOU'RE MADE OF VIBRANIUM RIGHT NOW.
I...
I MEAN... I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKING--YOU NEVER BOSS MY SISTER AROUND. I'D RATHER FIGHT FIFTY 200-FOOT CAT-WOMEN THAN ONE REGULAR-SIZED RAMONE.
MAYBE IN THIS VIBRANIUM FORM, I GET MORE DUMB?
REC

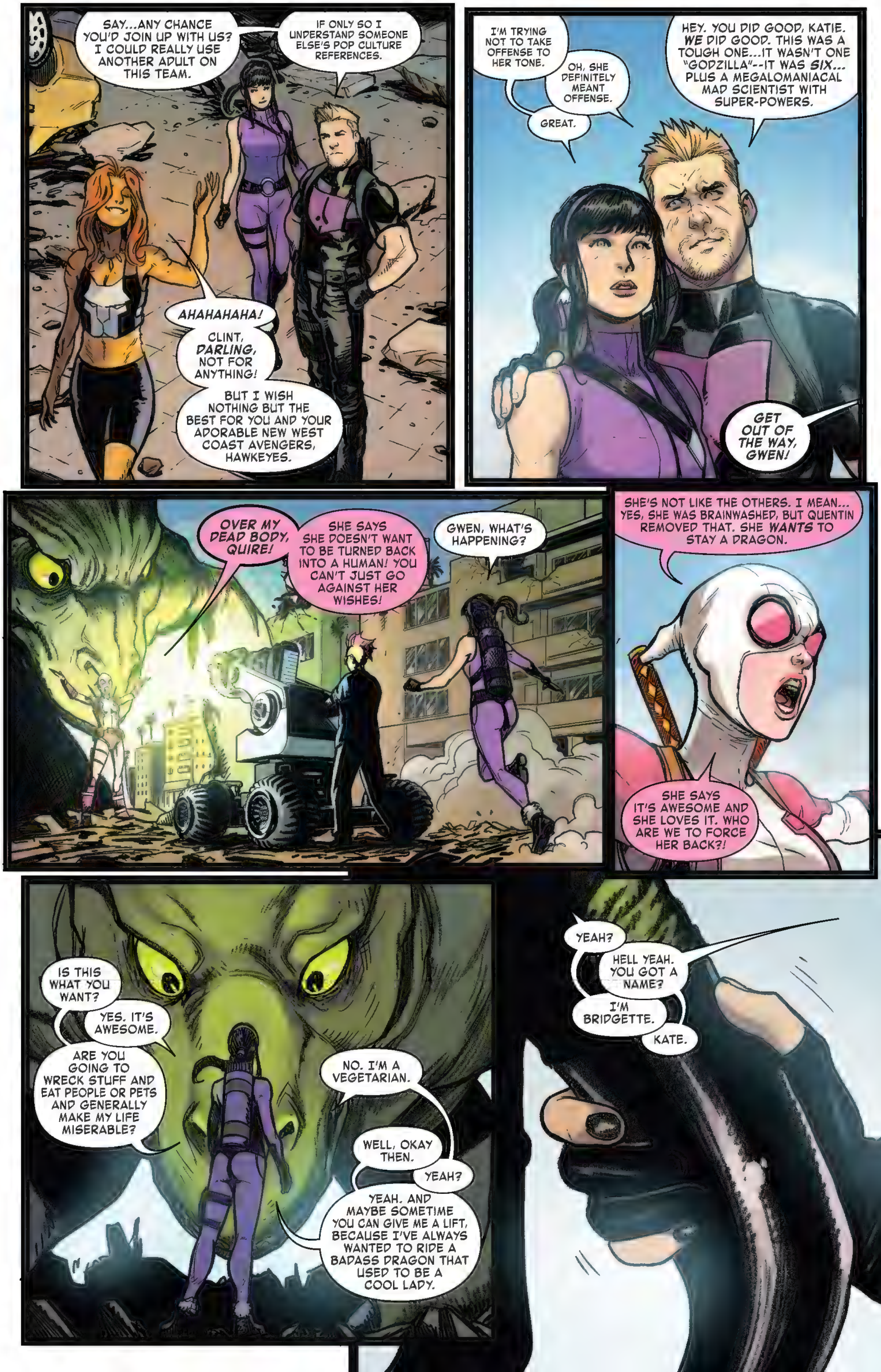

AND I'M *DEFINITELY* GOING BACK IN THERE TO MAKE ANOTHER PASS. THIS IS MY NEIGHBORHOOD AND I'M NOT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND!
OKAY, OKAY!
DON'T MAKE ME POKE YOU WITH MY SWORD AGAIN, LADY.
I DON'T LIKE DOING IT!
I...THINK YOU SHOULD HELP GWENPOOL.
...YEAH.
BE CAREFUL!
NO, *YOU* BE CAREFUL.
I'M JUST... I'M SO PROUD OF HIM. IT'S SO DUMB. I CAN'T EVEN LOOK AT HIM-- I JUST SWELL WITH BIG, STUPID PRIDE AT WHAT HE'S DOING.
DON'T... DON'T TELL HIM I SAID THAT, OKAY?
OKAY.
REC
YOU'RE TOTALLY GOING TO, AREN'T YOU?
YEAH, PROBABLY.
YOU'RE THE WORST.
WE KNOW.
REC

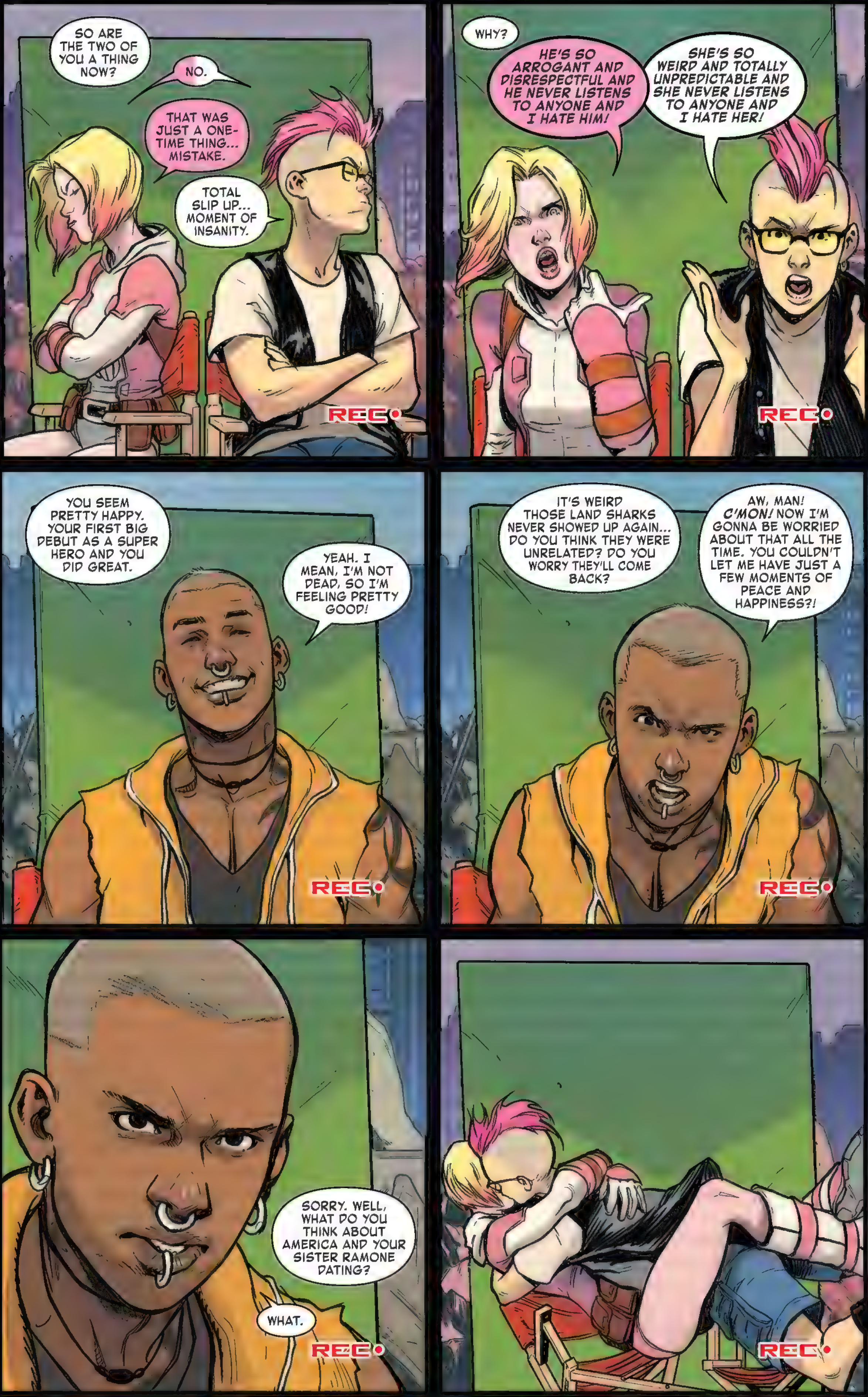

HOLY &!$#.
KATIE?
CAVALRY IS HERE, KIDS!
SKREEEEE
ALL RIGHT. FOLLOW KATIE'S LEAD...LET'S SHUT THIS ALL THE WAY DOWN.
AVERSA
EVERYONE SWITCH OVER TO THE "BEAT BACK MONSTERS AND PROTECT CIVILIANS" PLAN.
AND I'M GONNA TRY TO ZAP THESE LADIES BACK TO NORMAL, ONE BY ONE.
FUTURE PHOENIX
AVERSA

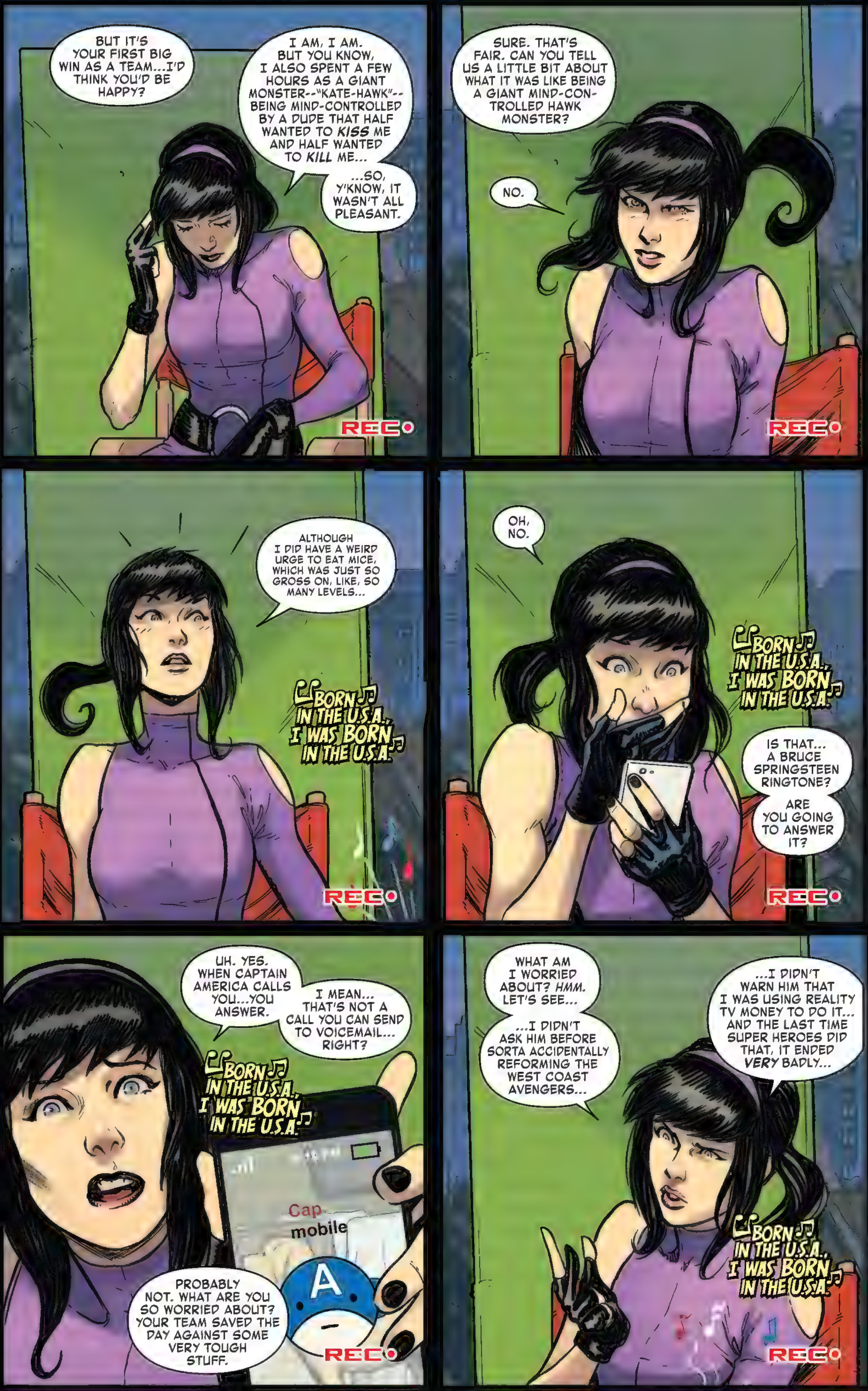

I LIKE YOU, DRAGON, BUT I WILL PUT MY SWORD IN YOUR EYE IF YOU GET TOO CLOSE TO THOSE CIVILIANS!
SKRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
HOLD STILL, SHEEP!
FOOM
YEAH! THIS MOVE NEEDS A NAME!
NO.
BOOM

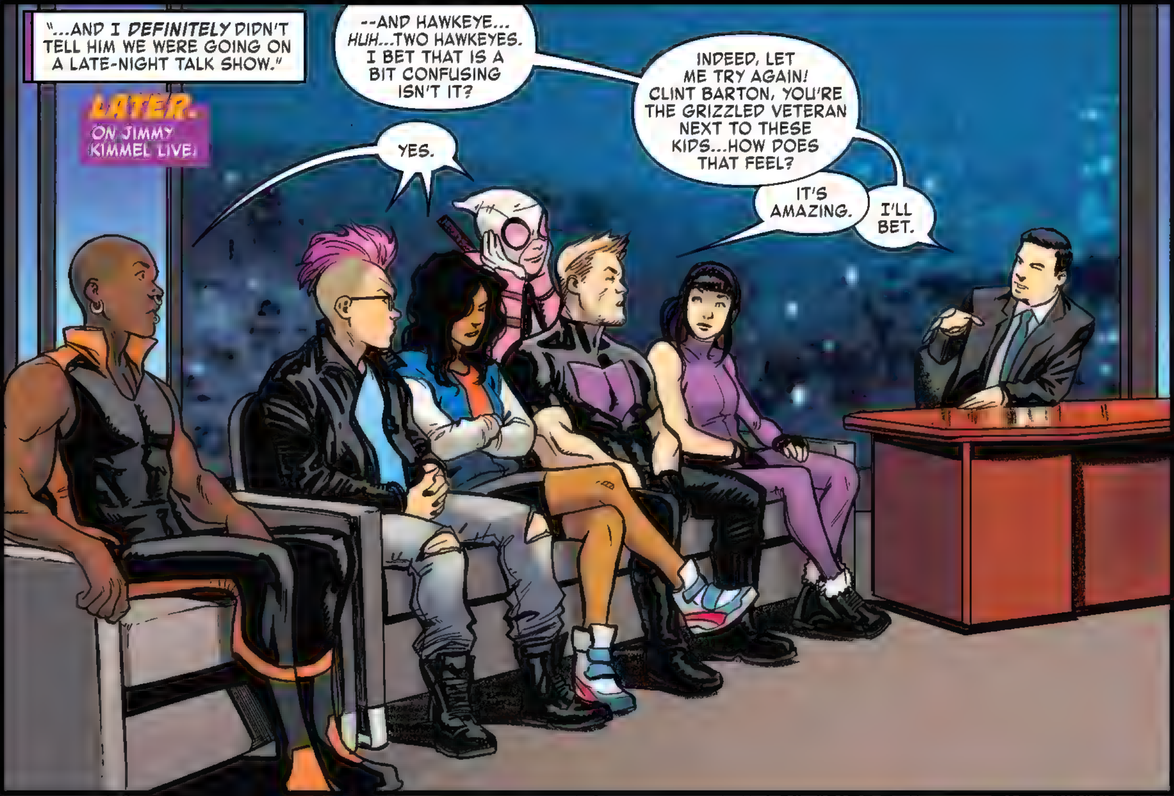

SMASH
RAMONE!
SHE'S IN THERE?
YES.
I GOT IT.
OH, LUCKY... WE'RE IN TROUBLE...
HI.
HI. AMERICA, RIGHT?
YEAH. YOU OKAY?
MEOWRRR.
SO, YOU AND RAMONE, HUH?
I BET NOBODY WOULD EVEN MISS YOU IF YOU DISAPPEARED.
REC

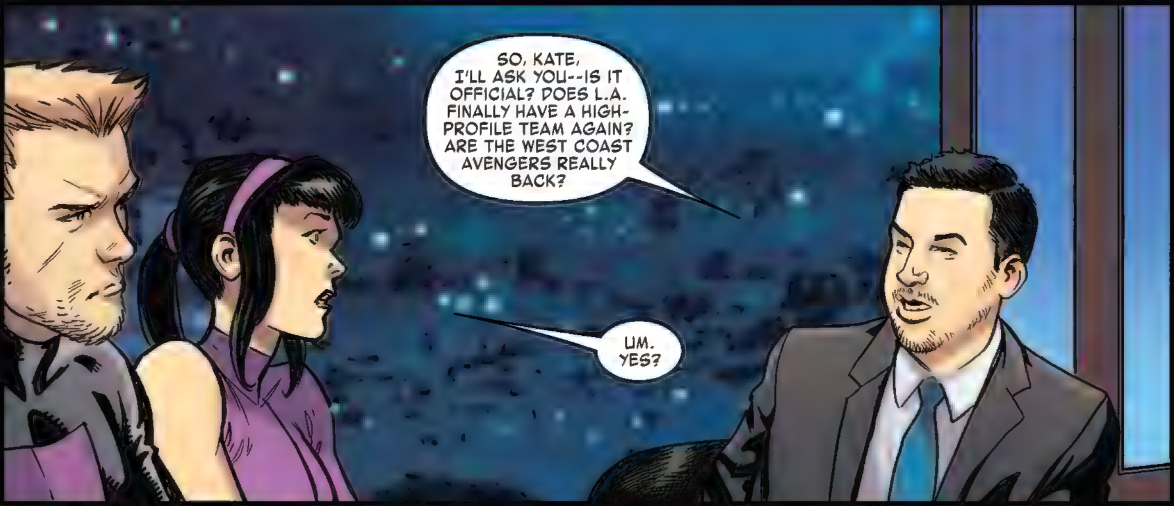

UH...WHAT IS ALL OF *THIS?*
WHAT? I WAS JUST HELPING HER.
REALLY?
WELL, MAYBE NOT *JUST.*
I'M GONNA KILL THAT B.R.O.D.O.K. #$%&.
YOU'LL HAVE TO FLIP ME FOR IT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I EVEN *CONSIDERED* IT WHEN HE ASKED ME OUT!
GONNA TAKE ME A HUNDRED YEARS TO GET ALL THE SPLINTERS OUT OF MY FEET.
I'M GONNA NEED *SO* MUCH THERAPY. I MEAN, I ALMOST *ATE* A GUY!
WE SHOULD FORM A SUPPORT GROUP.
OR JUST TEAM UP TO DESTROY B.R.O.D.O.K. SEND ME YOUR CONTACT INFO.
NO, NO, NO. THIS IS NOT HAPPENING. I CAN'T HAVE MY TWO BEST FRIENDS MAKING HEART EYES AT EACH OTHER. NOT TODAY. NOT WHEN I SPENT MOST OF THE DAY BEING A GIANT HAWK MONSTER. NOPE.
I THINK SHE DOTH PROTEST TOO MUCH.
THIS IS WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING.
CLINT. YOU BEAUTIFUL IDIOT. THANK YOU.
UH. YOU'RE WELCOME, TIGRA.
WHERE'S M.O.D.O.K.?
KATE LAUNCHED HIM INTO OUTER SPACE...OR AS CLOSE AS WE COULD GET. NOT A LONG-TERM SOLUTION, BUT GETTING YOU ALL BACK TO NORMAL SEEMED LIKE THE PRIORITY.
EVEN BETTER. NOW I CAN HAVE THE PLEASURE OF HUNTING HIM DOWN *MYSELF.*

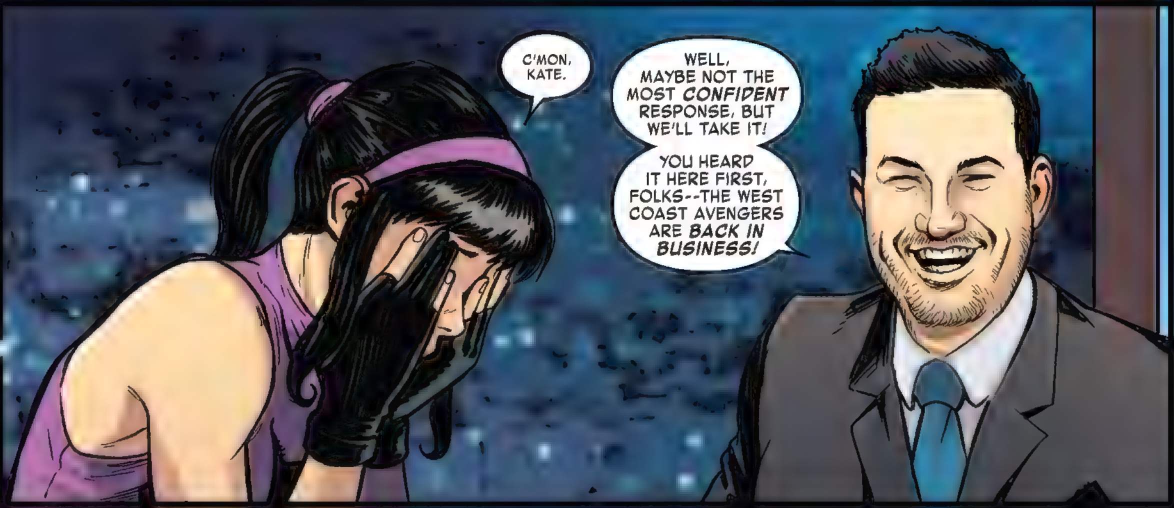

SAY...ANY CHANCE YOU'D JOIN UP WITH US? I COULD REALLY USE ANOTHER ADULT ON THIS TEAM.
IF ONLY SO I UNDERSTAND SOMEONE ELSE'S POP CULTURE REFERENCES.
AHAHAHAHA!
CLINT, DARLING, NOT FOR ANYTHING!
BUT I WISH NOTHING BUT THE BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR ADORABLE NEW WEST COAST AVENGERS, HAWKEYES.
I'M TRYING NOT TO TAKE OFFENSE TO HER TONE.
OH, SHE DEFINITELY MEANT OFFENSE.
GREAT.
HEY. YOU DID GOOD, KATIE. WE DID GOOD. THIS WAS A TOUGH ONE...IT WASN'T ONE "GODZILLA"--IT WAS SIX... PLUS A MEGALOMANIACAL MAD SCIENTIST WITH SUPER-POWERS.
GET OUT OF THE WAY, GWEN!
OVER MY DEAD BODY, QUIRE!
SHE SAYS SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BE TURNED BACK INTO A HUMAN! YOU CAN'T JUST GO AGAINST HER WISHES!
GWEN, WHAT'S HAPPENING?
SHE'S NOT LIKE THE OTHERS. I MEAN... YES, SHE WAS BRAINWASHED, BUT QUENTIN REMOVED THAT. SHE WANTS TO STAY A DRAGON.
SHE SAYS IT'S AWESOME AND SHE LOVES IT. WHO ARE WE TO FORCE HER BACK?!
IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT?
YES. IT'S AWESOME.
ARE YOU GOING TO WRECK STUFF AND EAT PEOPLE OR PETS AND GENERALLY MAKE MY LIFE MISERABLE?
NO. I'M A VEGETARIAN.
WELL, OKAY THEN.
YEAH?
YEAH. AND MAYBE SOMETIME YOU CAN GIVE ME A LIFT, BECAUSE I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO RIDE A BADASS DRAGON THAT USED TO BE A COOL LADY.
YEAH?
HELL YEAH. YOU GOT A NAME?
I'M BRIDGETTE.
KATE.

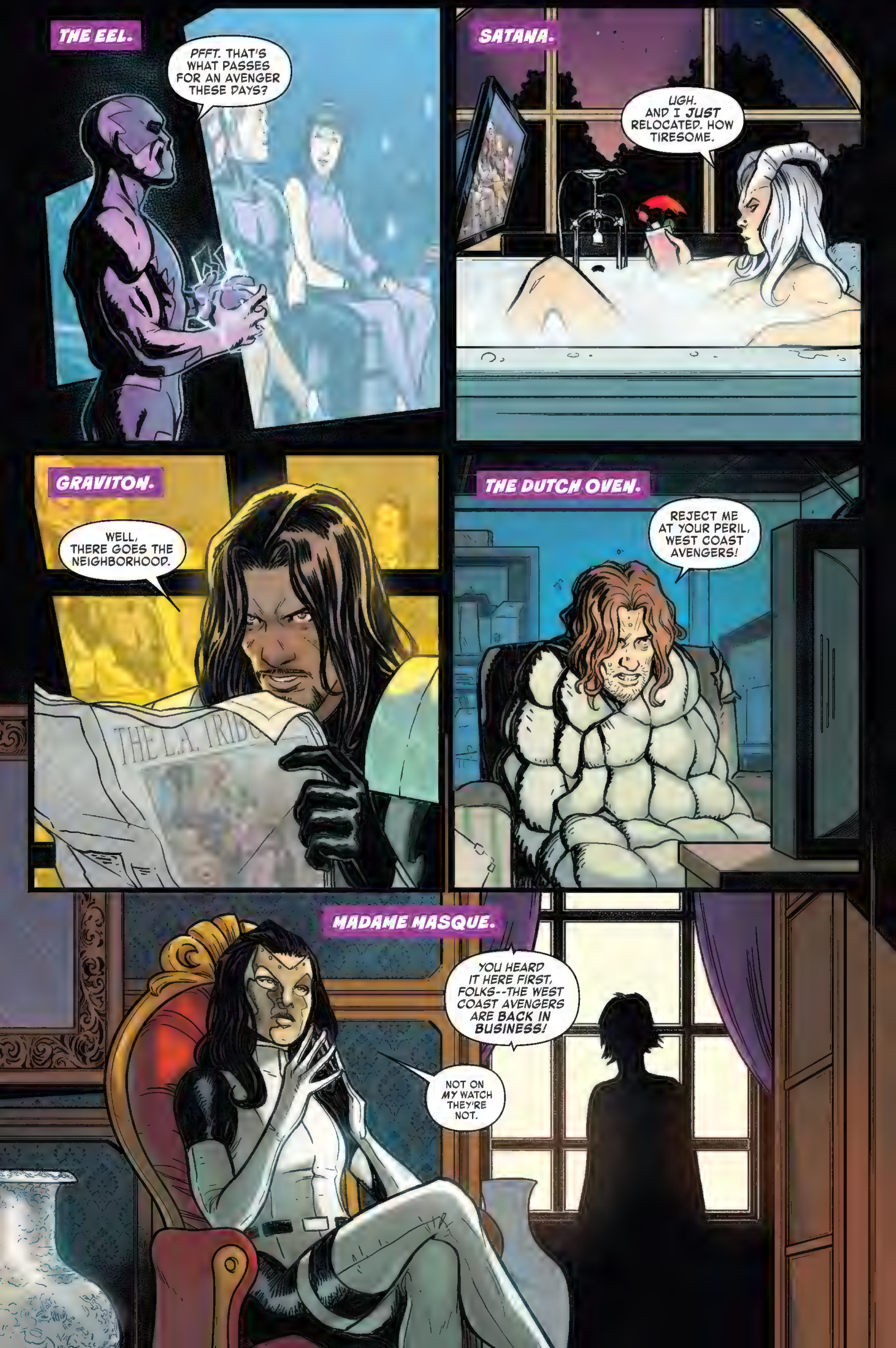

SO ARE THE TWO OF YOU A THING NOW?
NO.
THAT WAS JUST A ONE-TIME THING... MISTAKE.
TOTAL SLIP UP... MOMENT OF INSANITY.
REC
WHY?
HE'S SO ARROGANT AND DISRESPECTFUL AND HE NEVER LISTENS TO ANYONE AND I HATE HIM!
SHE'S SO WEIRD AND TOTALLY UNPREDICTABLE AND SHE NEVER LISTENS TO ANYONE AND I HATE HER!
REC
YOU SEEM PRETTY HAPPY. YOUR FIRST BIG DEBUT AS A SUPER HERO AND YOU DID GREAT.
YEAH. I MEAN, I'M NOT DEAD, SO I'M FEELING PRETTY GOOD!
REC
IT'S WEIRD THOSE LAND SHARKS NEVER SHOWED UP AGAIN... DO YOU THINK THEY WERE UNRELATED? DO YOU WORRY THEY'LL COME BACK?
AW, MAN! *C'MON!* NOW I'M GONNA BE WORRIED ABOUT THAT ALL THE TIME. YOU COULDN'T LET ME HAVE JUST A FEW MOMENTS OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS?!
REC
SORRY. WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT AMERICA AND YOUR SISTER RAMONE DATING?
WHAT.
REC
REC


BUT IT'S YOUR FIRST BIG WIN AS A TEAM...I'D THINK YOU'D BE HAPPY?
I AM, I AM. BUT YOU KNOW, I ALSO SPENT A FEW HOURS AS A GIANT MONSTER--"KATE-HAWK"--BEING MIND-CONTROLLED BY A DUDE THAT HALF WANTED TO *KISS* ME AND HALF WANTED TO *KILL* ME...
...SO, Y'KNOW, IT WASN'T ALL PLEASANT.
REC
SURE. THAT'S FAIR. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT IT WAS LIKE BEING A GIANT MIND-CONTROLLED HAWK MONSTER?
NO.
REC
ALTHOUGH I DID HAVE A WEIRD URGE TO EAT MICE, WHICH WAS JUST SO GROSS ON, LIKE, SO MANY LEVELS...
♫BORN♫ IN THE U.S.A., I WAS BORN♫ IN THE U.S.A.♫
REC
OH, NO.
♫BORN♫ IN THE U.S.A., I WAS BORN♫ IN THE U.S.A.♫
IS THAT... A BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN RINGTONE?
ARE YOU GOING TO ANSWER IT?
REC
UH. YES. WHEN CAPTAIN AMERICA CALLS YOU...YOU ANSWER.
I MEAN... THAT'S NOT A CALL YOU CAN SEND TO VOICEMAIL... RIGHT?
♫BORN♫ IN THE U.S.A., I WAS BORN♫ IN THE U.S.A.♫
Cap mobile
A
PROBABLY NOT. WHAT ARE YOU SO WORRIED ABOUT? YOUR TEAM SAVED THE DAY AGAINST SOME VERY TOUGH STUFF.
REC
WHAT AM I WORRIED ABOUT? *HMM.* LET'S SEE...
...I DIDN'T ASK HIM BEFORE SORTA ACCIDENTALLY REFORMING THE WEST COAST AVENGERS...
...I DIDN'T WARN HIM THAT I WAS USING REALITY TV MONEY TO DO IT... AND THE LAST TIME SUPER HEROES DID THAT, IT ENDED *VERY* BADLY...
♫BORN♫ IN THE U.S.A., I WAS BORN♫ IN THE U.S.A.♫
REC

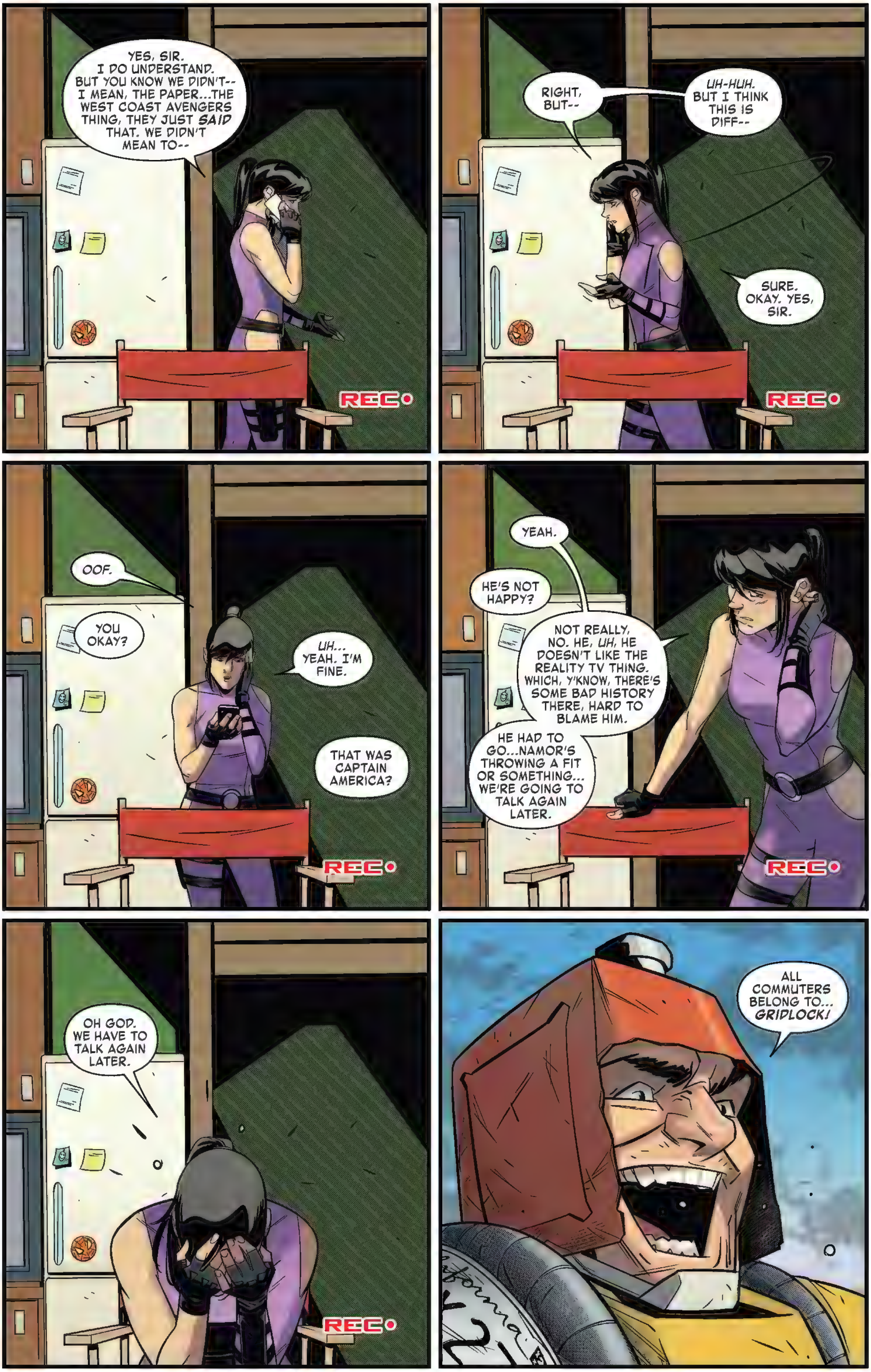

"...AND I *DEFINITELY* DIDN'T TELL HIM WE WERE GOING ON A LATE-NIGHT TALK SHOW."
LATER, ON JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE!
--AND HAWKEYE... *HUH*...TWO HAWKEYES. I BET THAT IS A BIT CONFUSING ISN'T IT?
YES.
INDEED, LET ME TRY AGAIN! CLINT BARTON, YOU'RE THE GRIZZLED VETERAN NEXT TO THESE KIDS...HOW DOES THAT FEEL?
IT'S AMAZING.
I'LL BET.

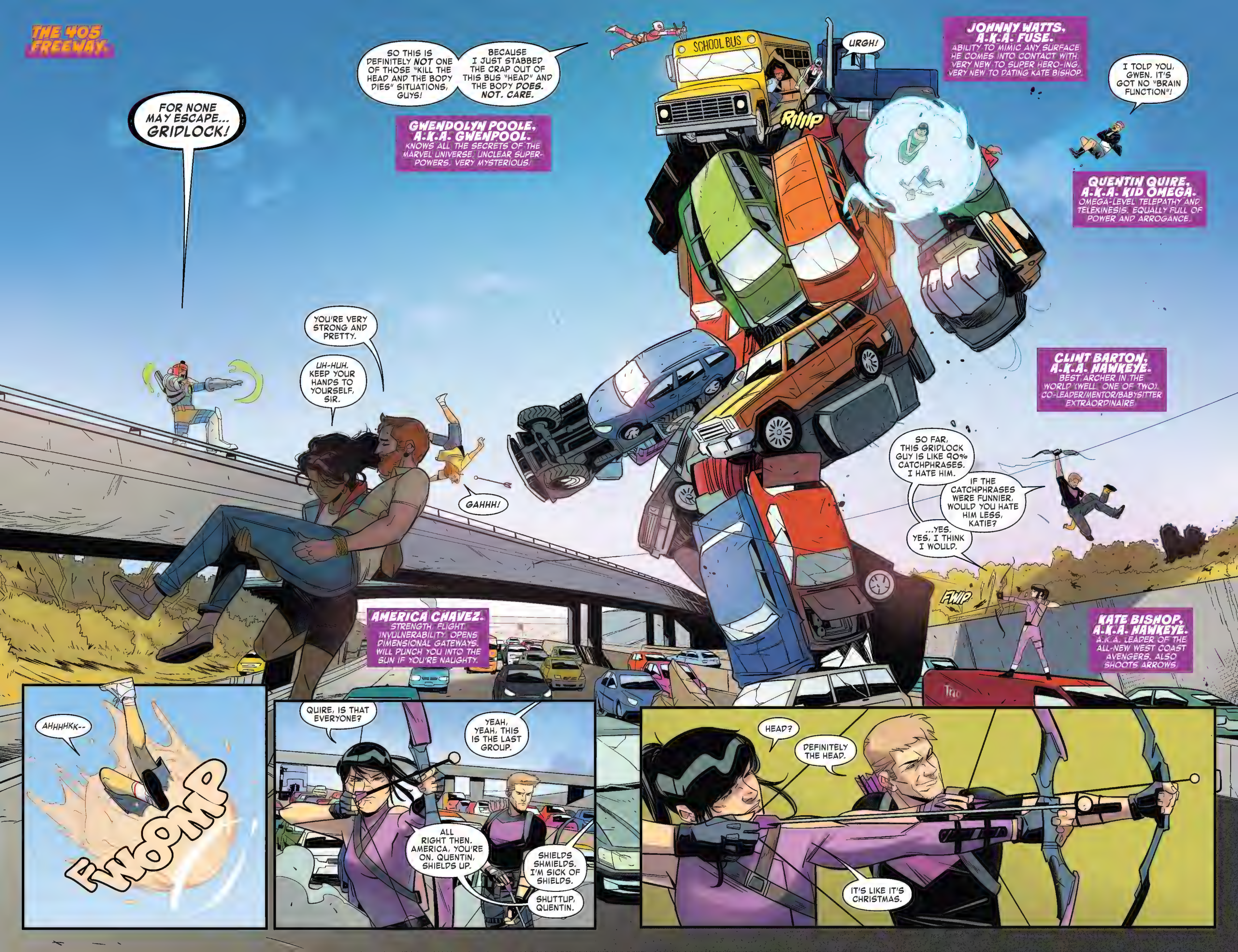

SO, KATE, I'LL ASK YOU--IS IT OFFICIAL? DOES L.A. FINALLY HAVE A HIGH-PROFILE TEAM AGAIN? ARE THE WEST COAST AVENGERS REALLY BACK?
UM. YES?

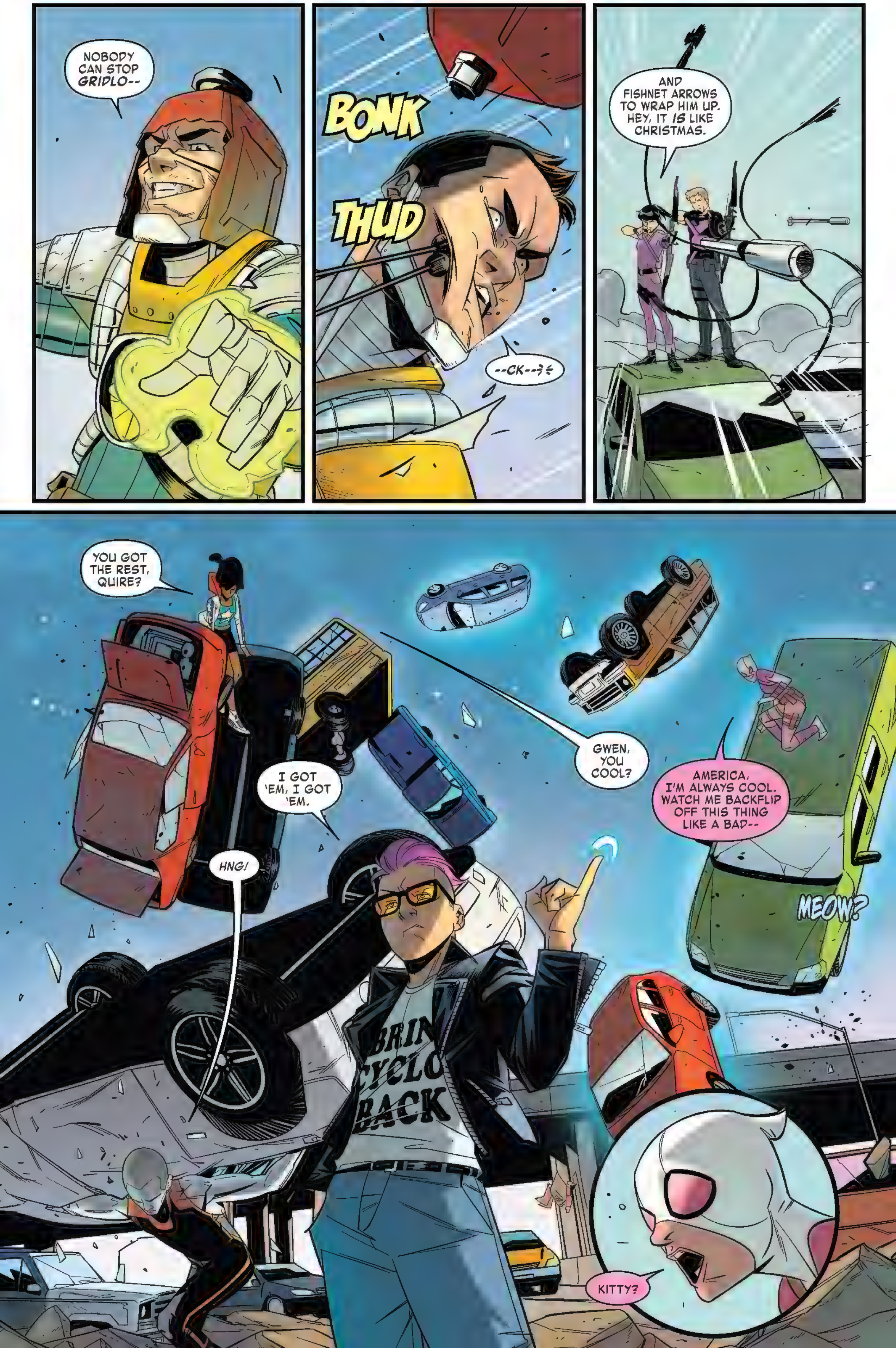

C'MON, KATE.
WELL, MAYBE NOT THE MOST *CONFIDENT* RESPONSE, BUT WE'LL TAKE IT!
YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST, FOLKS--THE WEST COAST AVENGERS ARE *BACK IN BUSINESS!*

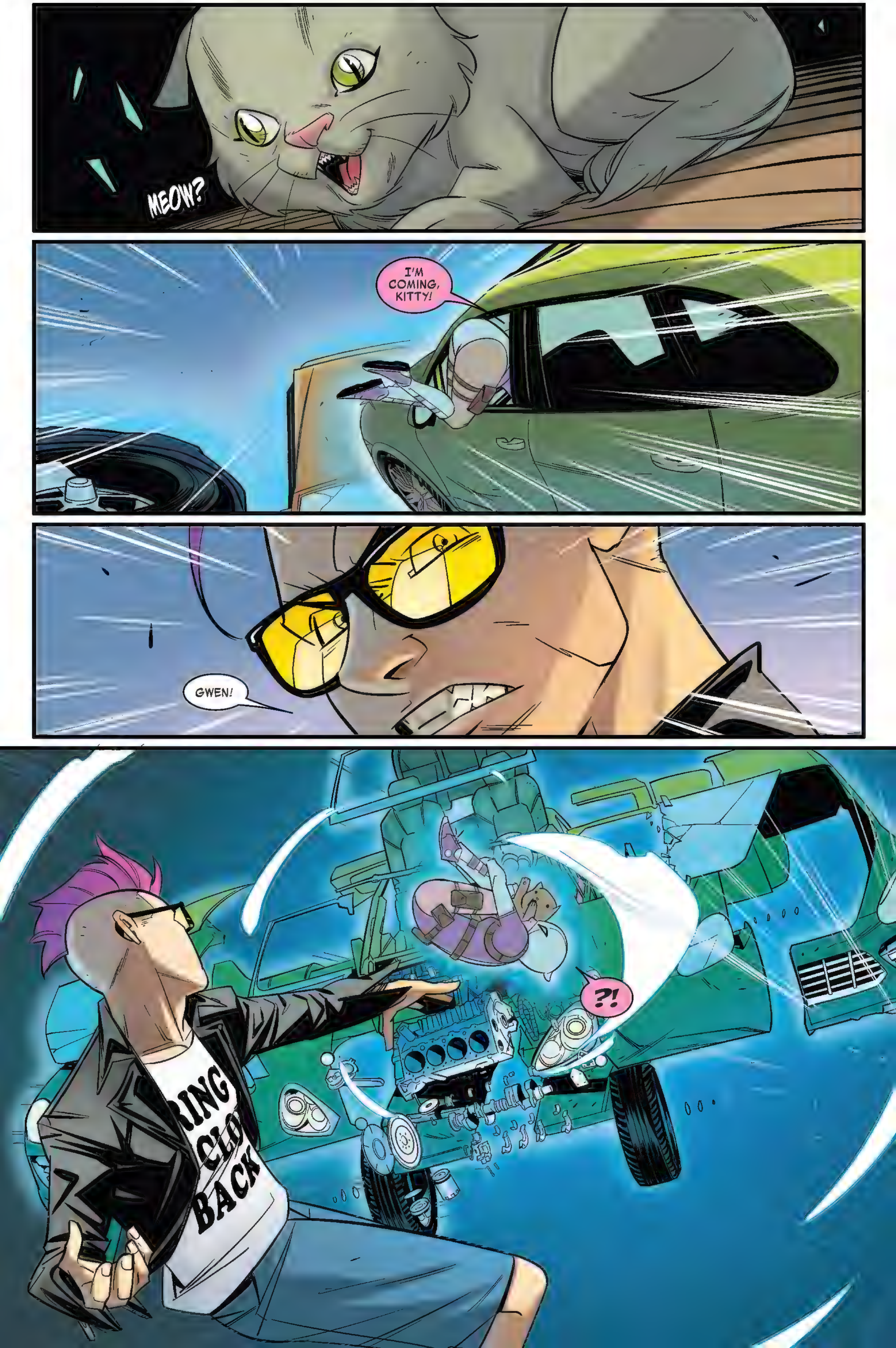

THE EEL.
PFFT. THAT'S WHAT PASSES FOR AN AVENGER THESE DAYS?
SATANA.
UGH. AND I *JUST* RELOCATED. HOW TIRESOME.
GRAVITON.
WELL, THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
THE L.A. TRIBU
THE DUTCH OVEN.
REJECT ME AT YOUR PERIL, WEST COAST AVENGERS!
MADAME MASQUE.
YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST, FOLKS--THE WEST COAST AVENGERS ARE BACK IN **BUSINESS!**
NOT ON *MY* WATCH THEY'RE NOT.

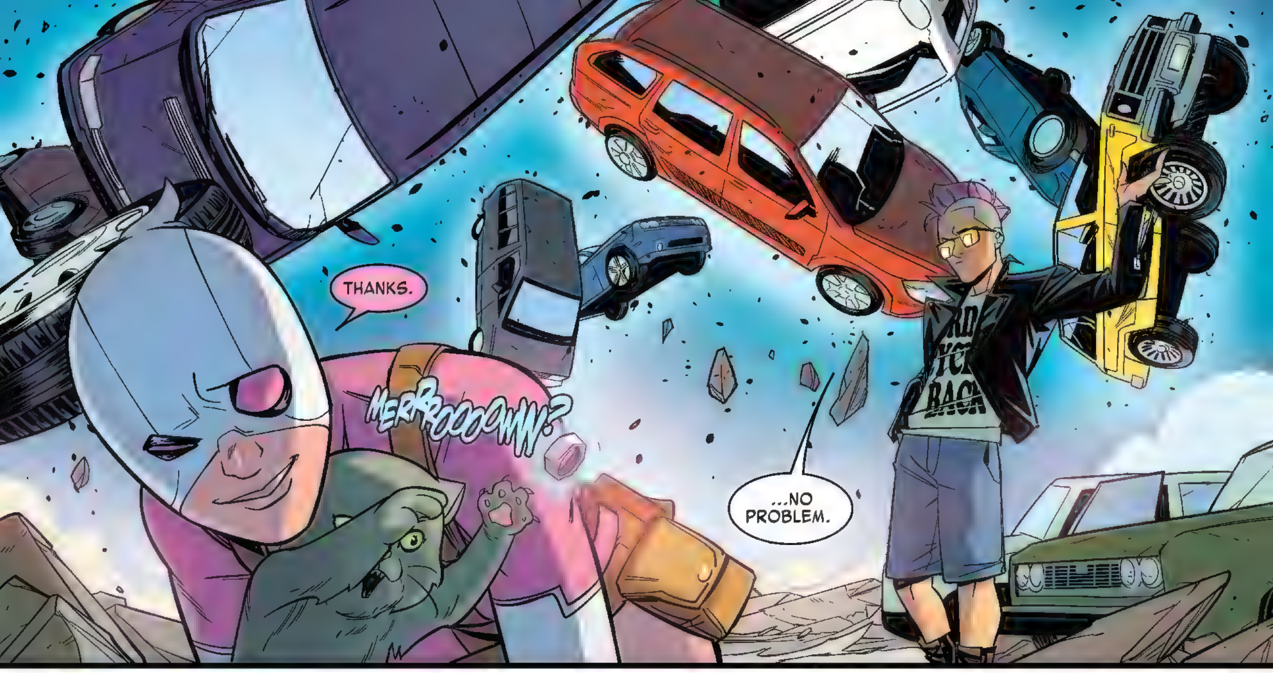
WEST COAST AVENGERS #5

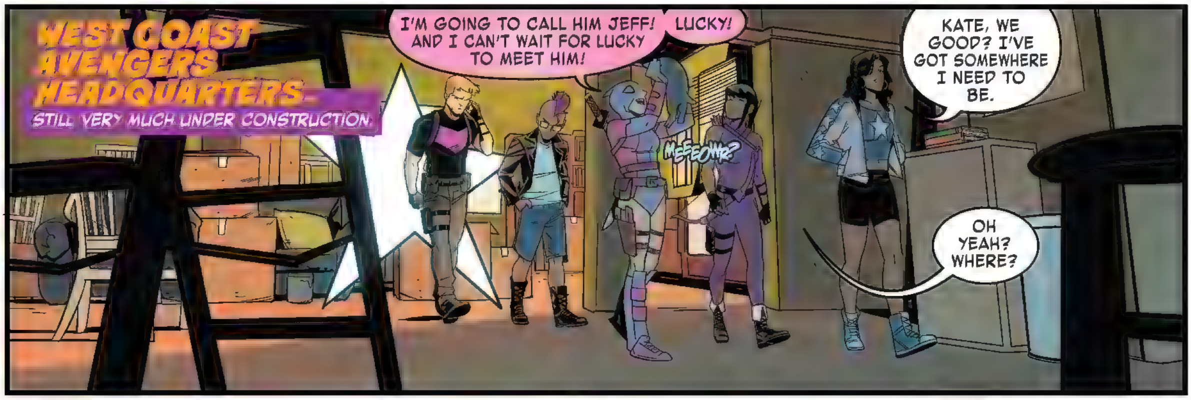

YES, SIR. I DO UNDERSTAND. BUT YOU KNOW WE DIDN'T-- I MEAN, THE PAPER...THE WEST COAST AVENGERS THING, THEY JUST *SAID* THAT. WE DIDN'T MEAN TO--
REC
RIGHT, BUT--
UH-HUH. BUT I THINK THIS IS DIFF--
SURE. OKAY. YES, SIR.
REC
OOF.
YOU OKAY?
UH... YEAH. I'M FINE.
THAT WAS CAPTAIN AMERICA?
REC
YEAH.
HE'S NOT HAPPY?
NOT REALLY, NO. HE, *UH*, HE DOESN'T LIKE THE REALITY TV THING. WHICH, Y'KNOW, THERE'S SOME BAD HISTORY THERE, HARD TO BLAME HIM.
HE HAD TO GO...NAMOR'S THROWING A FIT OR SOMETHING... WE'RE GOING TO TALK AGAIN LATER.
REC
OH GOD. WE HAVE TO TALK AGAIN LATER.
REC
ALL COMMUTERS BELONG TO... *GRIDLOCK!*

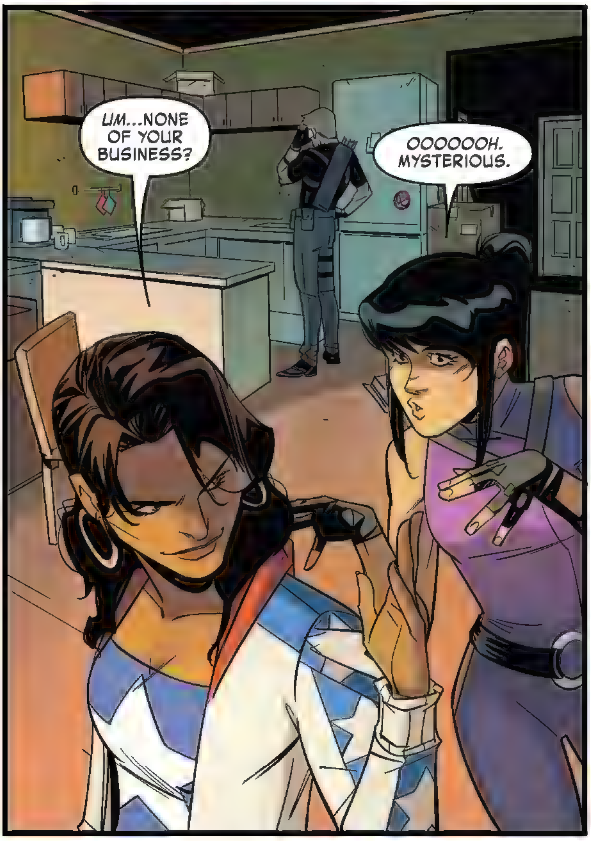

THE 405 FREEWAY.
FOR NONE MAY ESCAPE... GRIDLOCK!
SO THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT ONE OF THOSE "KILL THE HEAD AND THE BODY DIES" SITUATIONS, GUYS!
BECAUSE I JUST STABBED THE CRAP OUT OF THIS BUS "HEAD" AND THE BODY DOES. NOT. CARE.
GWENDOLYN POOLE, A.K.A. GWENPOOL. KNOWS ALL THE SECRETS OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE. UNCLEAR SUPER-POWERS. VERY MYSTERIOUS!
SCHOOL BUS
URGH!
RIIIP
JOHNNY WATTS, A.K.A. FUSE. ABILITY TO MIMIC ANY SURFACE HE COMES INTO CONTACT WITH. VERY NEW TO SUPER HERO-ING. VERY NEW TO DATING KATE BISHOP.
I TOLD YOU, GWEN. IT'S GOT NO "BRAIN FUNCTION"!
QUENTIN QUIRE, A.K.A. KID OMEGA. OMEGA-LEVEL TELEPATHY AND TELEKINESIS. EQUALLY FULL OF POWER AND ARROGANCE.
YOU'RE VERY STRONG AND PRETTY.
UH-HUH. KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF, SIR.
GAHHH!
CLINT BARTON, A.K.A. HAWKEYE. BEST ARCHER IN THE WORLD (WELL, ONE OF TWO). CO-LEADER/MENTOR/BABYSITTER EXTRAORDINAIRE.
SO FAR, THIS GRIDLOCK GUY IS LIKE 90% CATCHPHRASES. I HATE HIM.
IF THE CATCHPHRASES WERE FUNNIER, WOULD YOU HATE HIM LESS, KATIE?
...YES. YES, I THINK I WOULD.
FWIP
AMERICA CHAVEZ. STRENGTH. FLIGHT. INVULNERABILITY. OPENS DIMENSIONAL GATEWAYS. WILL PUNCH YOU INTO THE SUN IF YOU'RE NAUGHTY.
KATE BISHOP, A.K.A. HAWKEYE. A.K.A. LEADER OF THE ALL-NEW WEST COAST AVENGERS. ALSO SHOOTS ARROWS.
AHHHHKK--
FWOMP
QUIRE, IS THAT EVERYONE?
YEAH, YEAH, THIS IS THE LAST GROUP.
ALL RIGHT THEN. AMERICA, YOU'RE ON. QUENTIN, SHIELDS UP.
SHIELDS SHMIELDS. I'M SICK OF SHIELDS.
SHUTTUP, QUENTIN.
HEAD?
DEFINITELY THE HEAD.
IT'S LIKE IT'S CHRISTMAS.

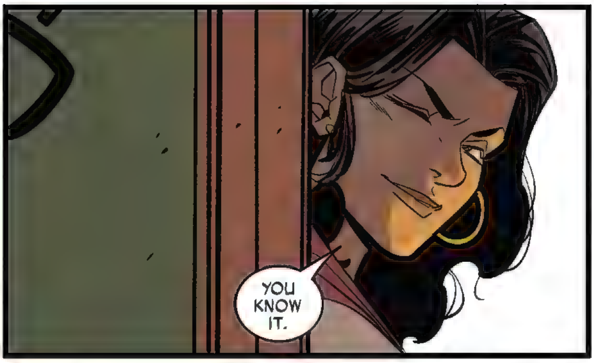

NOBODY CAN STOP *GRIDLO*--
BONK
THUD
--CK-->‹
AND FISHNET ARROWS TO WRAP HIM UP. HEY, IT *IS* LIKE CHRISTMAS.
YOU GOT THE REST, QUIRE?
I GOT 'EM, I GOT 'EM.
HNG!
GWEN, YOU COOL?
AMERICA, I'M ALWAYS COOL. WATCH ME BACKFLIP OFF THIS THING LIKE A BAD--
MEOW?
BRIN CYCLO BACK
KITTY?

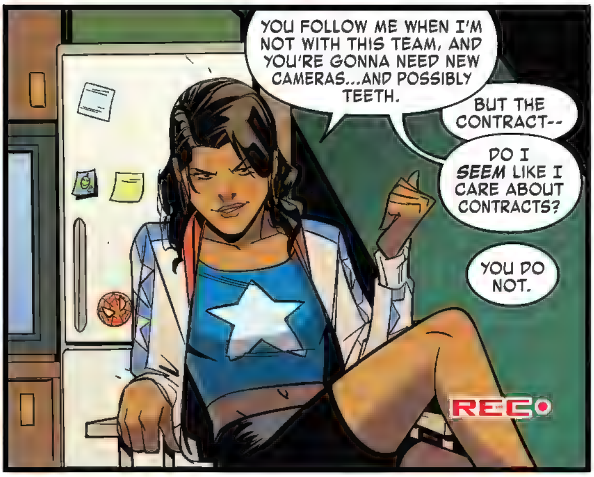

MEOW?
I'M COMING, KITTY!
GWEN!
RING
CLO
BACK
?!

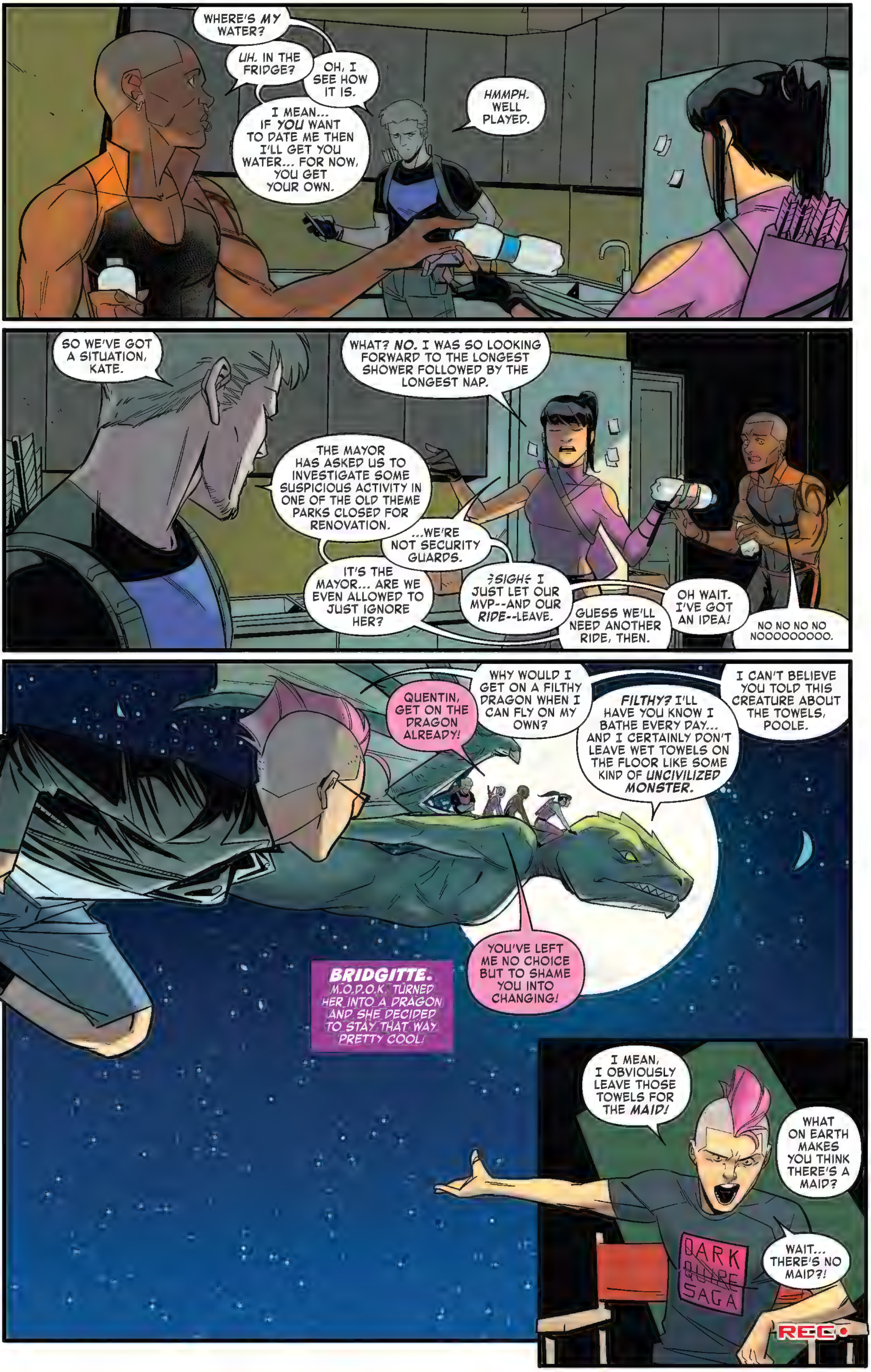

THANKS.
MERRROOOOWW?
...NO PROBLEM.

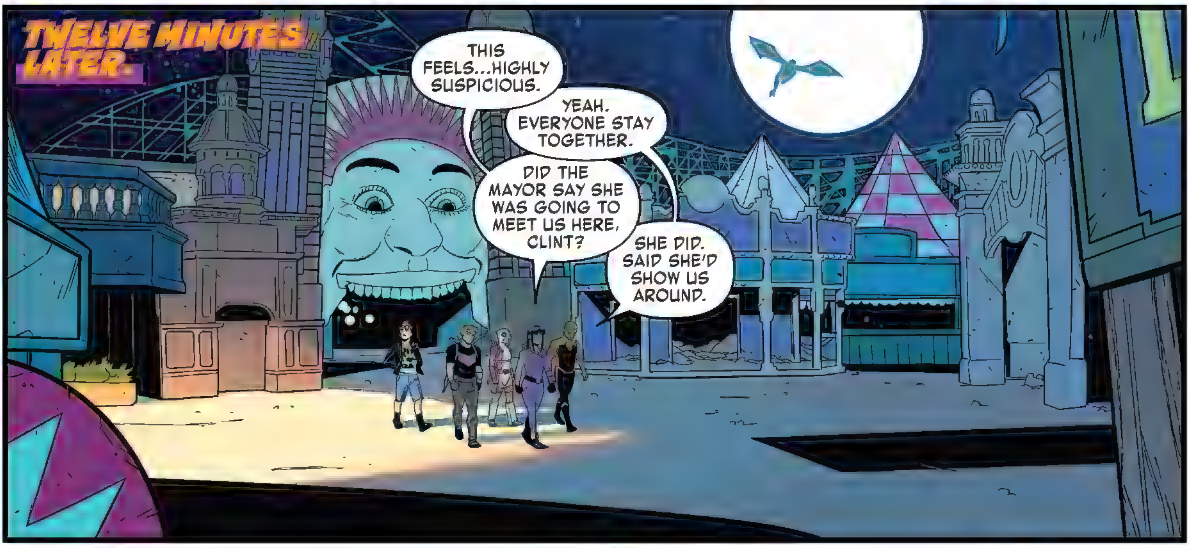

WEST COAST AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS—
STILL VERY MUCH UNDER CONSTRUCTION.
I'M GOING TO CALL HIM JEFF! AND I CAN'T WAIT FOR LUCKY TO MEET HIM!
LUCKY!
MEEEOWR?
KATE, WE GOOD? I'VE GOT SOMEWHERE I NEED TO BE.
OH YEAH? WHERE?

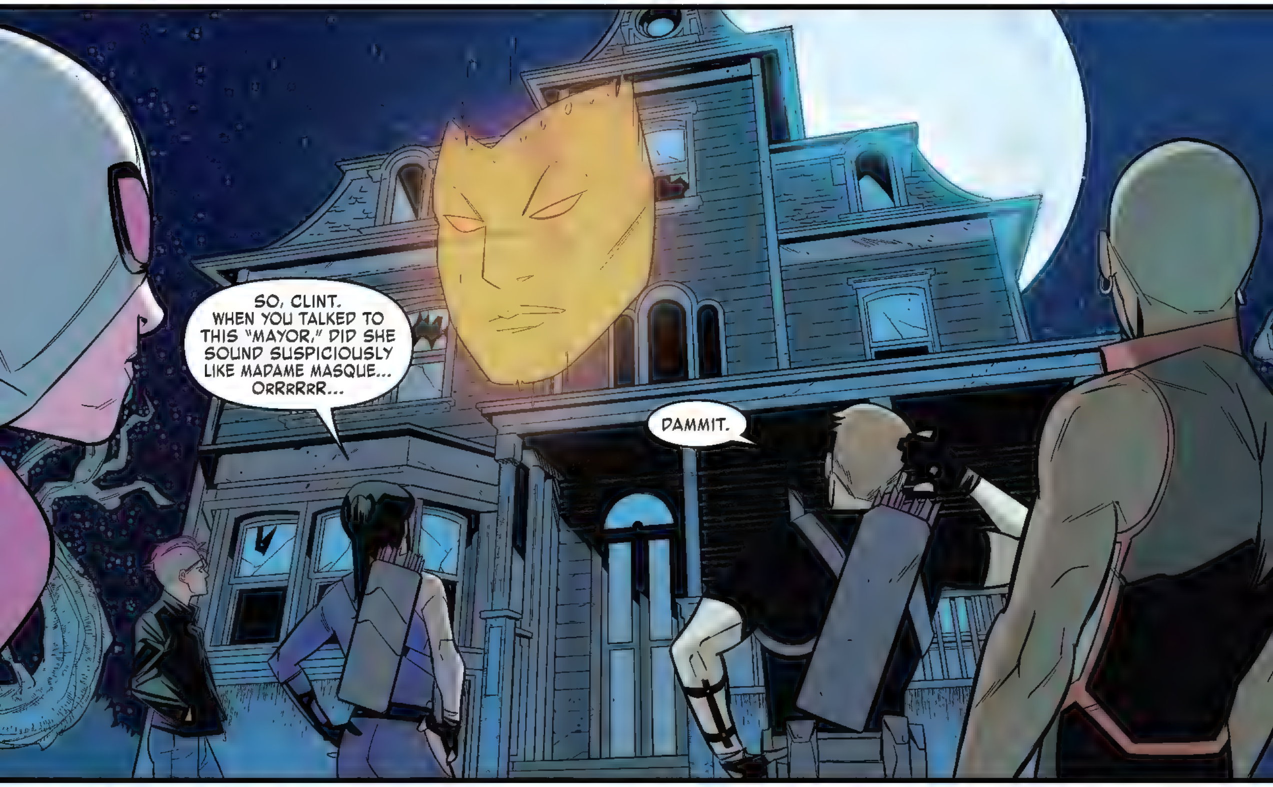

UM...NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS?
OOOOOOH. MYSTERIOUS.

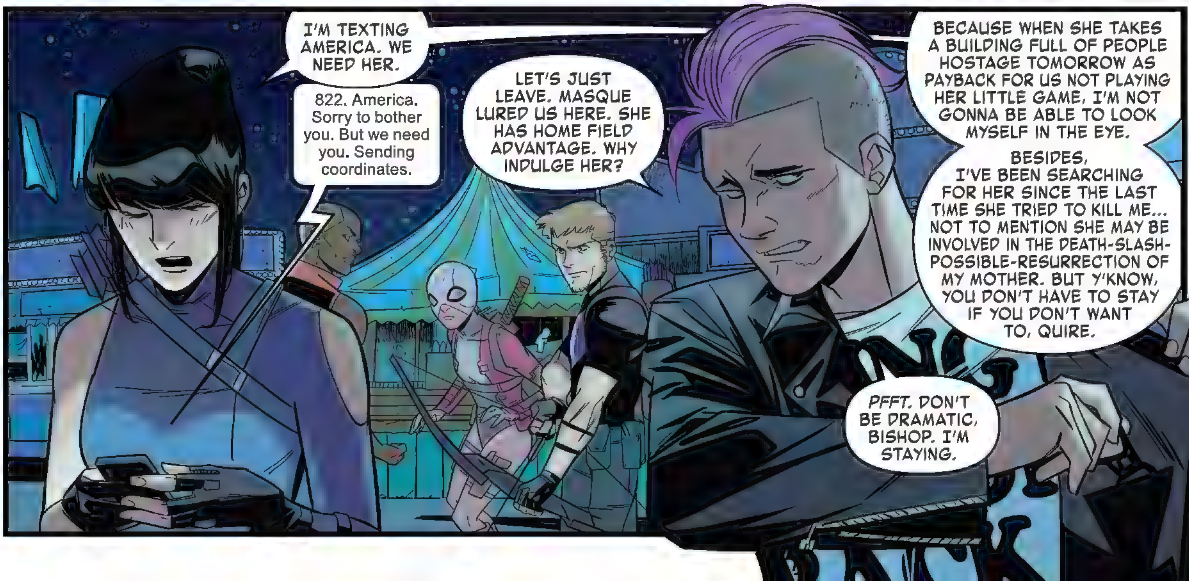

YOU KNOW IT.

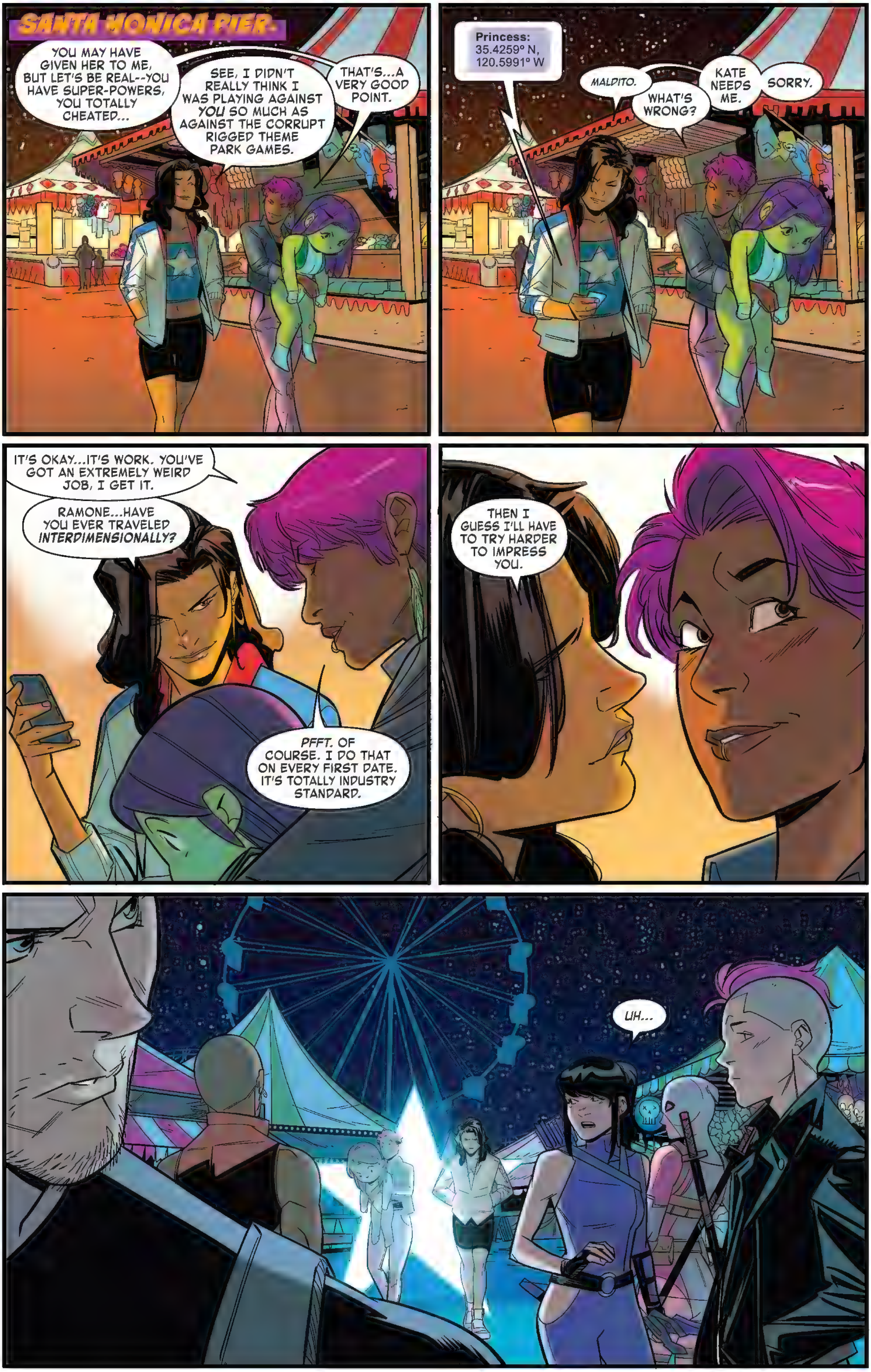

YOU FOLLOW ME WHEN I'M NOT WITH THIS TEAM, AND YOU'RE GONNA NEED NEW CAMERAS...AND POSSIBLY TEETH.
BUT THE CONTRACT--
DO I SEEM LIKE I CARE ABOUT CONTRACTS?
YOU DO NOT.
REC

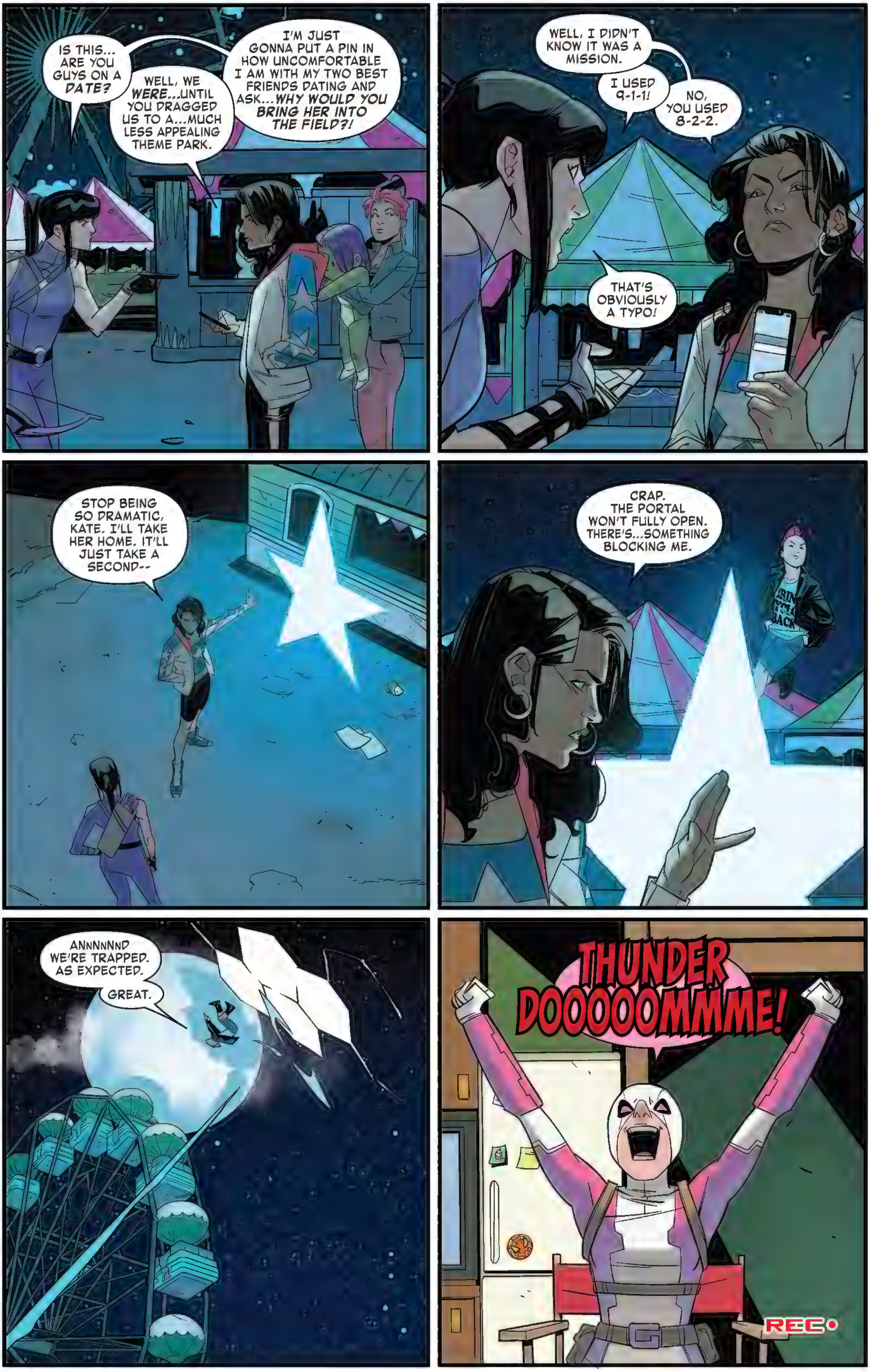

WHERE'S *MY* WATER?
UH. IN THE FRIDGE?
OH, I SEE HOW IT IS.
I MEAN... IF *YOU* WANT TO DATE ME THEN I'LL GET YOU WATER... FOR NOW, YOU GET YOUR OWN.
HMMPH. WELL PLAYED.
SO WE'VE GOT A SITUATION, KATE.
WHAT? *NO.* I WAS SO LOOKING FORWARD TO THE LONGEST SHOWER FOLLOWED BY THE LONGEST NAP.
THE MAYOR HAS ASKED US TO INVESTIGATE SOME SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY IN ONE OF THE OLD THEME PARKS CLOSED FOR RENOVATION.
...WE'RE NOT SECURITY GUARDS.
IT'S THE MAYOR... ARE WE EVEN ALLOWED TO JUST IGNORE HER?
SIGH I JUST LET OUR MVP--AND OUR *RIDE*--LEAVE.
GUESS WE'LL NEED ANOTHER RIDE, THEN.
OH WAIT. I'VE GOT AN IDEA!
NO NO NO NO NOOOOOOOOO.
QUENTIN, GET ON THE DRAGON ALREADY!
WHY WOULD I GET ON A FILTHY DRAGON WHEN I CAN FLY ON MY OWN?
FILTHY? I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I BATHE EVERY DAY... AND I CERTAINLY DON'T LEAVE WET TOWELS ON THE FLOOR LIKE SOME KIND OF *UNCIVILIZED MONSTER.*
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TOLD THIS CREATURE ABOUT THE TOWELS, POOLE.
YOU'VE LEFT ME NO CHOICE BUT TO SHAME YOU INTO CHANGING!
BRIDGITTE. M.O.D.O.K. TURNED HER INTO A DRAGON AND SHE DECIDED TO STAY THAT WAY. PRETTY COOL.
I MEAN, I OBVIOUSLY LEAVE THOSE TOWELS FOR THE *MAID!*
WHAT ON EARTH MAKES YOU THINK THERE'S A MAID?
WAIT... THERE'S NO MAID?!
DARK QUIRE SAGA
REC

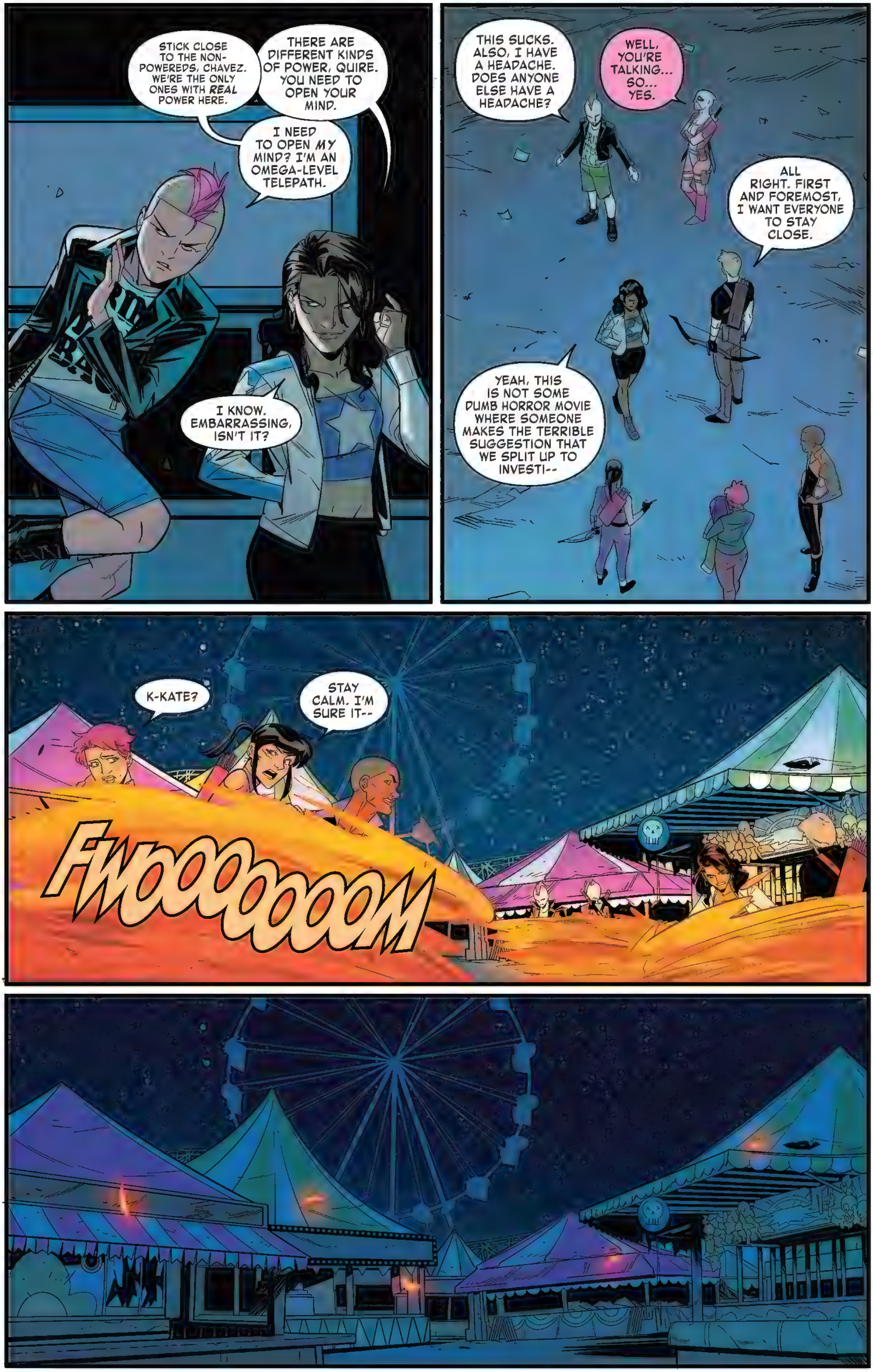

TWELVE MINUTES LATER.
THIS FEELS...HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS.
YEAH. EVERYONE STAY TOGETHER.
DID THE MAYOR SAY SHE WAS GOING TO MEET US HERE, CLINT?
SHE DID. SAID SHE'D SHOW US AROUND.

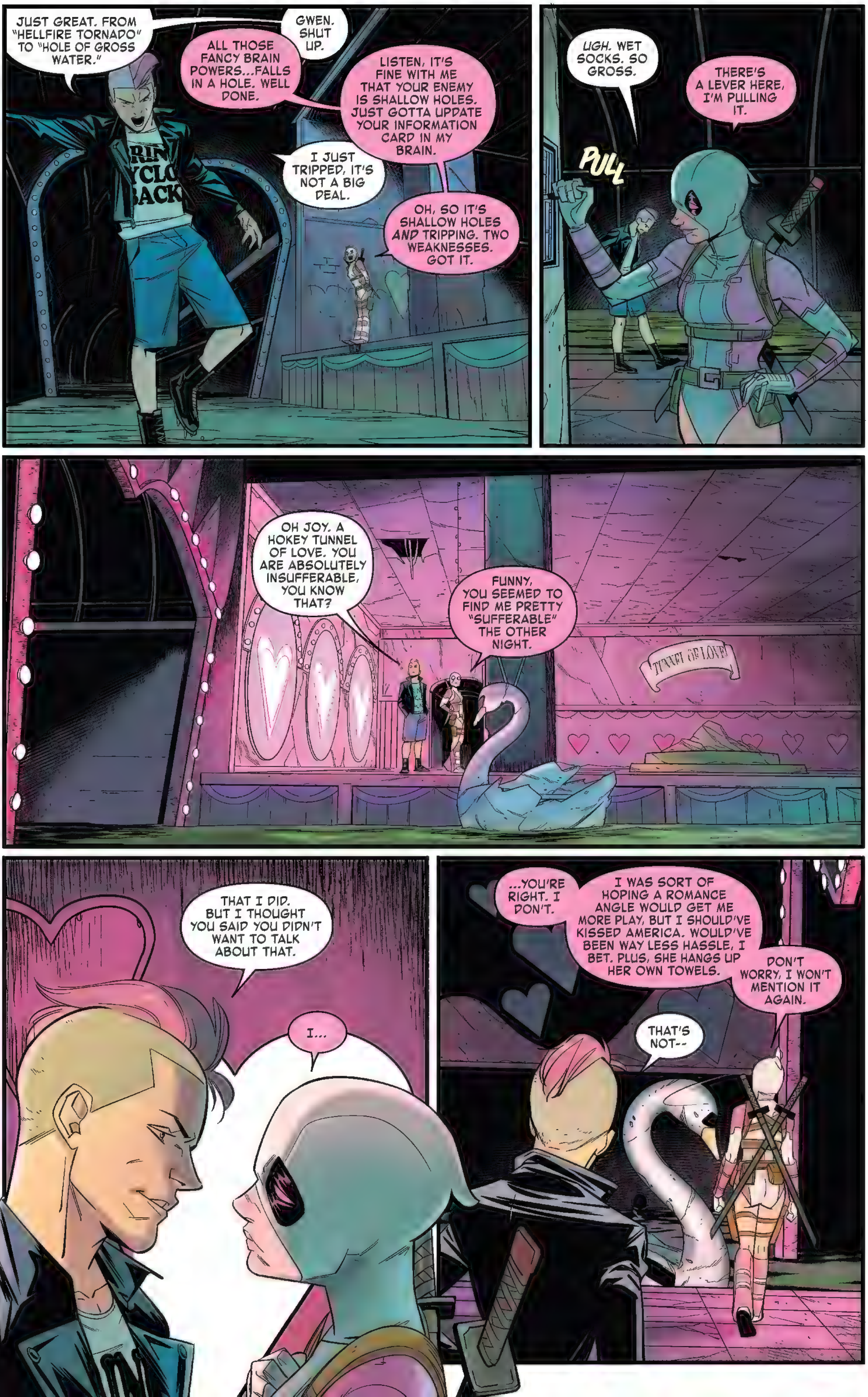

SO, CLINT. WHEN YOU TALKED TO THIS "MAYOR," DID SHE SOUND SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE MADAME MASQUE... ORRRRRR...
DAMMIT.

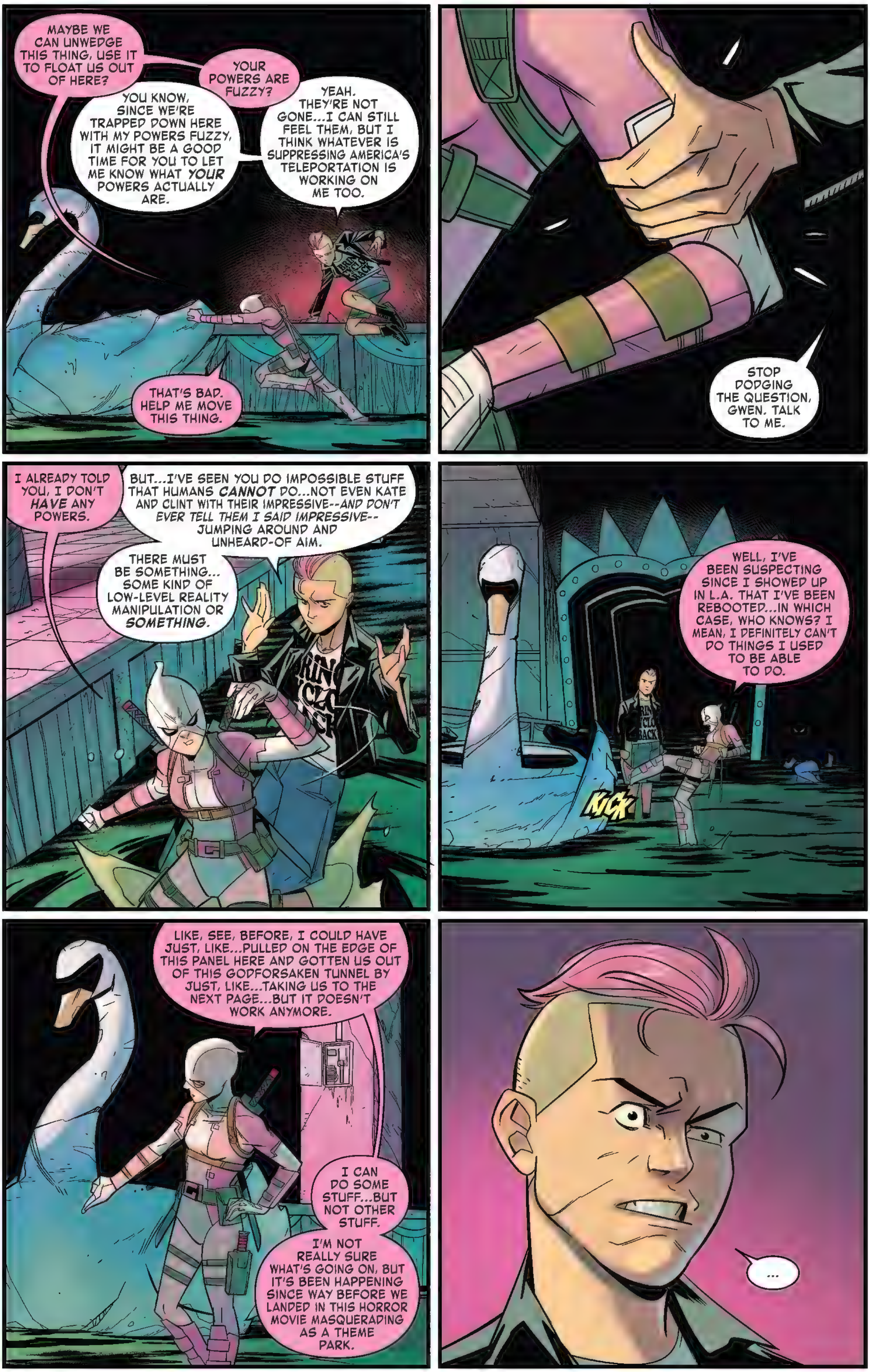

I'M TEXTING AMERICA. WE NEED HER.
822. America. Sorry to bother you. But we need you. Sending coordinates.
LET'S JUST LEAVE. MASQUE LURED US HERE. SHE HAS HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE. WHY INDULGE HER?
BECAUSE WHEN SHE TAKES A BUILDING FULL OF PEOPLE HOSTAGE TOMORROW AS PAYBACK FOR US NOT PLAYING HER LITTLE GAME, I'M NOT GONNA BE ABLE TO LOOK MYSELF IN THE EYE.
BESIDES, I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR HER SINCE THE LAST TIME SHE TRIED TO KILL ME... NOT TO MENTION SHE MAY BE INVOLVED IN THE DEATH-SLASH-POSSIBLE-RESURRECTION OF MY MOTHER. BUT Y'KNOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, QUIRE.
PFFT. DON'T BE DRAMATIC, BISHOP. I'M STAYING.

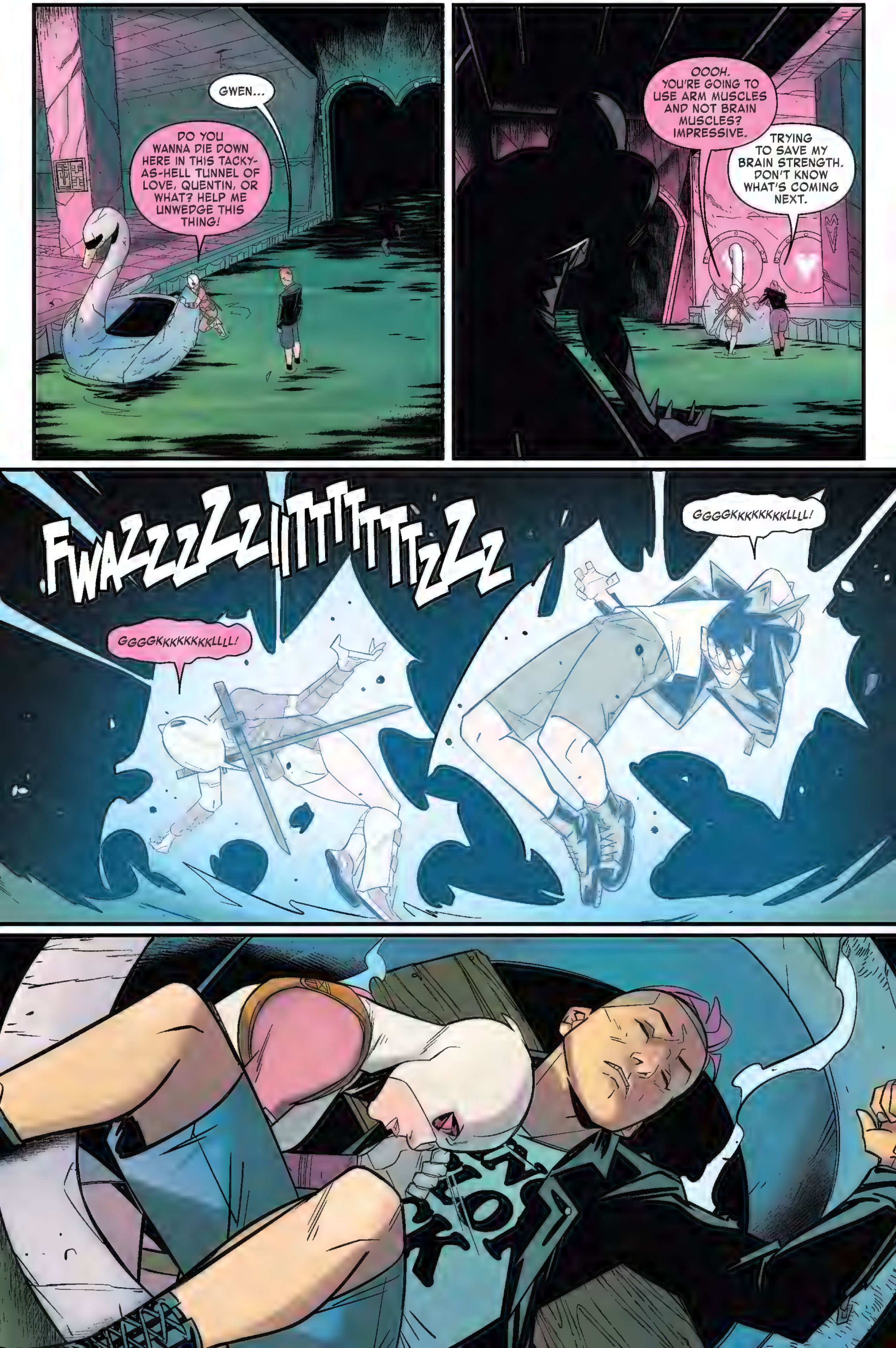

SANTA MONICA PIER.
YOU MAY HAVE GIVEN HER TO ME, BUT LET'S BE REAL--YOU HAVE SUPER-POWERS, YOU TOTALLY CHEATED...
SEE, I DIDN'T REALLY THINK I WAS PLAYING AGAINST *YOU* SO MUCH AS AGAINST THE CORRUPT RIGGED THEME PARK GAMES.
THAT'S...A VERY GOOD POINT.
Princess: 35.4259° N, 120.5991° W
MALDITO.
WHAT'S WRONG?
KATE NEEDS ME.
SORRY.
IT'S OKAY...IT'S WORK. YOU'VE GOT AN EXTREMELY WEIRD JOB, I GET IT.
RAMONE...HAVE YOU EVER TRAVELED *INTERDIMENSIONALLY?*
PFFT. OF COURSE. I DO THAT ON EVERY FIRST DATE. IT'S TOTALLY INDUSTRY STANDARD.
THEN I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO TRY HARDER TO IMPRESS YOU.
UH...

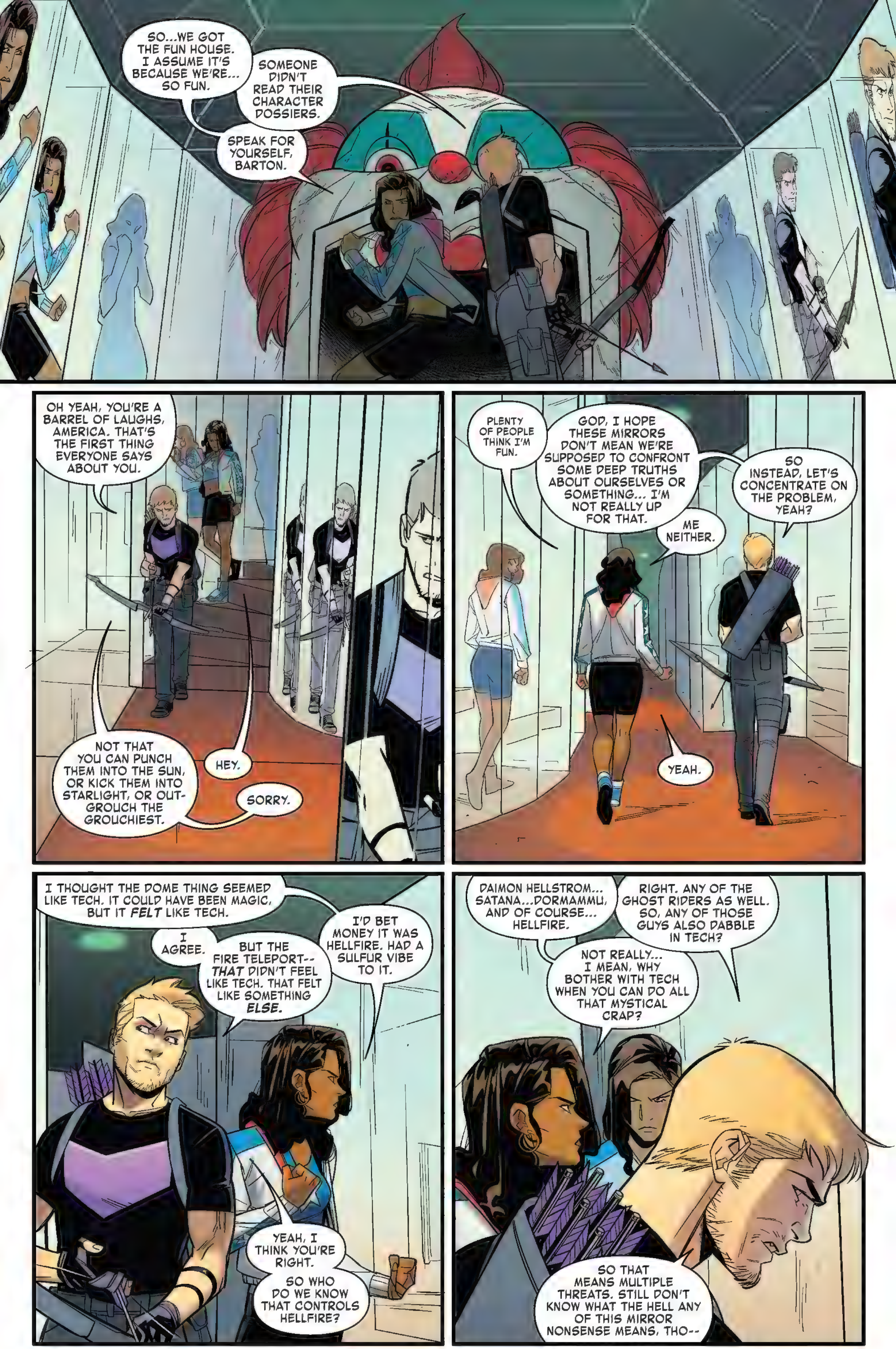

IS THIS... ARE YOU GUYS ON A *DATE?*
WELL, WE *WERE*...UNTIL YOU DRAGGED US TO A...MUCH LESS APPEALING THEME PARK.
I'M JUST GONNA PUT A PIN IN HOW UNCOMFORTABLE I AM WITH MY TWO BEST FRIENDS DATING AND ASK...*WHY WOULD YOU BRING HER INTO THE FIELD?!*
WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS A MISSION.
I USED 9-1-1!
NO, YOU USED 8-2-2.
THAT'S OBVIOUSLY A TYPO!
STOP BEING SO DRAMATIC, KATE. I'LL TAKE HER HOME. IT'LL JUST TAKE A SECOND--
CRAP. THE PORTAL WON'T FULLY OPEN. THERE'S...SOMETHING BLOCKING ME.
ANNNNNND WE'RE TRAPPED. AS EXPECTED.
GREAT.
THUNDER DOOOOOMMME!
REC

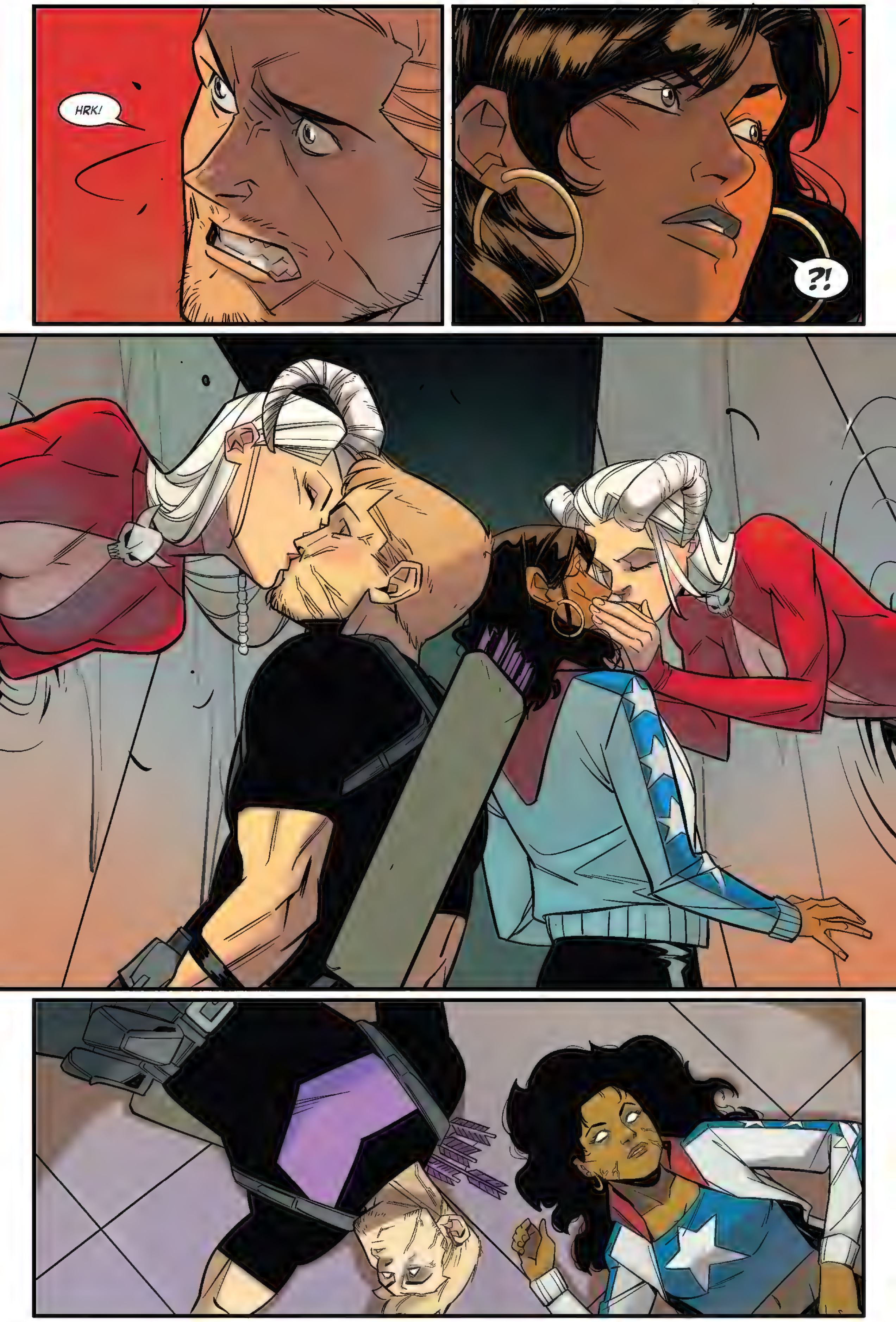

STICK CLOSE TO THE NON-POWEREDS, CHAVEZ. WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WITH *REAL* POWER HERE.
THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF POWER, QUIRE. YOU NEED TO OPEN YOUR MIND.
I NEED TO OPEN *MY* MIND? I'M AN OMEGA-LEVEL TELEPATH.
I KNOW. EMBARRASSING, ISN'T IT?
THIS SUCKS. ALSO, I HAVE A HEADACHE. DOES ANYONE ELSE HAVE A HEADACHE?
WELL, YOU'RE TALKING... SO... YES.
ALL RIGHT. FIRST AND FOREMOST, I WANT EVERYONE TO STAY CLOSE.
YEAH, THIS IS NOT SOME DUMB HORROR MOVIE WHERE SOMEONE MAKES THE TERRIBLE SUGGESTION THAT WE SPLIT UP TO INVESTI--
K-KATE?
STAY CALM. I'M SURE IT--
FWOOOOOOOM

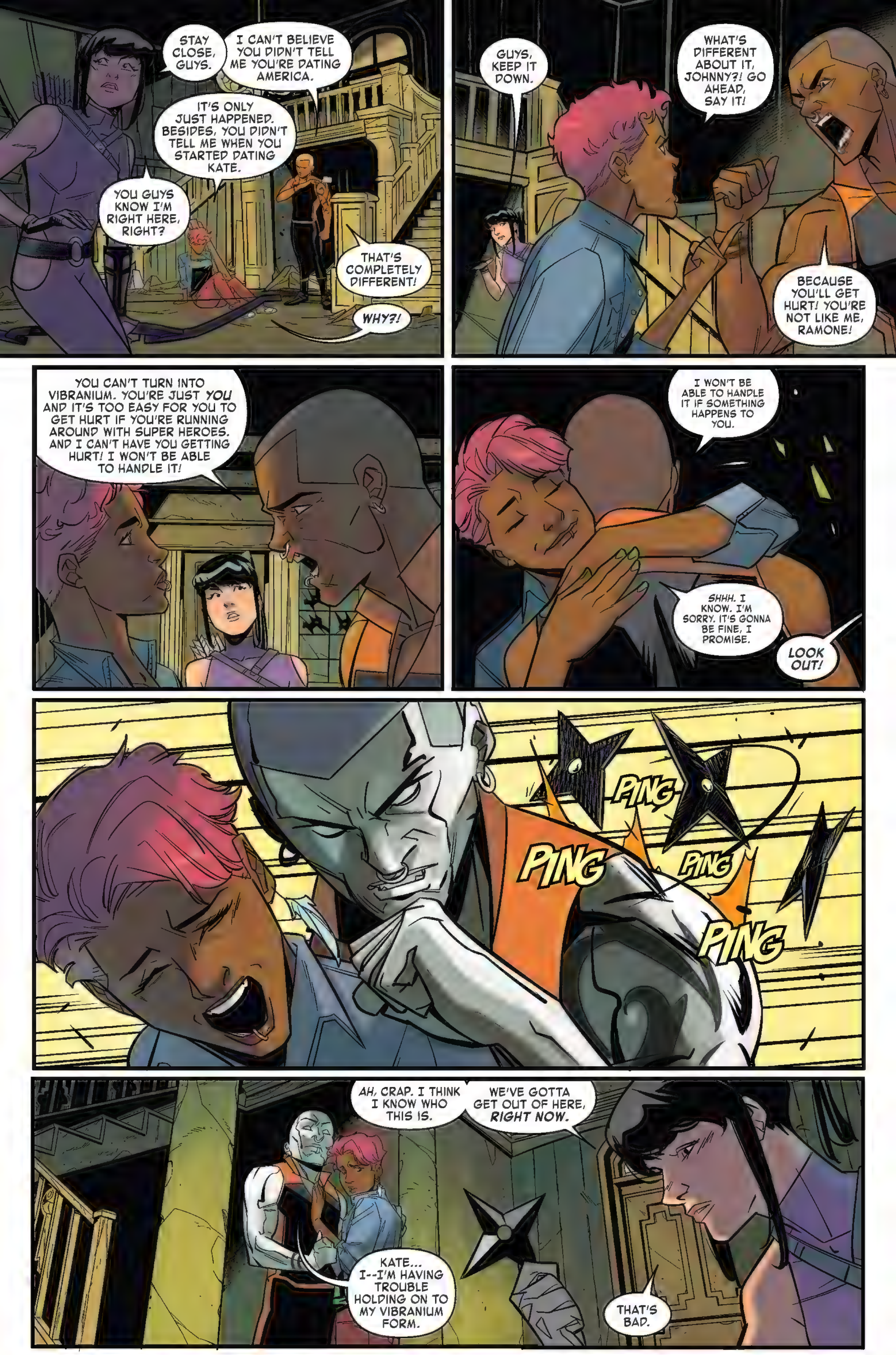

JUST GREAT. FROM "HELLFIRE TORNADO" TO "HOLE OF GROSS WATER."
GWEN. SHUT UP.
ALL THOSE FANCY BRAIN POWERS...FALLS IN A HOLE. WELL DONE.
LISTEN, IT'S FINE WITH ME THAT YOUR ENEMY IS SHALLOW HOLES. JUST GOTTA UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION CARD IN MY BRAIN.
I JUST TRIPPED, IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.
OH, SO IT'S SHALLOW HOLES *AND* TRIPPING. TWO WEAKNESSES. GOT IT.
UGH. WET SOCKS. SO GROSS.
THERE'S A LEVER HERE. I'M PULLING IT.
PULL
OH JOY. A HOKEY TUNNEL OF LOVE. YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY INSUFFERABLE, YOU KNOW THAT?
FUNNY, YOU SEEMED TO FIND ME PRETTY "SUFFERABLE" THE OTHER NIGHT.
TUNNEL OF LOVE
THAT I DID. BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT.
I...
...YOU'RE RIGHT. I DON'T.
I WAS SORT OF HOPING A ROMANCE ANGLE WOULD GET ME MORE PLAY, BUT I SHOULD'VE KISSED AMERICA. WOULD'VE BEEN WAY LESS HASSLE, I BET. PLUS, SHE HANGS UP HER OWN TOWELS.
THAT'S NOT--
DON'T WORRY, I WON'T MENTION IT AGAIN.

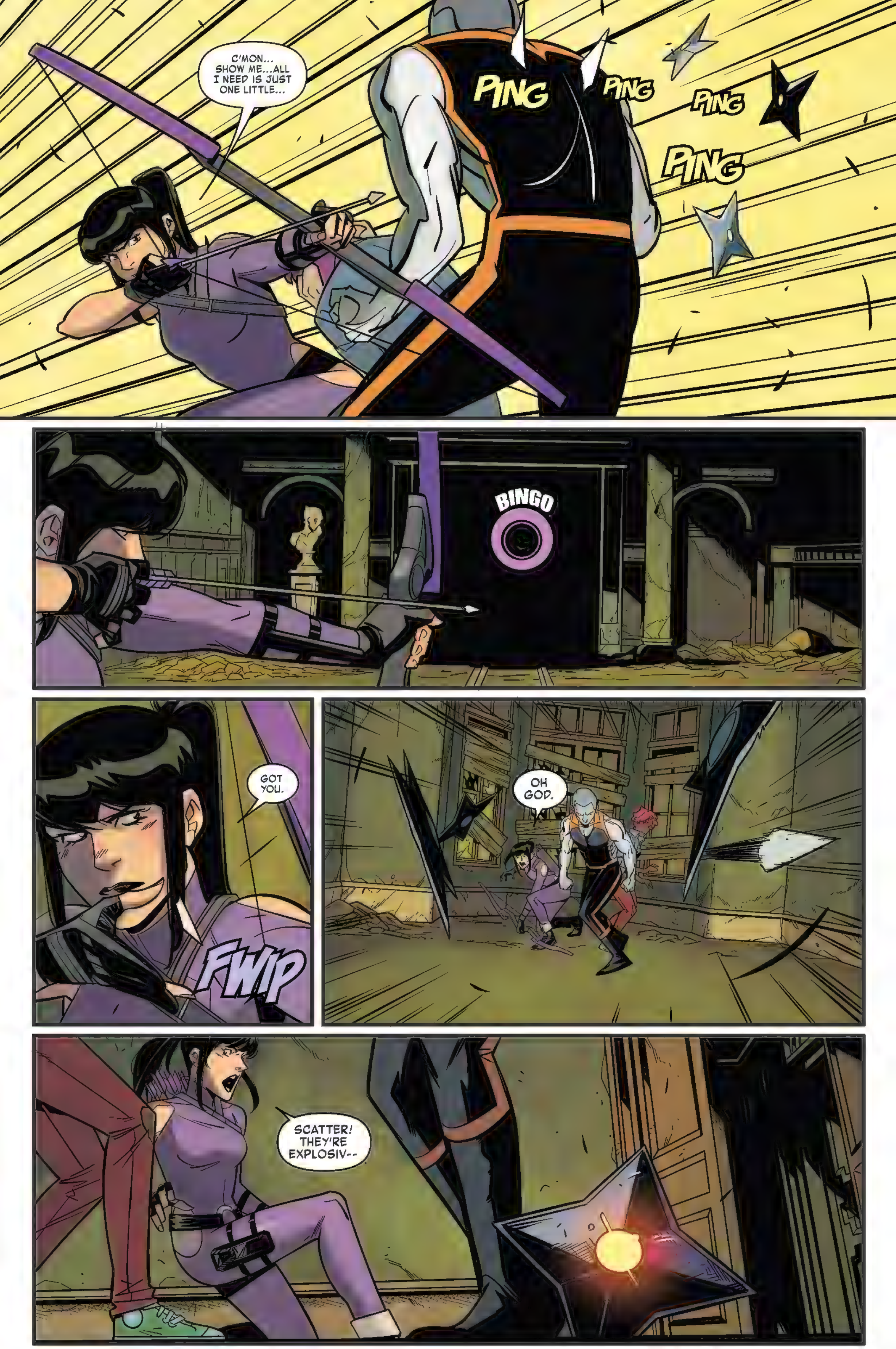

MAYBE WE CAN UNWEDGE THIS THING, USE IT TO FLOAT US OUT OF HERE?
YOU KNOW, SINCE WE'RE TRAPPED DOWN HERE WITH MY POWERS FUZZY, IT MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME FOR YOU TO LET ME KNOW WHAT *YOUR* POWERS ACTUALLY ARE.
YOUR POWERS ARE FUZZY?
YEAH. THEY'RE NOT GONE...I CAN STILL FEEL THEM, BUT I THINK WHATEVER IS SUPPRESSING AMERICA'S TELEPORTATION IS WORKING ON ME TOO.
THAT'S BAD. HELP ME MOVE THIS THING.
STOP DODGING THE QUESTION, GWEN. TALK TO ME.
I ALREADY TOLD YOU, I DON'T *HAVE* ANY POWERS.
BUT...I'VE SEEN YOU DO IMPOSSIBLE STUFF THAT HUMANS *CANNOT* DO...NOT EVEN KATE AND CLINT WITH THEIR IMPRESSIVE--*AND DON'T EVER TELL THEM I SAID IMPRESSIVE*--JUMPING AROUND AND UNHEARD-OF AIM.
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING... SOME KIND OF LOW-LEVEL REALITY MANIPULATION OR *SOMETHING*.
WELL, I'VE BEEN SUSPECTING SINCE I SHOWED UP IN L.A. THAT I'VE BEEN REBOOTED...IN WHICH CASE, WHO KNOWS? I MEAN, I DEFINITELY CAN'T DO THINGS I USED TO BE ABLE TO DO.
KICK
LIKE, SEE, BEFORE, I COULD HAVE JUST, LIKE...PULLED ON THE EDGE OF THIS PANEL HERE AND GOTTEN US OUT OF THIS GODFORSAKEN TUNNEL BY JUST, LIKE...TAKING US TO THE NEXT PAGE...BUT IT DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE.
I CAN DO SOME STUFF...BUT NOT OTHER STUFF.
I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT IT'S BEEN HAPPENING SINCE WAY BEFORE WE LANDED IN THIS HORROR MOVIE MASQUERADING AS A THEME PARK.
...

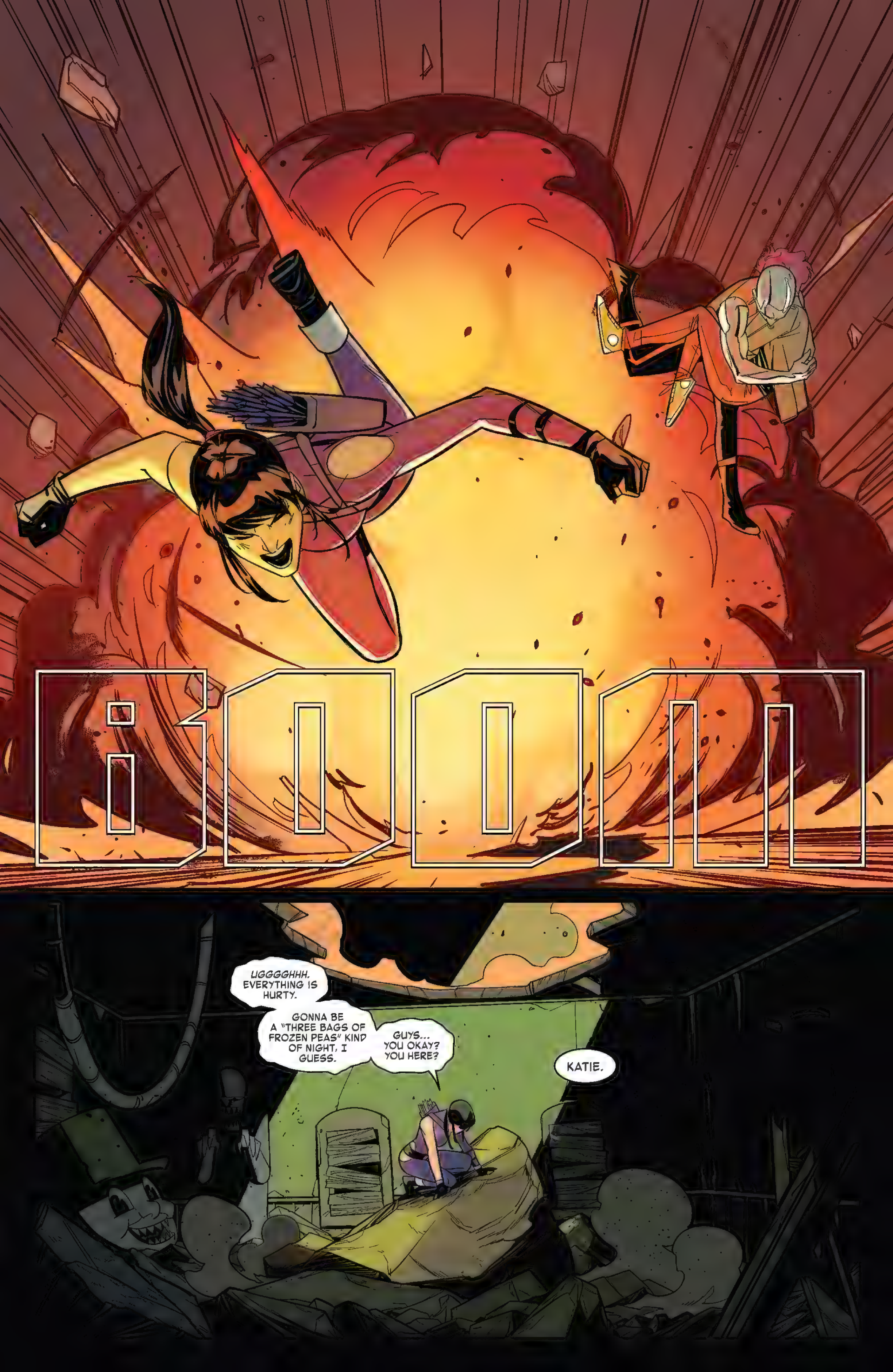

GWEN...
DO YOU WANNA DIE DOWN HERE IN THIS TACKY-AS-HELL TUNNEL OF LOVE, QUENTIN, OR WHAT? HELP ME UNWEDGE THIS THING!
OOOH. YOU'RE GOING TO USE ARM MUSCLES AND NOT BRAIN MUSCLES? IMPRESSIVE.
TRYING TO SAVE MY BRAIN STRENGTH. DON'T KNOW WHAT'S COMING NEXT.
FWAZZZZZITTTTTTTZZZ
GGGGKKKKKKKKLLLLL!
GGGGKKKKKKKKLLLLL!

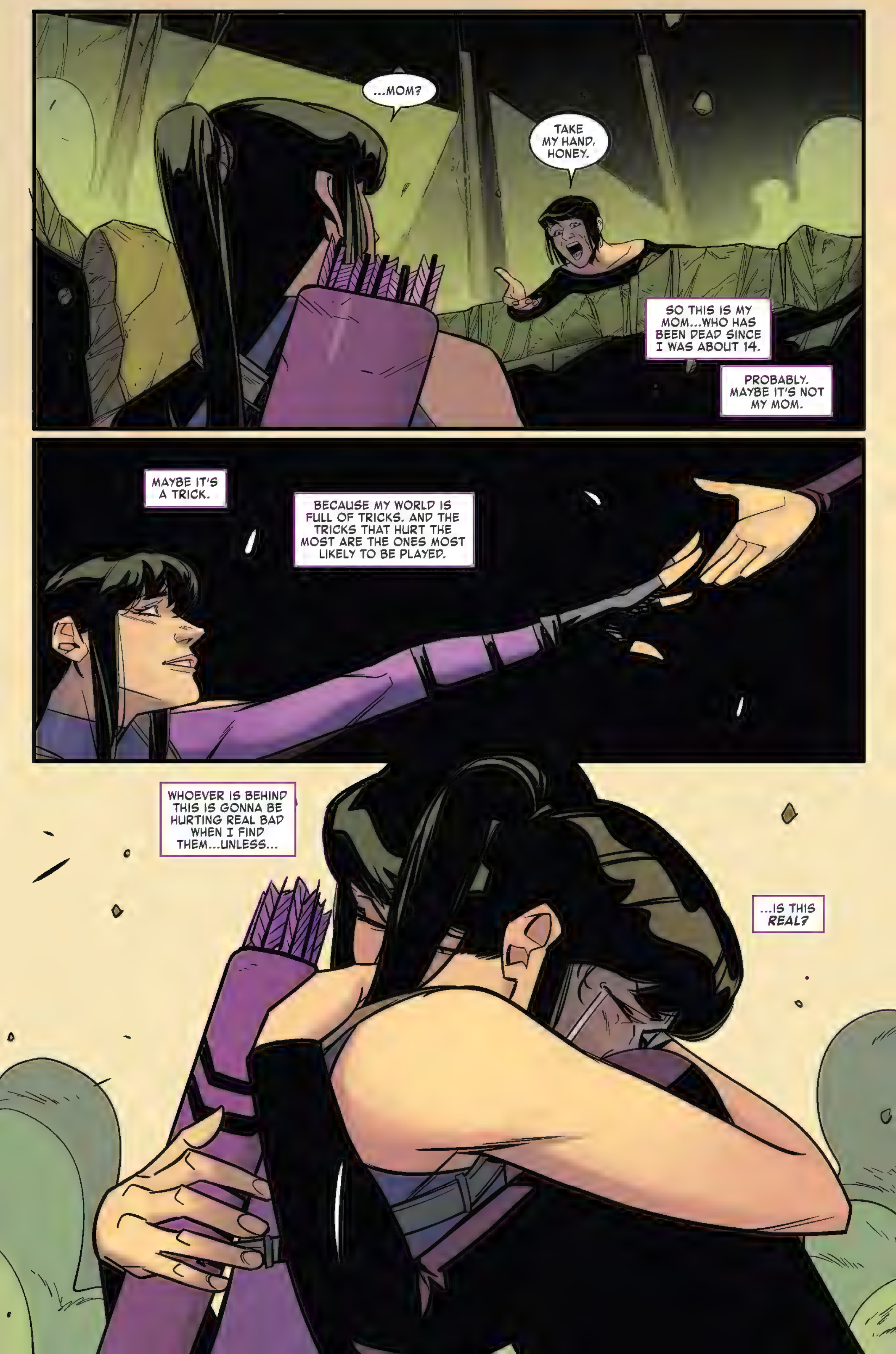

SO...WE GOT THE FUN HOUSE. I ASSUME IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE... SO FUN.
SOMEONE DIDN'T READ THEIR CHARACTER DOSSIERS.
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, BARTON.
OH YEAH, YOU'RE A BARREL OF LAUGHS, AMERICA. THAT'S THE FIRST THING EVERYONE SAYS ABOUT YOU.
NOT THAT YOU CAN PUNCH THEM INTO THE SUN, OR KICK THEM INTO STARLIGHT, OR OUT-GROUCH THE GROUCHIEST.
HEY.
SORRY.
PLENTY OF PEOPLE THINK I'M FUN.
GOD, I HOPE THESE MIRRORS DON'T MEAN WE'RE SUPPOSED TO CONFRONT SOME DEEP TRUTHS ABOUT OURSELVES OR SOMETHING... I'M NOT REALLY UP FOR THAT.
ME NEITHER.
SO INSTEAD, LET'S CONCENTRATE ON THE PROBLEM, YEAH?
YEAH.
I THOUGHT THE DOME THING SEEMED LIKE TECH. IT COULD HAVE BEEN MAGIC, BUT IT *FELT* LIKE TECH.
I AGREE.
BUT THE FIRE TELEPORT-- *THAT* DIDN'T FEEL LIKE TECH. THAT FELT LIKE SOMETHING *ELSE*.
I'D BET MONEY IT WAS HELLFIRE. HAD A SULFUR VIBE TO IT.
YEAH, I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.
SO WHO DO WE KNOW THAT CONTROLS HELLFIRE?
DAIMON HELLSTROM... SATANA...DORMAMMU, AND OF COURSE... HELLFIRE.
RIGHT. ANY OF THE GHOST RIDERS AS WELL. SO, ANY OF THOSE GUYS ALSO DABBLE IN TECH?
NOT REALLY... I MEAN, WHY BOTHER WITH TECH WHEN YOU CAN DO ALL THAT MYSTICAL CRAP?
SO THAT MEANS MULTIPLE THREATS. STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL ANY OF THIS MIRROR NONSENSE MEANS, THO--


HRK!
?!

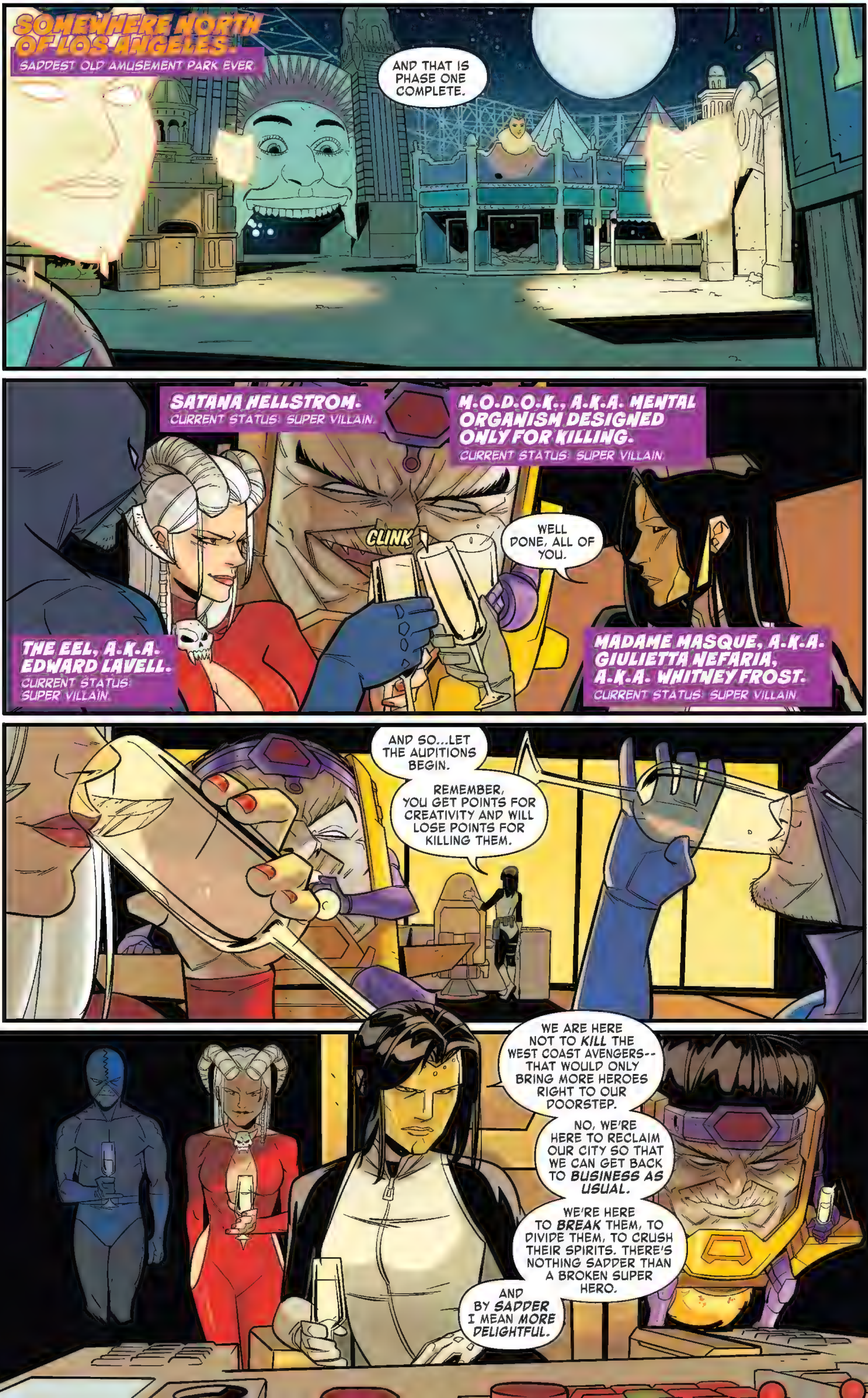

STAY CLOSE, GUYS.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DIDN'T TELL ME YOU'RE DATING AMERICA.
IT'S ONLY JUST HAPPENED. BESIDES, YOU DIDN'T TELL ME WHEN YOU STARTED DATING KATE.
YOU GUYS KNOW I'M RIGHT HERE, RIGHT?
THAT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!
WHY?!
GUYS, KEEP IT DOWN.
WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT IT, JOHNNY?! GO AHEAD, SAY IT!
BECAUSE YOU'LL GET HURT! YOU'RE NOT LIKE ME, RAMONE!
YOU CAN'T TURN INTO VIBRANIUM. YOU'RE JUST *YOU* AND IT'S TOO EASY FOR YOU TO GET HURT IF YOU'RE RUNNING AROUND WITH SUPER HEROES. AND I CAN'T HAVE YOU GETTING HURT! I WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT!
I WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO YOU.
SHHH. I KNOW. I'M SORRY. IT'S GONNA BE FINE, I PROMISE.
LOOK OUT!
PING
PING
PING
PING
AH, CRAP. I THINK I KNOW WHO THIS IS.
WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE, *RIGHT NOW.*
KATE... I--I'M HAVING TROUBLE HOLDING ON TO MY VIBRANIUM FORM.
THAT'S BAD.

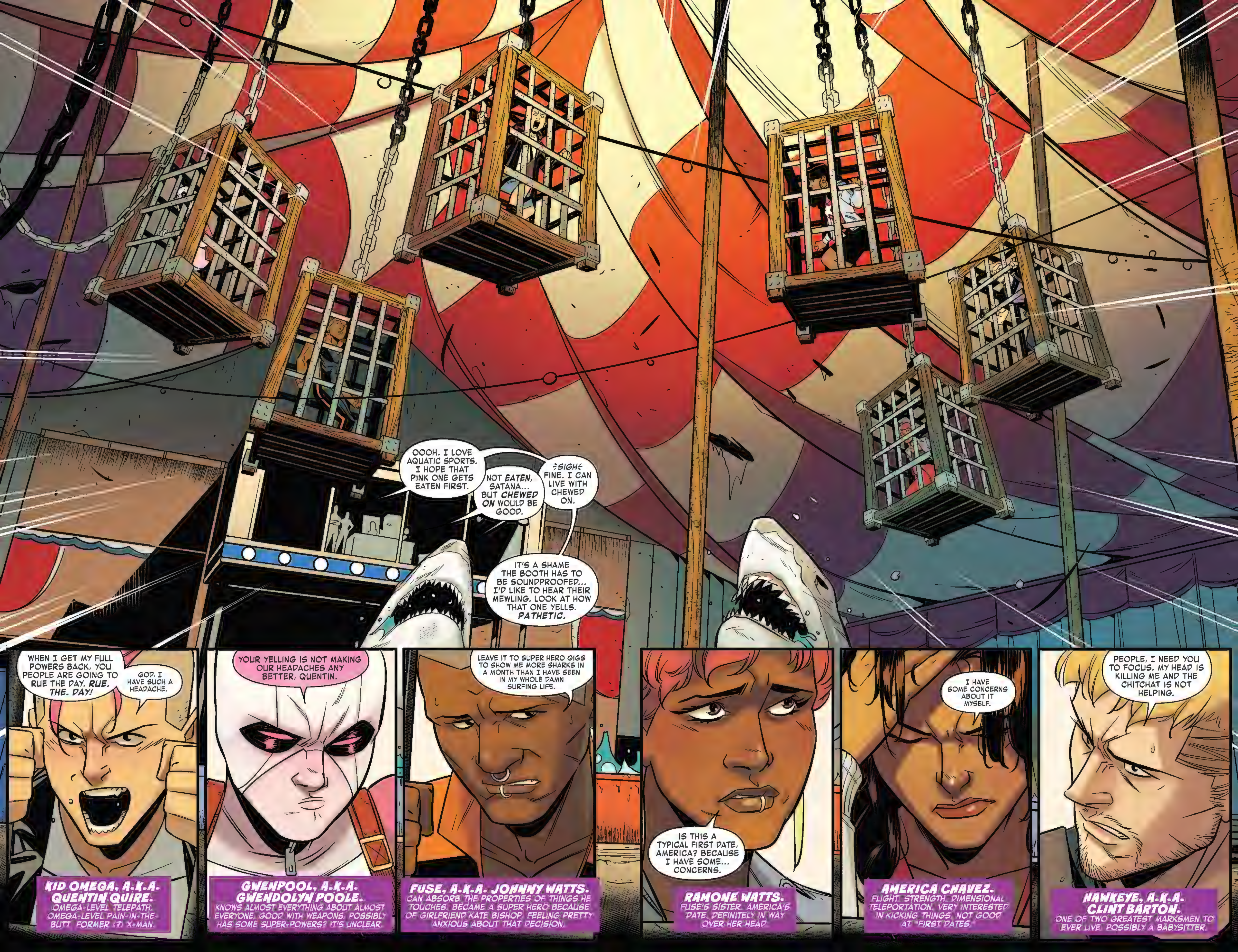

C'MON... SHOW ME...ALL I NEED IS JUST ONE LITTLE...
PING
PING
PING
PING
BINGO
GOT YOU.
FWIP
OH GOD.
SCATTER! THEY'RE EXPLOSIV--

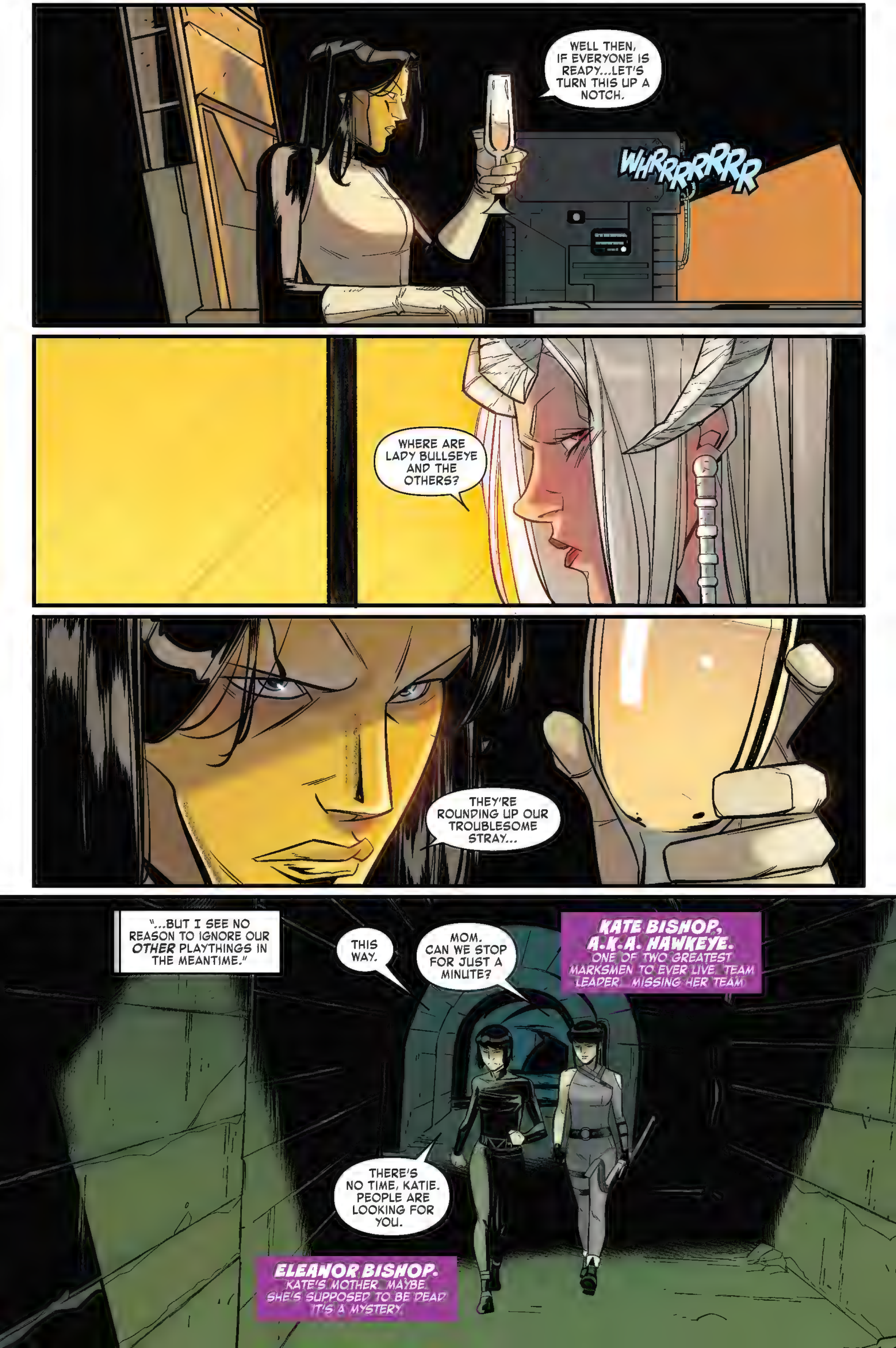

BOOM
UGGGGHHH. EVERYTHING IS HURTY.
GONNA BE A "THREE BAGS OF FROZEN PEAS" KIND OF NIGHT, I GUESS.
GUYS... YOU OKAY? YOU HERE?
KATIE.

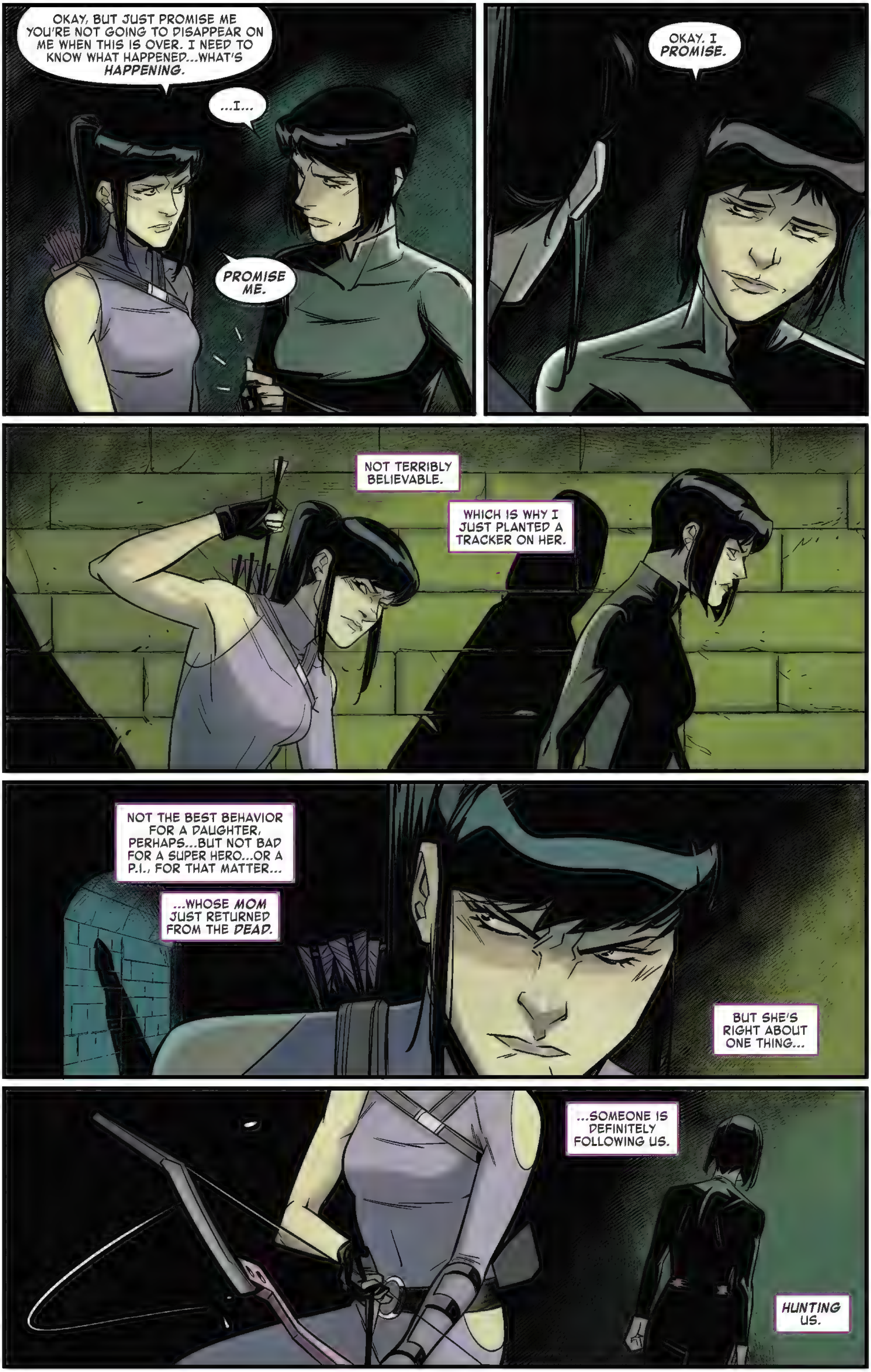

...MOM?
TAKE MY HAND, HONEY.
SO THIS IS MY MOM...WHO HAS BEEN DEAD SINCE I WAS ABOUT 14.
PROBABLY. MAYBE IT'S NOT MY MOM.
MAYBE IT'S A TRICK.
BECAUSE MY WORLD IS FULL OF TRICKS. AND THE TRICKS THAT HURT THE MOST ARE THE ONES MOST LIKELY TO BE PLAYED.
WHOEVER IS BEHIND THIS IS GONNA BE HURTING REAL BAD WHEN I FIND THEM...UNLESS...
...IS THIS *REAL?*

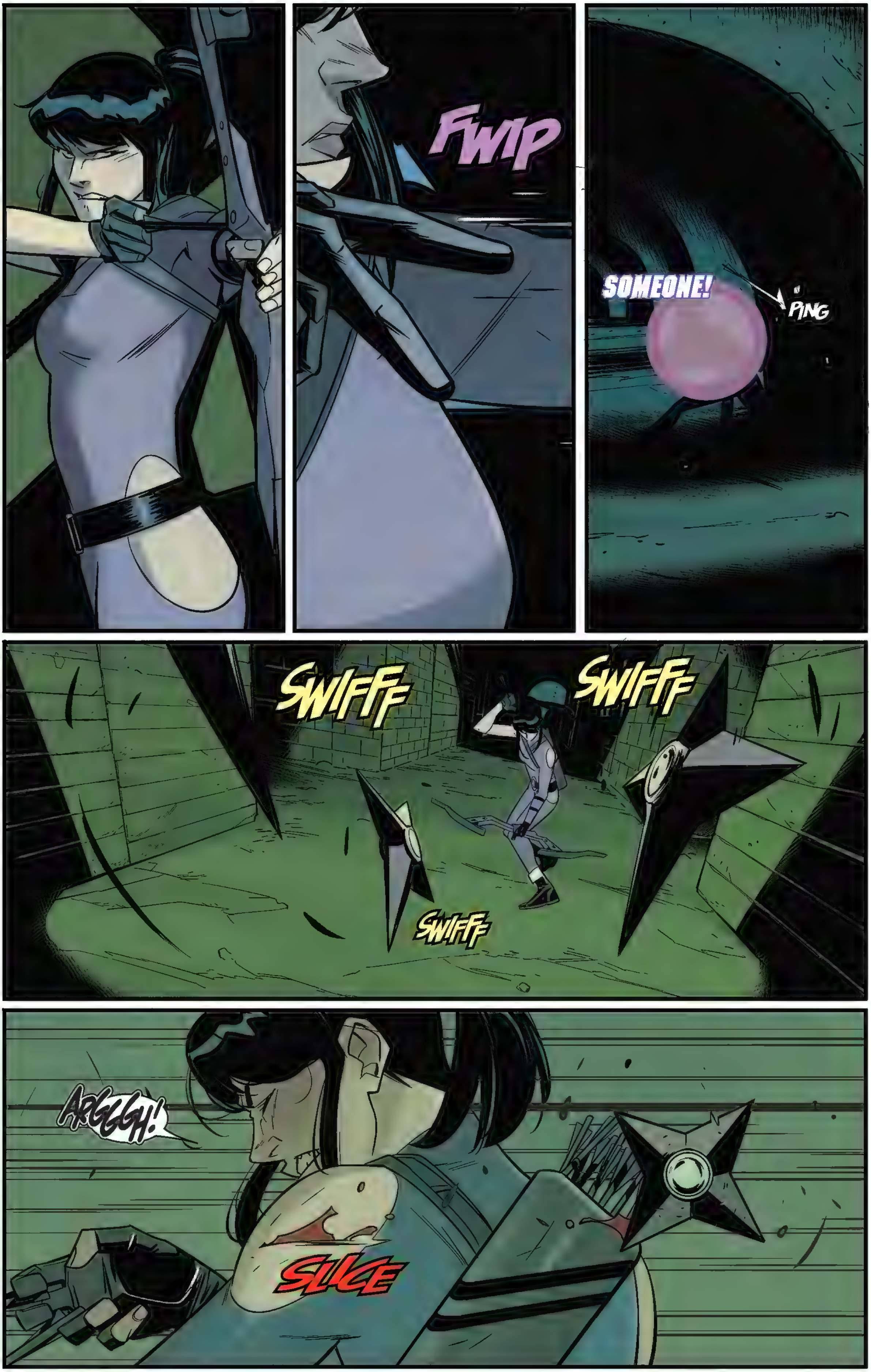
WEST COAST AVENGERS #6

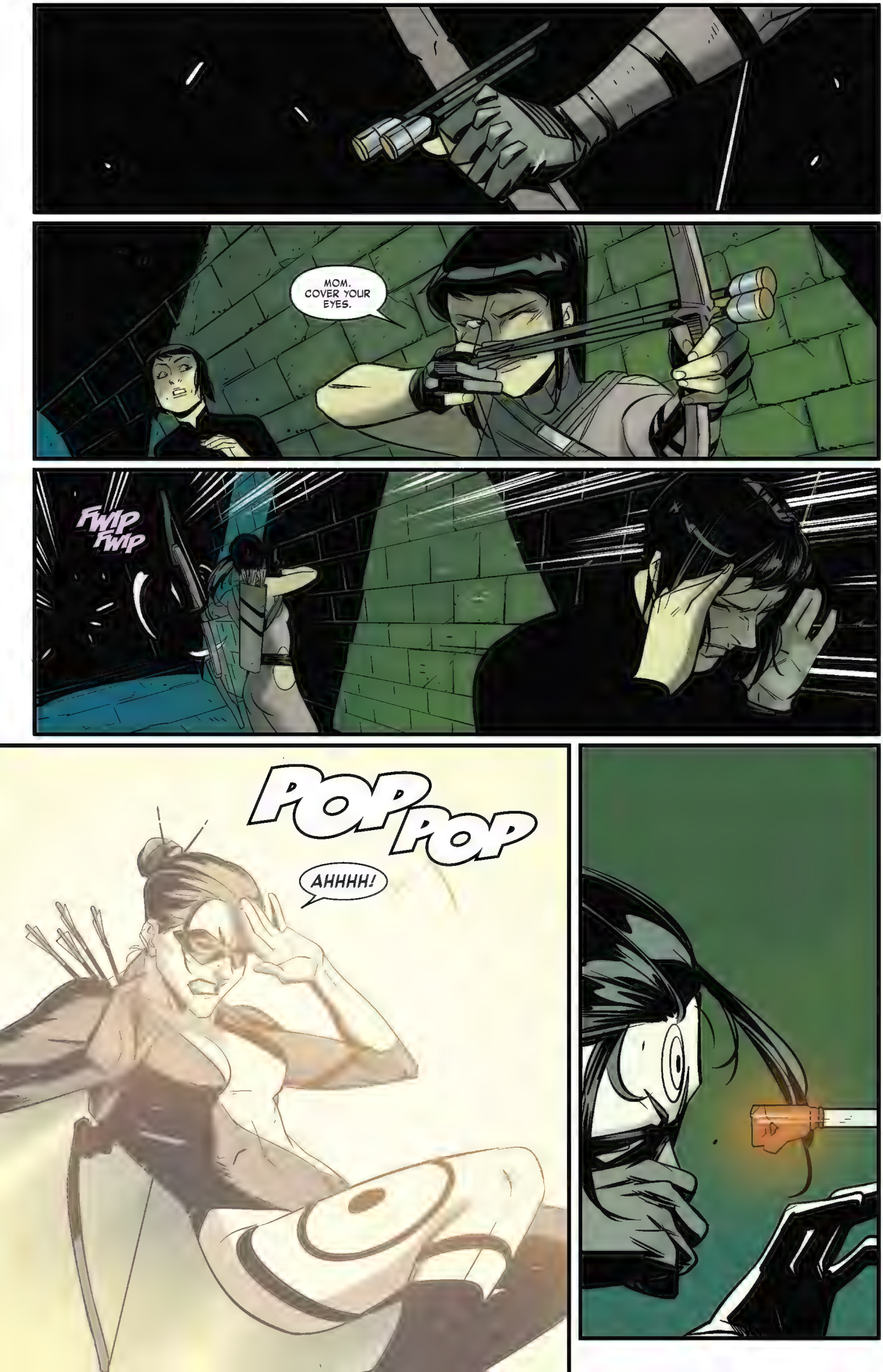

SOMEWHERE NORTH OF LOS ANGELES.
SADDEST OLD AMUSEMENT PARK EVER.
AND THAT IS PHASE ONE COMPLETE.
SATANA HELLSTROM. CURRENT STATUS: SUPER VILLAIN.
M.O.D.O.K., A.K.A. MENTAL ORGANISM DESIGNED ONLY FOR KILLING. CURRENT STATUS: SUPER VILLAIN.
CLINK
WELL DONE, ALL OF YOU.
THE EEL, A.K.A. EDWARD LAVELL. CURRENT STATUS: SUPER VILLAIN.
MADAME MASQUE, A.K.A. GIULIETTA NEFARIA, A.K.A. WHITNEY FROST. CURRENT STATUS: SUPER VILLAIN.
AND SO...LET THE AUDITIONS BEGIN.
REMEMBER, YOU GET POINTS FOR CREATIVITY AND WILL LOSE POINTS FOR KILLING THEM.
WE ARE HERE NOT TO KILL THE WEST COAST AVENGERS--THAT WOULD ONLY BRING MORE HEROES RIGHT TO OUR DOORSTEP.
NO, WE'RE HERE TO RECLAIM OUR CITY SO THAT WE CAN GET BACK TO BUSINESS AS USUAL.
WE'RE HERE TO BREAK THEM, TO DIVIDE THEM, TO CRUSH THEIR SPIRITS. THERE'S NOTHING SADDER THAN A BROKEN SUPER HERO.
AND BY SADDER I MEAN MORE DELIGHTFUL.

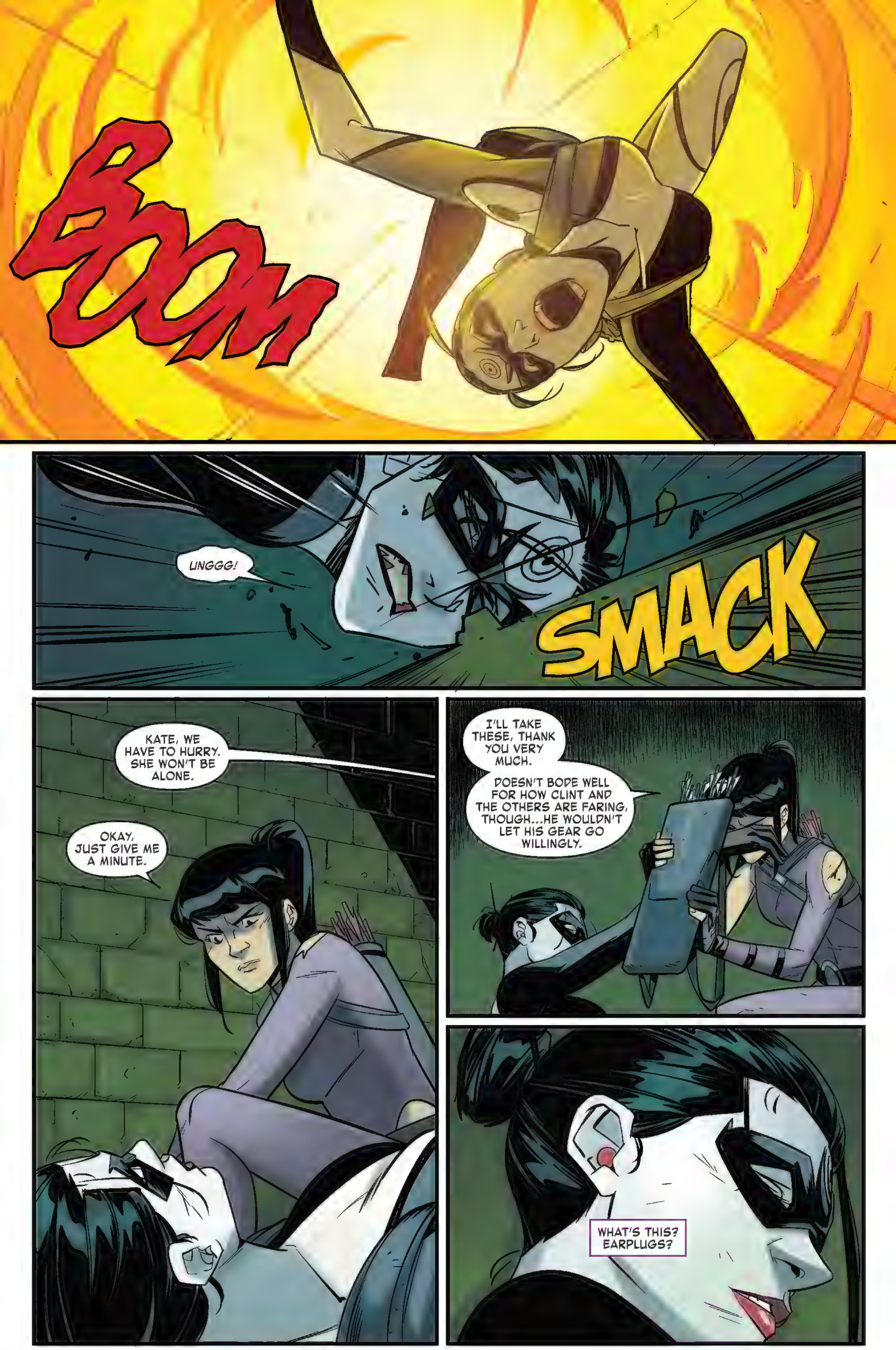

OOOH. I LOVE AQUATIC SPORTS. I HOPE THAT PINK ONE GETS EATEN FIRST.
NOT EATEN, SATANA... BUT CHEWED ON WOULD BE GOOD.
SIGH FINE. I CAN LIVE WITH CHEWED ON.
IT'S A SHAME THE BOOTH HAS TO BE SOUNDPROOFED... I'D LIKE TO HEAR THEIR MEWLING. LOOK AT HOW THAT ONE YELLS. PATHETIC.
WHEN I GET MY FULL POWERS BACK, YOU PEOPLE ARE GOING TO RUE THE DAY. RUE. THE. DAY!
GOD, I HAVE SUCH A HEADACHE.
KID OMEGA, A.K.A. QUENTIN QUIRE. OMEGA-LEVEL TELEPATH. OMEGA-LEVEL PAIN-IN-THE-BUTT. FORMER (?) X-MAN.
YOUR YELLING IS NOT MAKING OUR HEADACHES ANY BETTER, QUENTIN.
GWENPOOL, A.K.A. GWENDOLYN POOLE. KNOWS ALMOST EVERYTHING ABOUT ALMOST EVERYONE. GOOD WITH WEAPONS. POSSIBLY HAS SOME SUPER-POWERS? IT'S UNCLEAR.
LEAVE IT TO SUPER HERO GIGS TO SHOW ME MORE SHARKS IN A MONTH THAN I HAVE SEEN IN MY WHOLE DAMN SURFING LIFE.
FUSE, A.K.A. JOHNNY WATTS. CAN ABSORB THE PROPERTIES OF THINGS HE TOUCHES. BECAME A SUPER HERO BECAUSE OF GIRLFRIEND KATE BISHOP. FEELING PRETTY ANXIOUS ABOUT THAT DECISION.
IS THIS A TYPICAL FIRST DATE, AMERICA? BECAUSE I HAVE SOME... CONCERNS.
RAMONE WATTS. FUSE'S SISTER. AMERICA'S DATE. DEFINITELY IN WAY OVER HER HEAD.
I HAVE SOME CONCERNS ABOUT IT MYSELF.
AMERICA CHAVEZ. FLIGHT. STRENGTH. DIMENSIONAL TELEPORTATION. VERY INTERESTED IN KICKING THINGS. NOT GOOD AT "FIRST DATES."
PEOPLE, I NEED YOU TO FOCUS. MY HEAD IS KILLING ME AND THE CHITCHAT IS NOT HELPING.
HAWKEYE, A.K.A. CLINT BARTON. ONE OF TWO GREATEST MARKSMEN TO EVER LIVE. POSSIBLY A BABYSITTER.

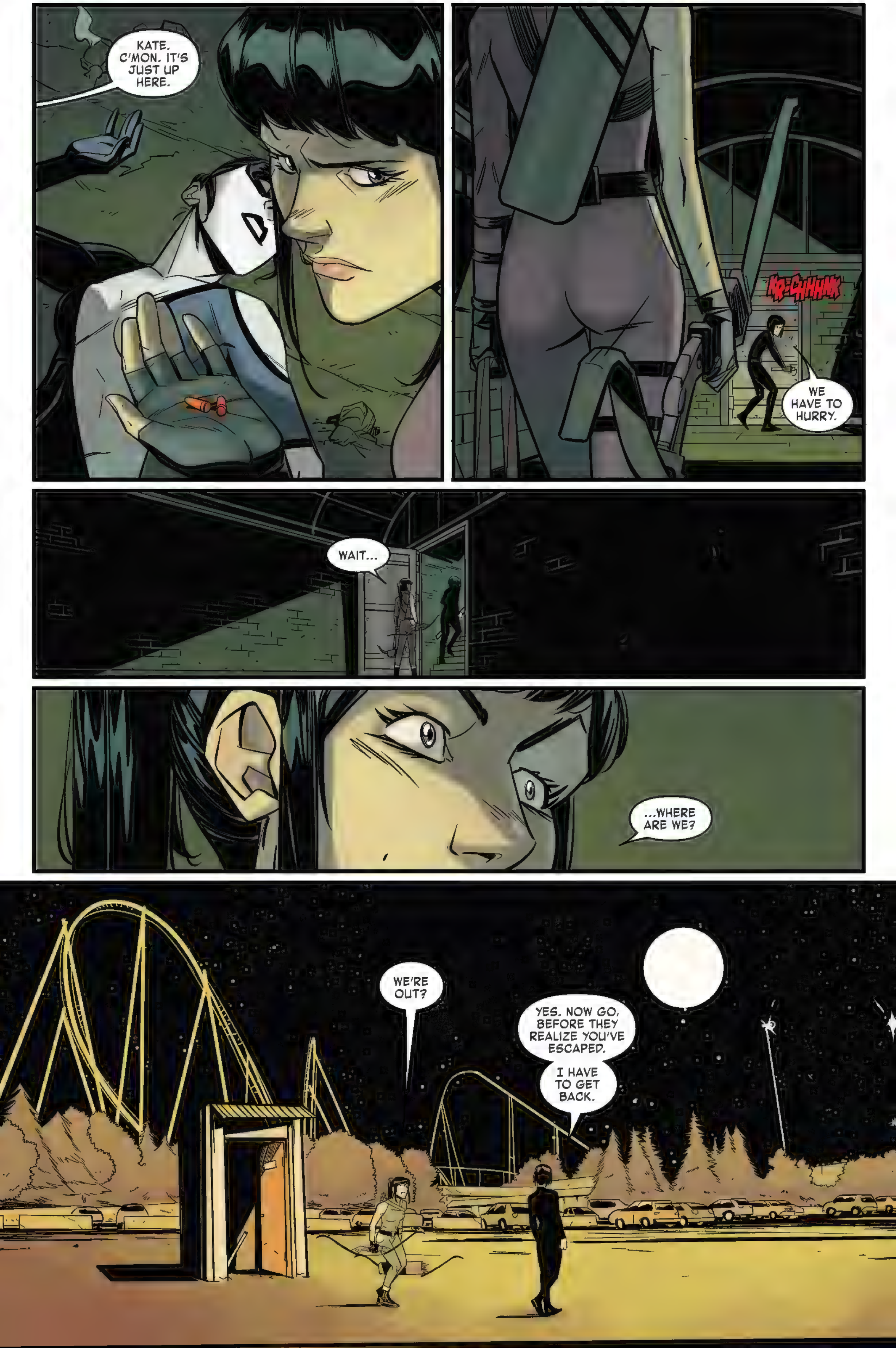

WELL THEN, IF EVERYONE IS READY...LET'S TURN THIS UP A NOTCH.
WHRRRRRRR
WHERE ARE LADY BULLSEYE AND THE OTHERS?
THEY'RE ROUNDING UP OUR TROUBLESOME STRAY...
"...BUT I SEE NO REASON TO IGNORE OUR *OTHER* PLAYTHINGS IN THE MEANTIME."
THIS WAY.
MOM. CAN WE STOP FOR JUST A MINUTE?
KATE BISHOP, A.K.A. HAWKEYE. ONE OF TWO GREATEST MARKSMEN TO EVER LIVE. TEAM LEADER. MISSING HER TEAM.
THERE'S NO TIME, KATIE. PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR YOU.
ELEANOR BISHOP. KATE'S MOTHER. MAYBE. SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD. IT'S A MYSTERY.

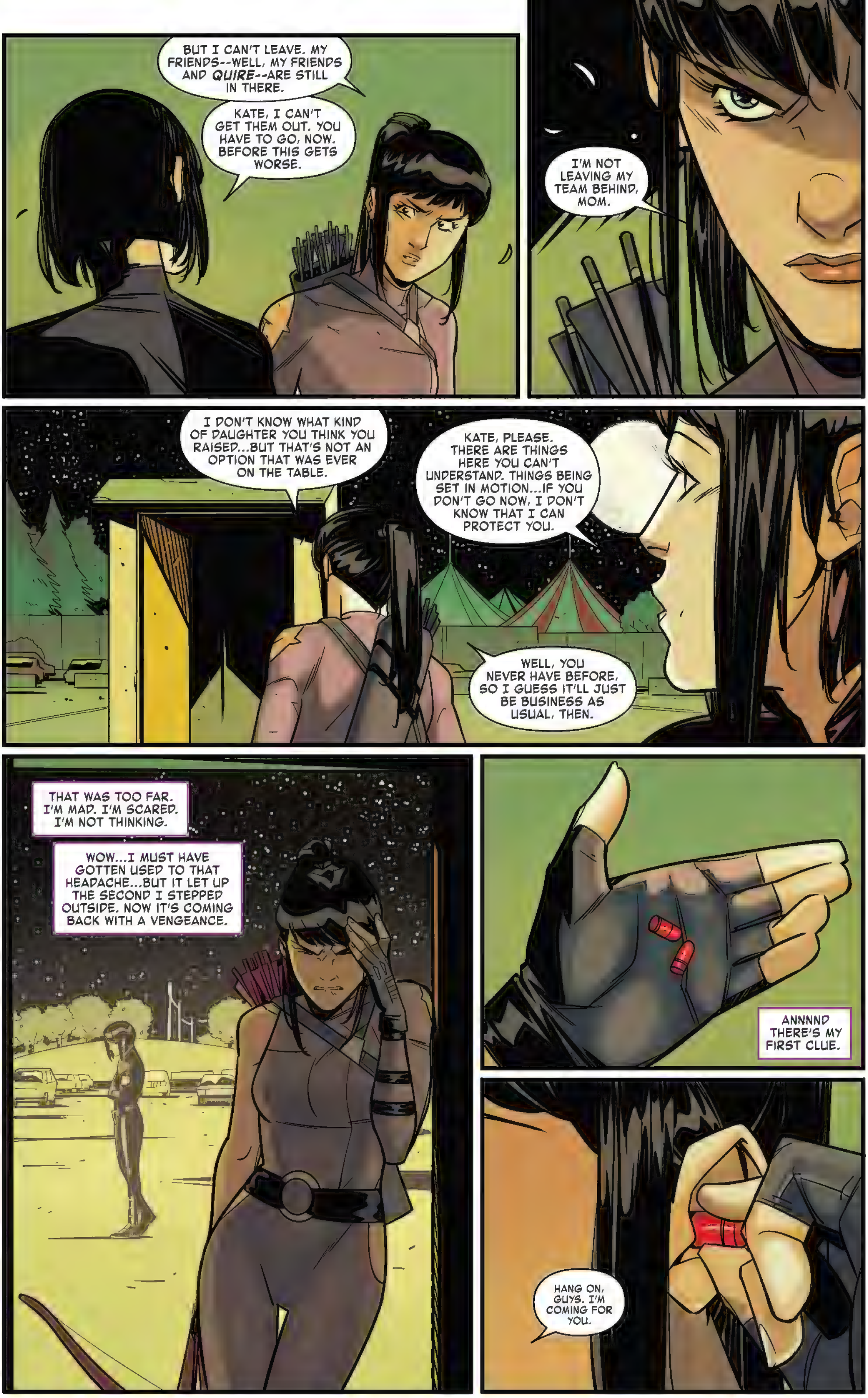

OKAY, BUT JUST PROMISE ME YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DISAPPEAR ON ME WHEN THIS IS OVER. I NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED...WHAT'S *HAPPENING.*
...I...
PROMISE ME.
OKAY. I *PROMISE.*
NOT TERRIBLY BELIEVABLE.
WHICH IS WHY I JUST PLANTED A TRACKER ON HER.
NOT THE BEST BEHAVIOR FOR A DAUGHTER, PERHAPS...BUT NOT BAD FOR A SUPER HERO...OR A P.I., FOR THAT MATTER...
...WHOSE *MOM* JUST RETURNED FROM THE *DEAD.*
BUT SHE'S RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING...
...SOMEONE IS DEFINITELY FOLLOWING US.
HUNTING US.

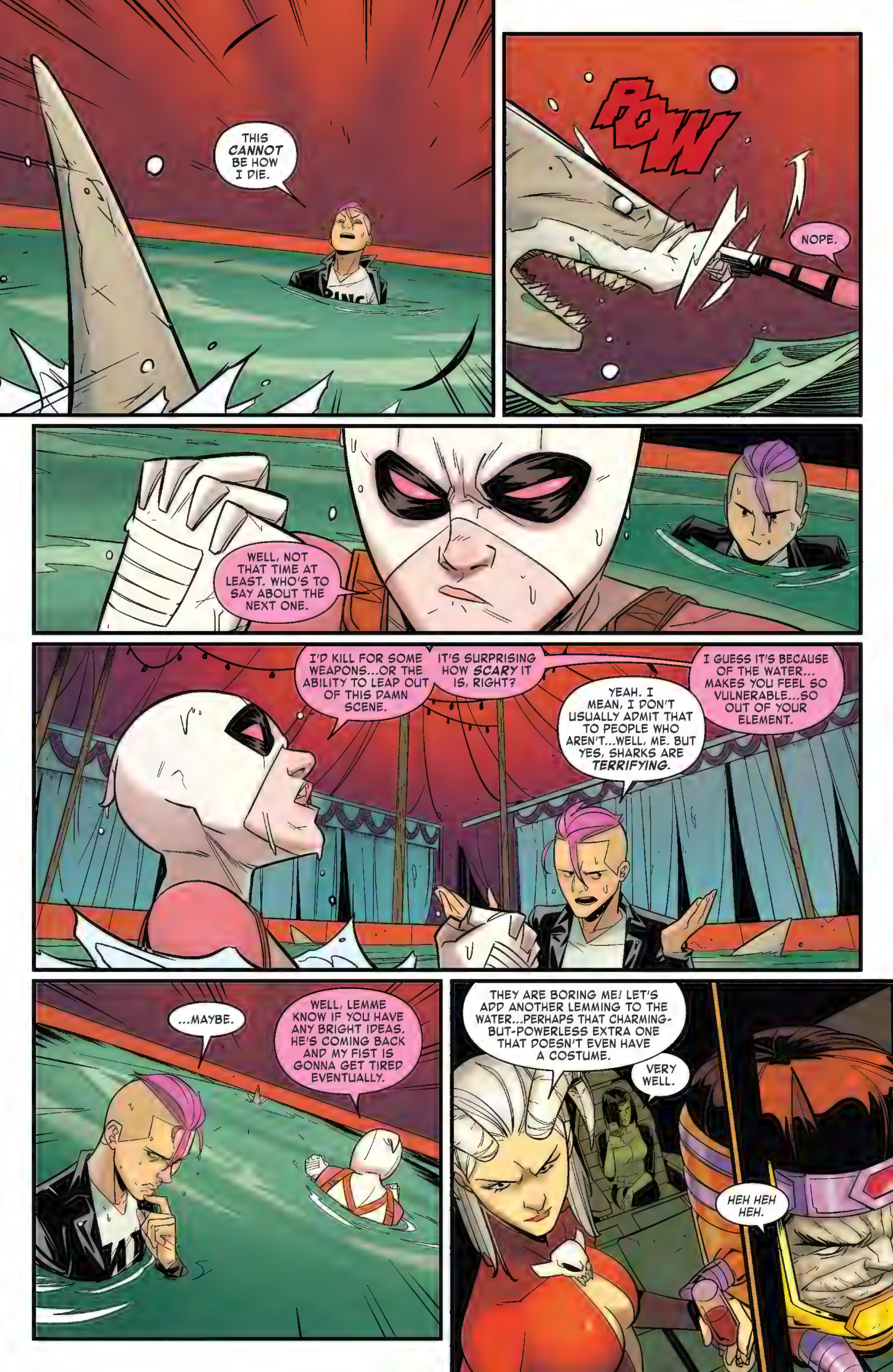

FWIP
SOMEONE!
PING
SWIFFF
SWIFFF
SWIFFF
ARGGGH!
SLICE

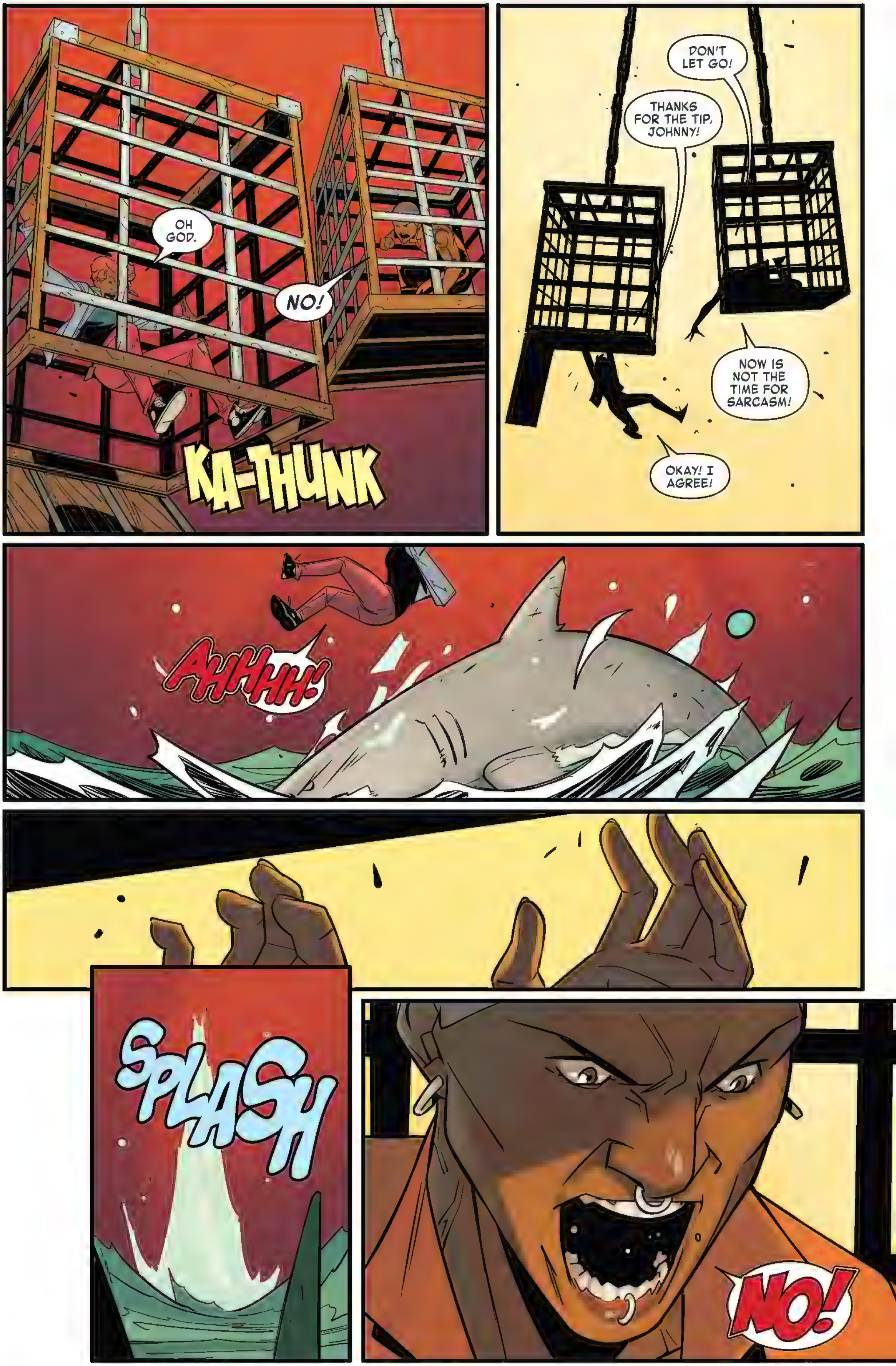

MOM. COVER YOUR EYES.
FWIP FWIP
POP POP
AHHHH!

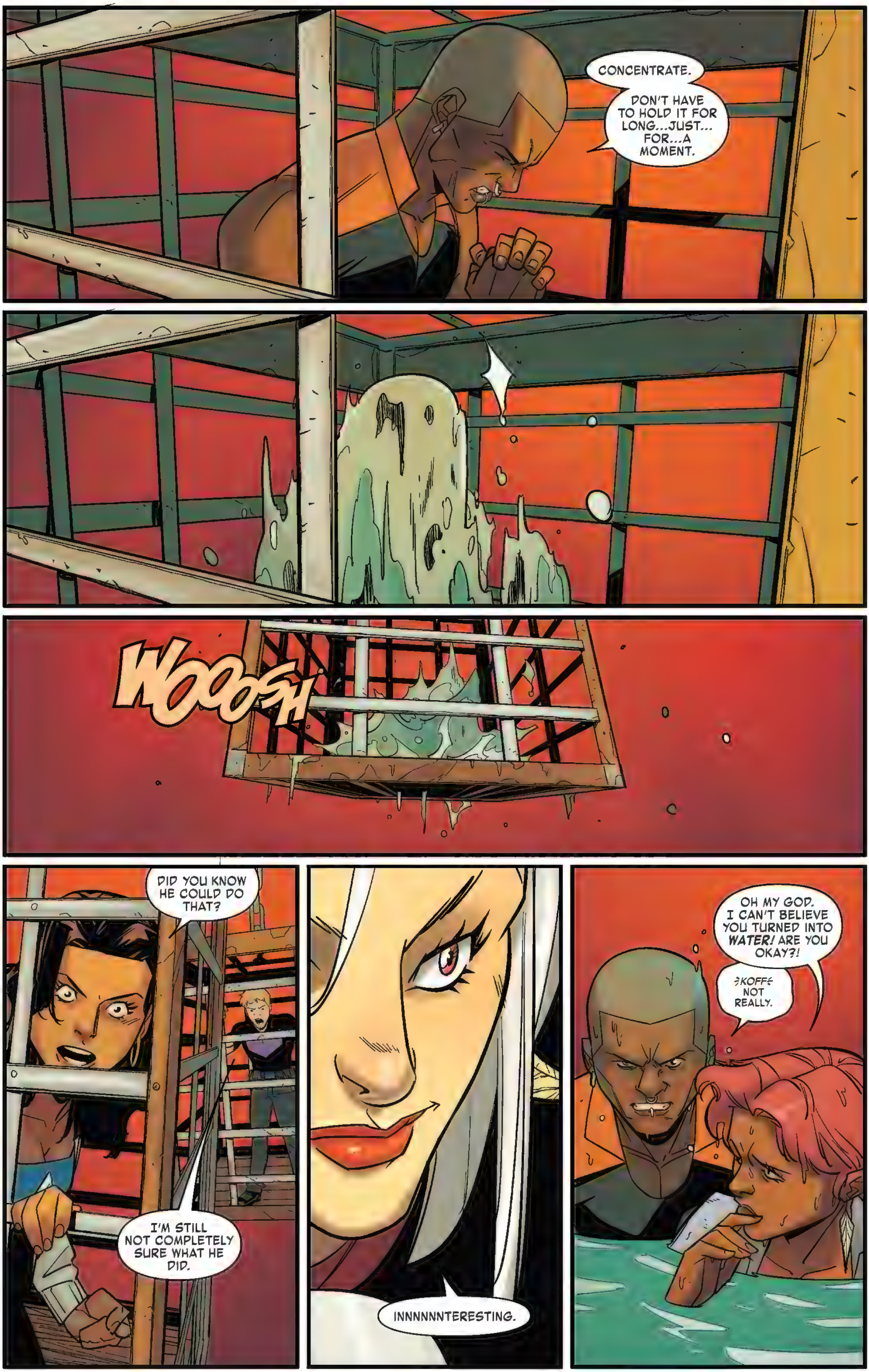

BOOM
UNGGG!
SMACK
KATE, WE HAVE TO HURRY. SHE WON'T BE ALONE.
OKAY, JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE.
I'LL TAKE THESE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
DOESN'T BODE WELL FOR HOW CLINT AND THE OTHERS ARE FARING, THOUGH...HE WOULDN'T LET HIS GEAR GO WILLINGLY.
WHAT'S THIS? EARPLUGS?

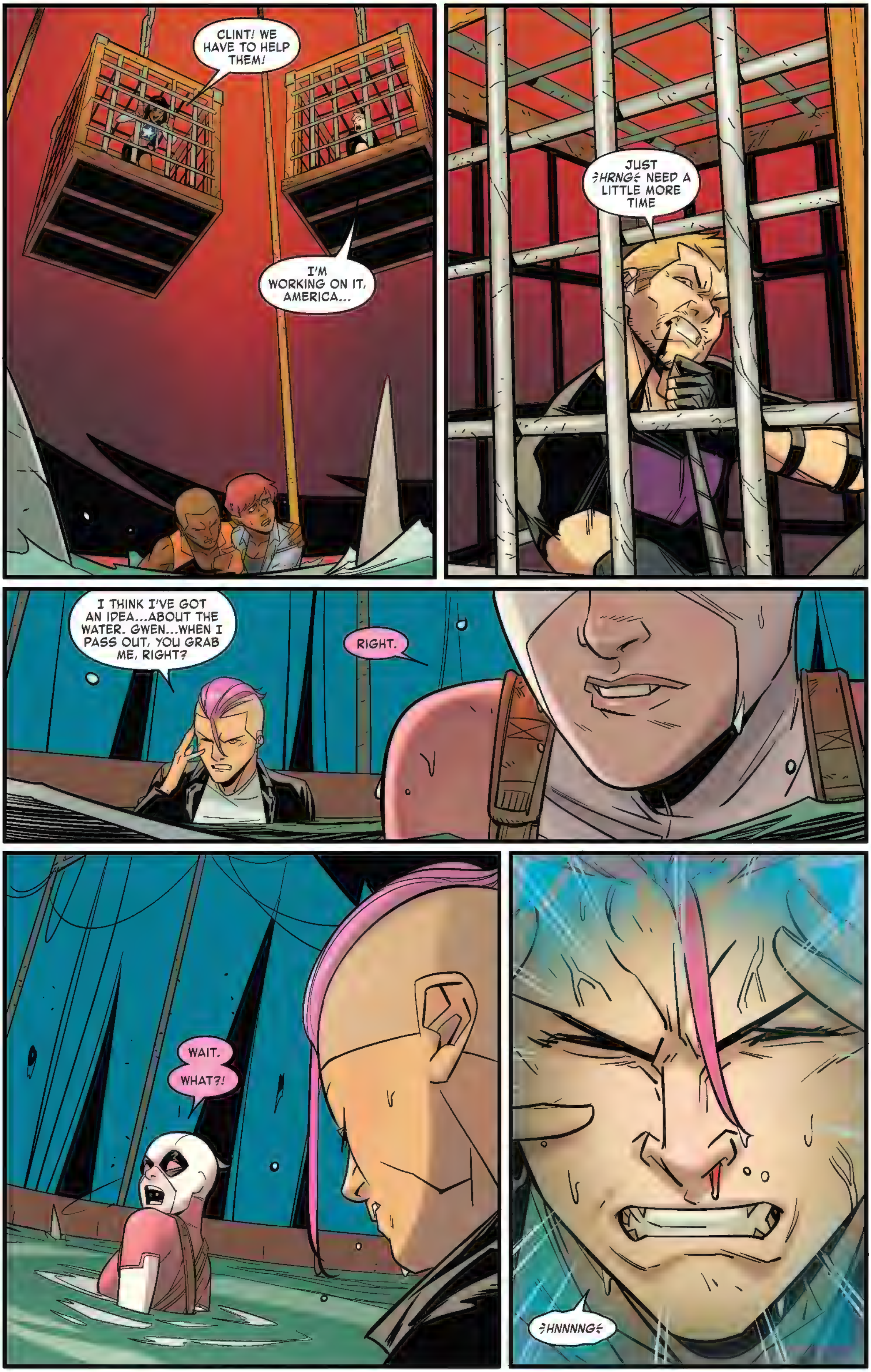

KATE. C'MON. IT'S JUST UP HERE.
KR-CHHHNK
WE HAVE TO HURRY.
WAIT...
...WHERE ARE WE?
WE'RE OUT?
YES. NOW GO, BEFORE THEY REALIZE YOU'VE ESCAPED.
I HAVE TO GET BACK.

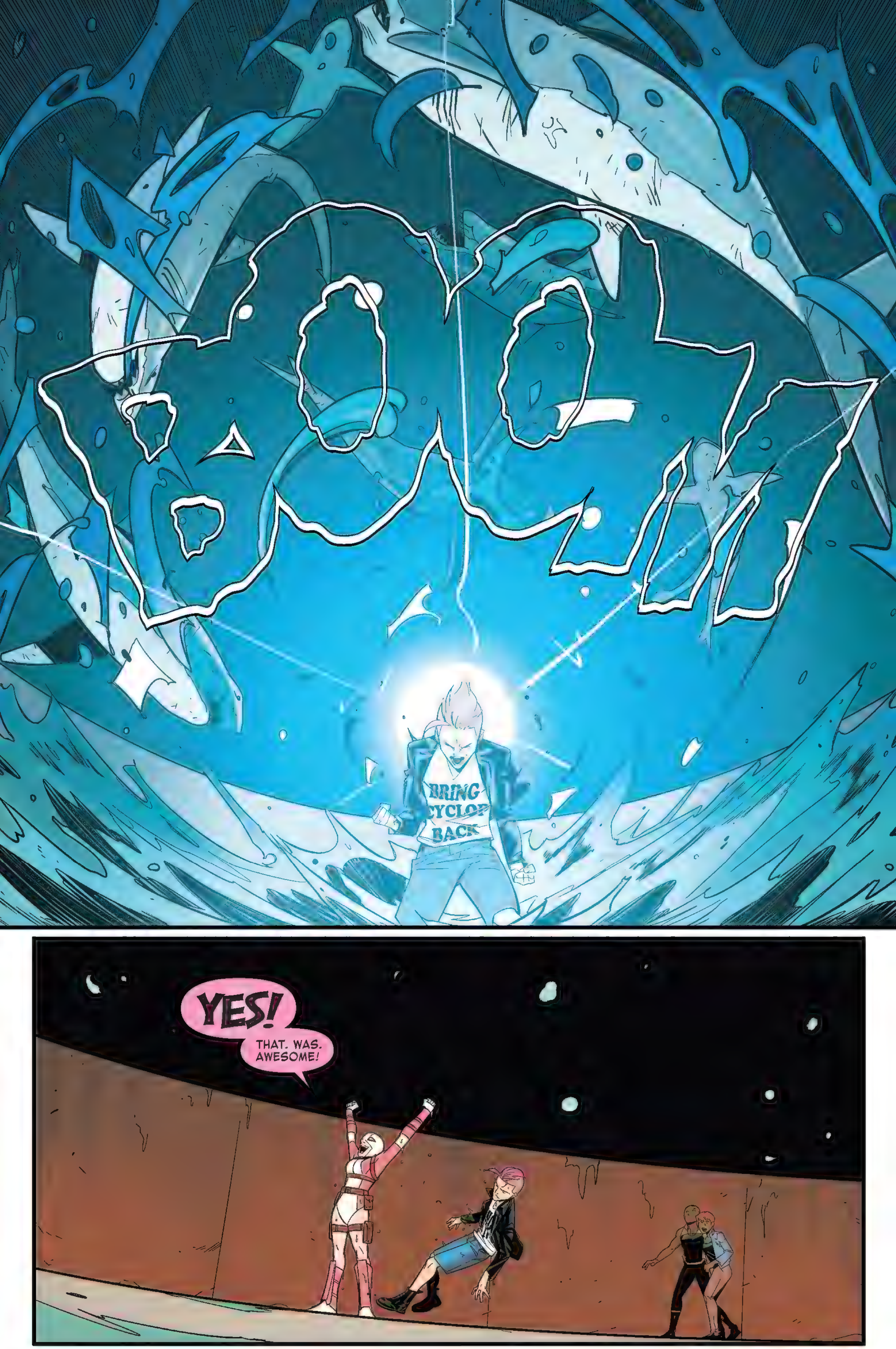

BUT I CAN'T LEAVE. MY FRIENDS--WELL, MY FRIENDS AND *QUIRE*--ARE STILL IN THERE.
KATE, I CAN'T GET THEM OUT. YOU HAVE TO GO, NOW. BEFORE THIS GETS WORSE.
I'M NOT LEAVING MY TEAM BEHIND, MOM.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF DAUGHTER YOU THINK YOU RAISED...BUT THAT'S NOT AN OPTION THAT WAS EVER ON THE TABLE.
KATE, PLEASE. THERE ARE THINGS HERE YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND. THINGS BEING SET IN MOTION...IF YOU DON'T GO NOW, I DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN PROTECT YOU.
WELL, YOU NEVER HAVE BEFORE, SO I GUESS IT'LL JUST BE BUSINESS AS USUAL, THEN.
THAT WAS TOO FAR. I'M MAD. I'M SCARED. I'M NOT THINKING.
WOW...I MUST HAVE GOTTEN USED TO THAT HEADACHE...BUT IT LET UP THE SECOND I STEPPED OUTSIDE. NOW IT'S COMING BACK WITH A VENGEANCE.
ANNNND THERE'S MY FIRST CLUE.
HANG ON, GUYS. I'M COMING FOR YOU.

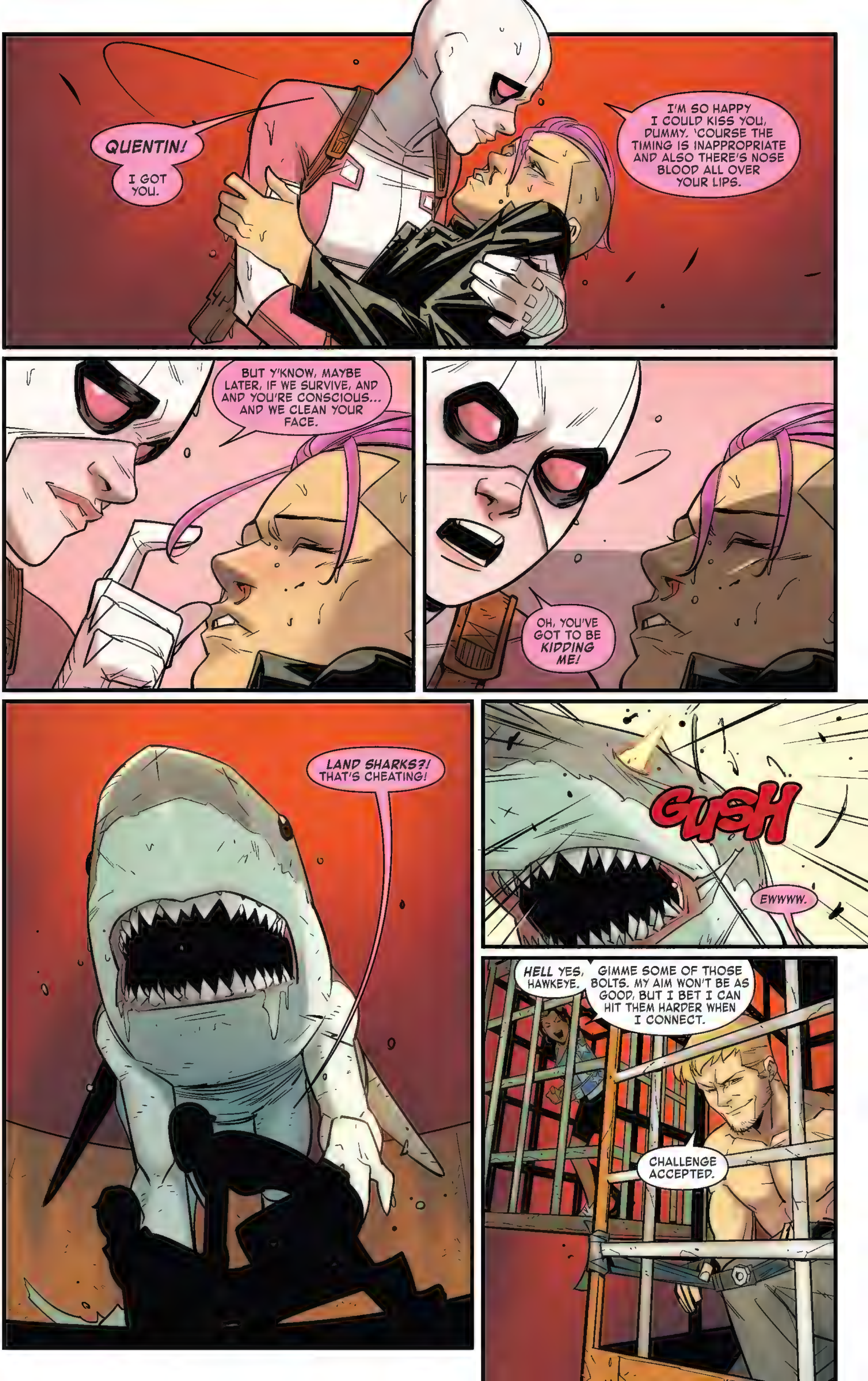

THIS *CANNOT* BE HOW I DIE.
POW
NOPE.
WELL, NOT THAT TIME AT LEAST. WHO'S TO SAY ABOUT THE NEXT ONE.
I'D KILL FOR SOME WEAPONS...OR THE ABILITY TO LEAP OUT OF THIS DAMN SCENE.
IT'S SURPRISING HOW *SCARY* IT IS, RIGHT?
I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE OF THE WATER... MAKES YOU FEEL SO VULNERABLE...SO OUT OF YOUR ELEMENT.
YEAH. I MEAN, I DON'T USUALLY ADMIT THAT TO PEOPLE WHO AREN'T...WELL, ME. BUT YES, SHARKS ARE *TERRIFYING*.
...MAYBE.
WELL, LEMME KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY BRIGHT IDEAS. HE'S COMING BACK AND MY FIST IS GONNA GET TIRED EVENTUALLY.
THEY ARE BORING ME! LET'S ADD ANOTHER LEMMING TO THE WATER...PERHAPS THAT CHARMING-BUT-POWERLESS EXTRA ONE THAT DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A COSTUME.
VERY WELL.
HEH HEH HEH.

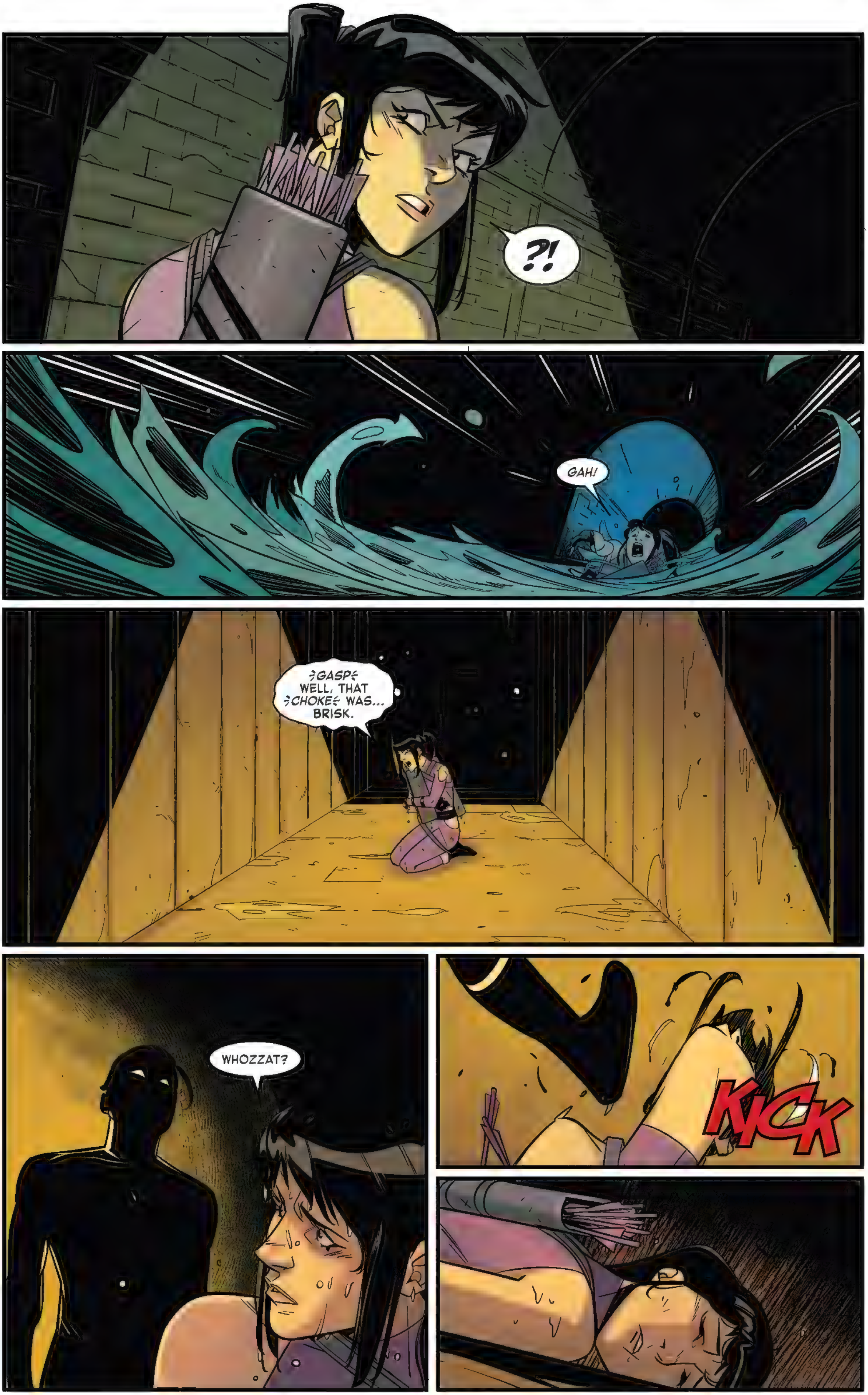

OH GOD.
NO!
KA-THUNK
DON'T LET GO!
THANKS FOR THE TIP, JOHNNY!
NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR SARCASM!
OKAY! I AGREE!
AHHHH!
SPLASH
NO!

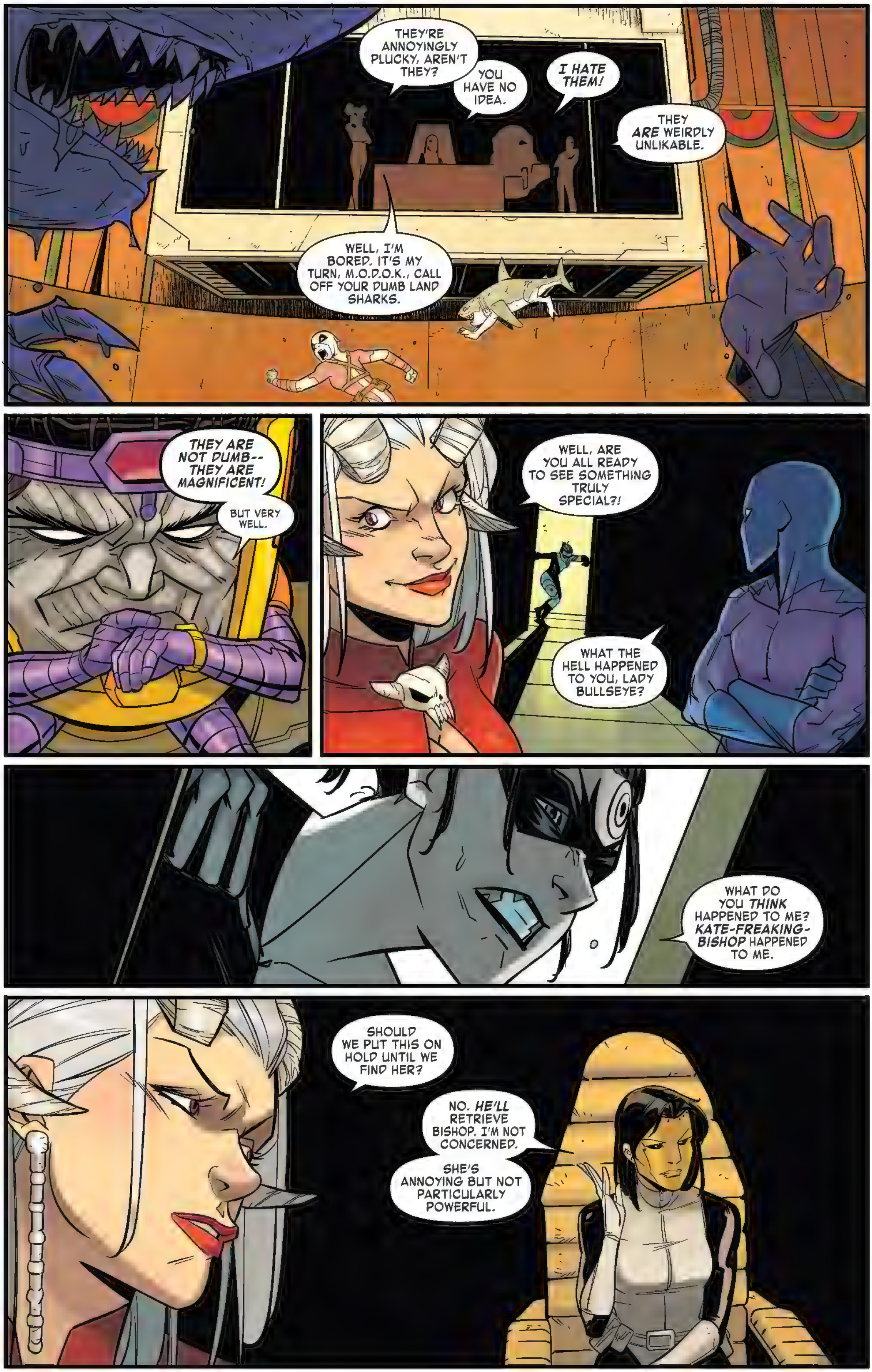

CONCENTRATE.
DON'T HAVE TO HOLD IT FOR LONG...JUST... FOR...A MOMENT.
WOOOSH
DID YOU KNOW HE COULD DO THAT?
I'M STILL NOT COMPLETELY SURE WHAT HE DID.
INNNNNNTERESTING.
OH MY GOD. I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TURNED INTO *WATER!* ARE YOU OKAY?!
KOFF NOT REALLY.

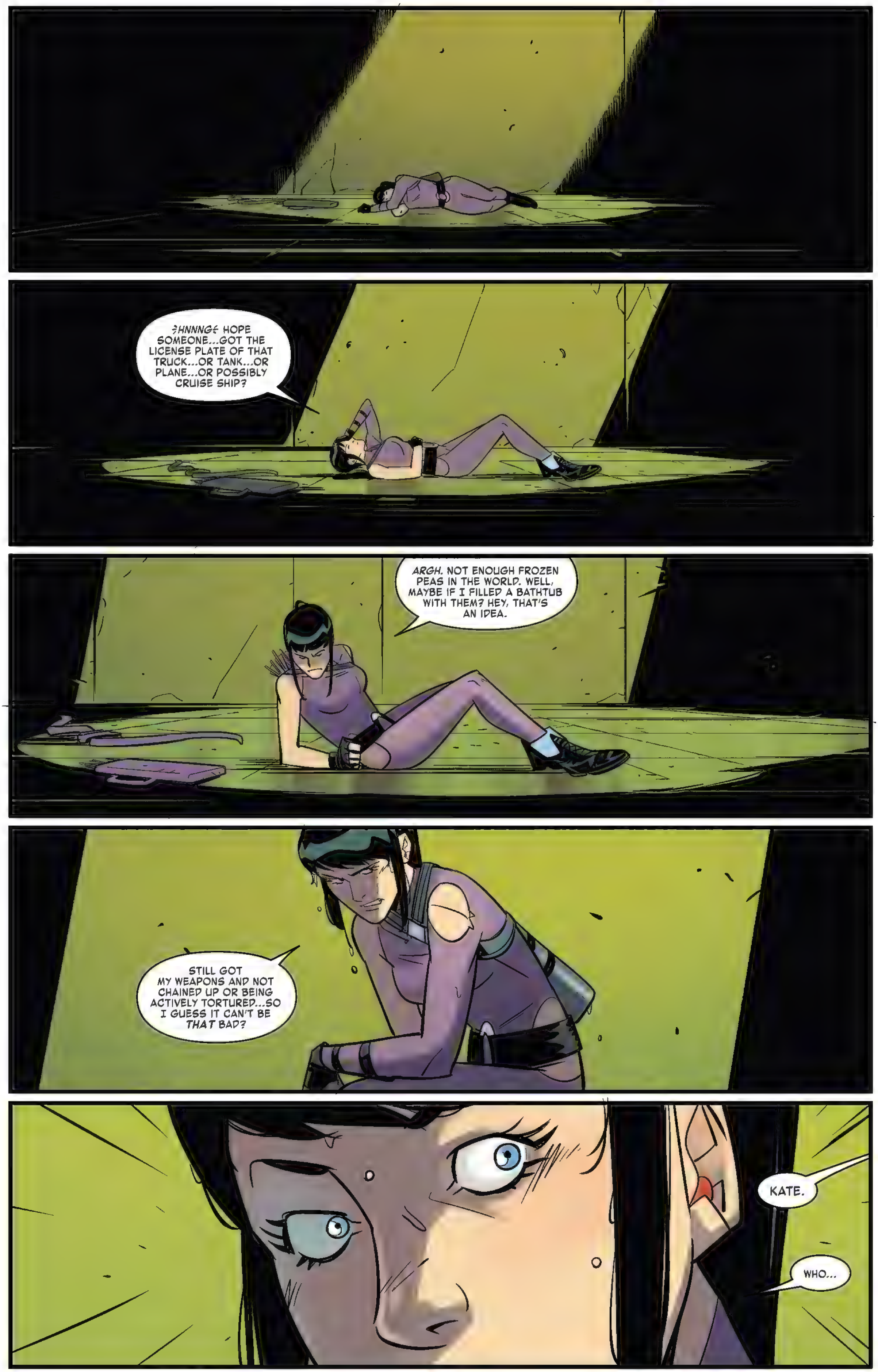

CLINT! WE HAVE TO HELP THEM!
I'M WORKING ON IT, AMERICA...
JUST ⸗HRNG⸗ NEED A LITTLE MORE TIME
I THINK I'VE GOT AN IDEA...ABOUT THE WATER. GWEN...WHEN I PASS OUT, YOU GRAB ME, RIGHT?
RIGHT.
WAIT.
WHAT?!
⸗HNNNNG⸗

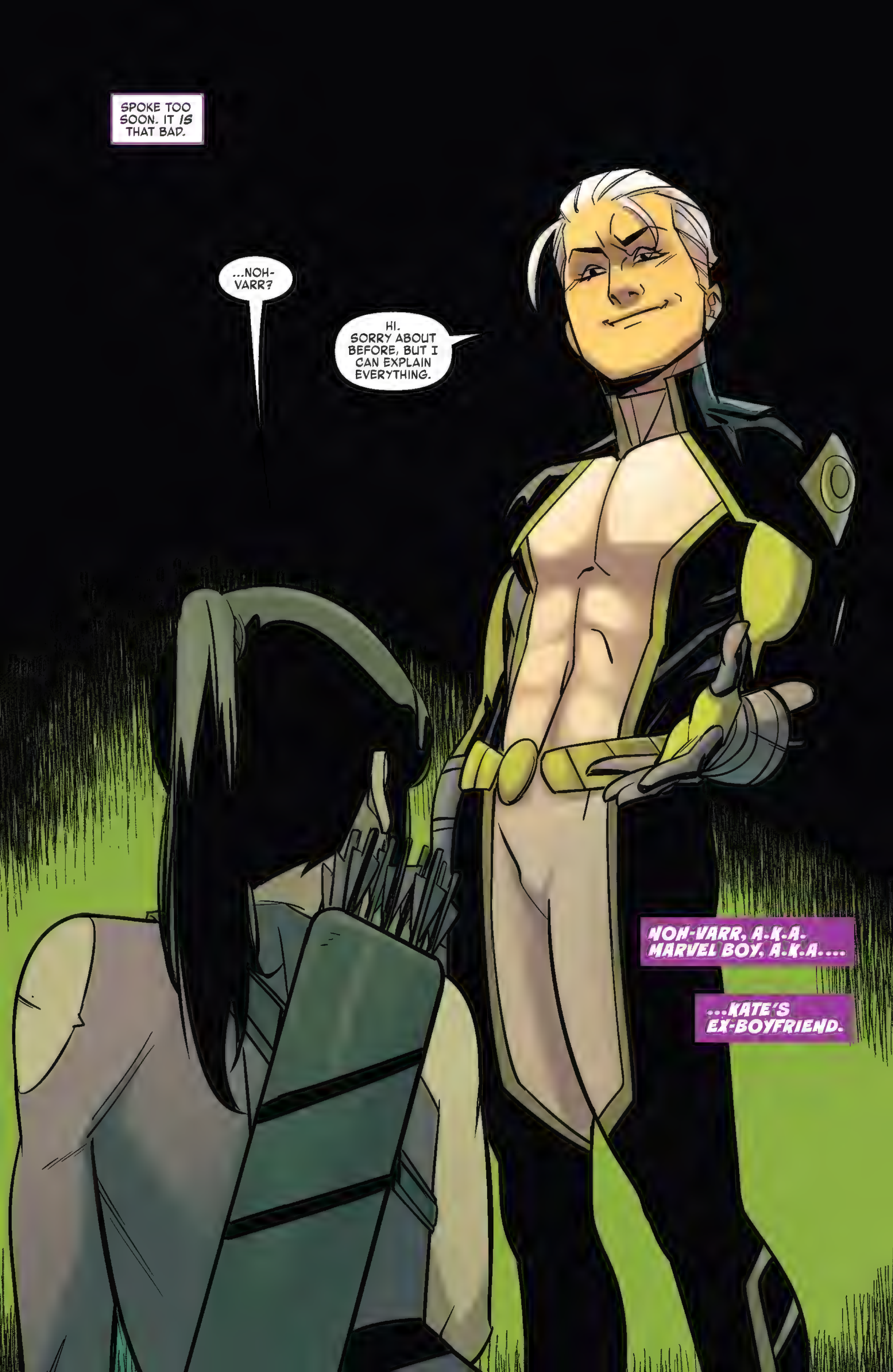

BOOM
BRING
CYCLOP
BACK
YES!
THAT. WAS. AWESOME!

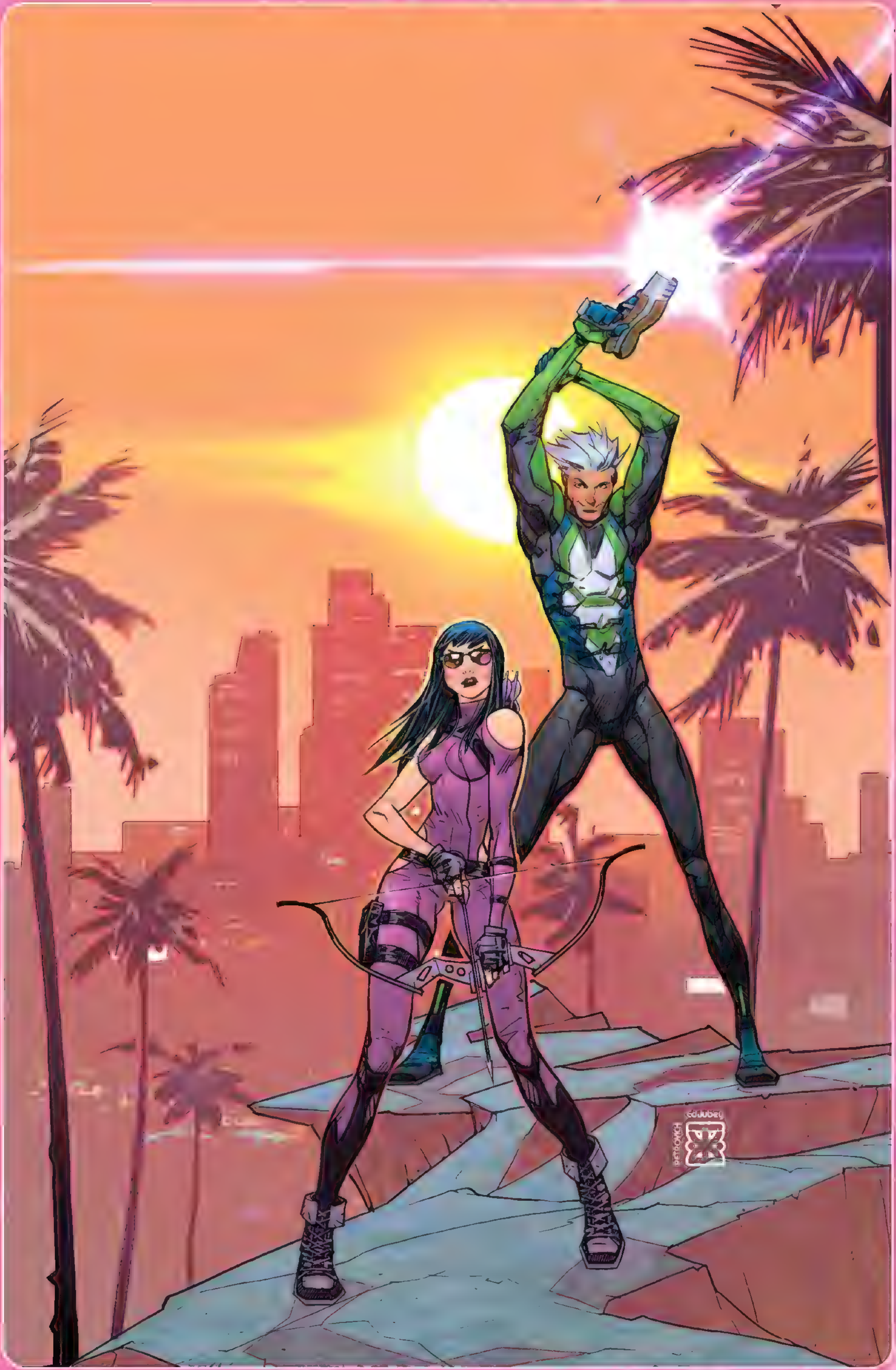

QUENTIN!
I GOT YOU.
I'M SO HAPPY I COULD KISS YOU, DUMMY. 'COURSE THE TIMING IS INAPPROPRIATE AND ALSO THERE'S NOSE BLOOD ALL OVER YOUR LIPS.
BUT Y'KNOW, MAYBE LATER, IF WE SURVIVE, AND YOU'RE CONSCIOUS... AND WE CLEAN YOUR FACE.
OH, YOU'VE GOT TO BE *KIDDING* ME!
LAND SHARKS?! THAT'S CHEATING!
GUSH
EWWWW.
HELL YES, HAWKEYE.
GIMME SOME OF THOSE BOLTS. MY AIM WON'T BE AS GOOD, BUT I BET I CAN HIT THEM HARDER WHEN I CONNECT.
CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.


?!
GAH!
⸗GASP⸗ WELL, THAT ⸗CHOKE⸗ WAS... BRISK.
WHOZZAT?
KICK

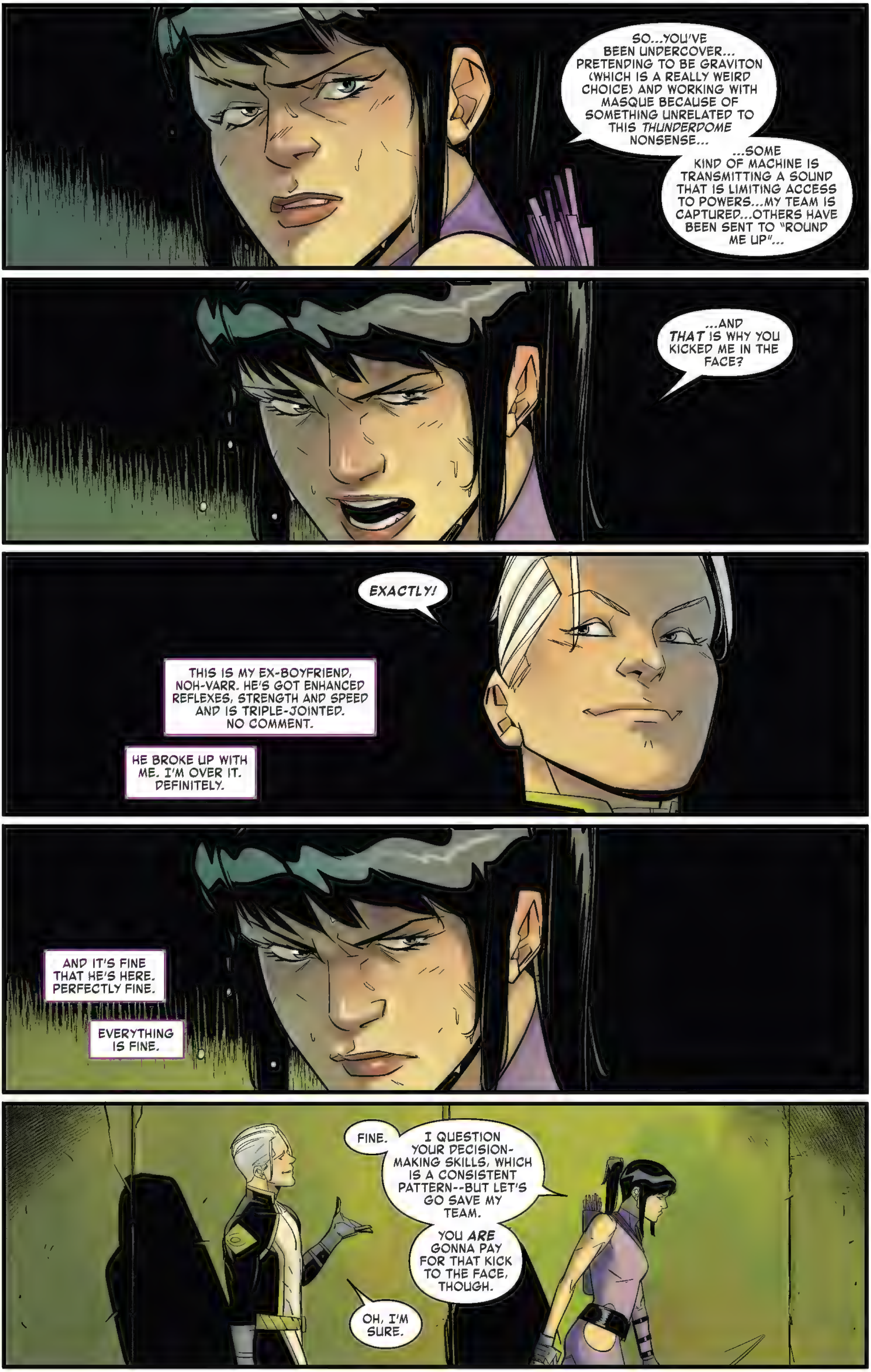

THEY'RE ANNOYINGLY PLUCKY, AREN'T THEY?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
I HATE THEM!
THEY ARE WEIRDLY UNLIKABLE.
WELL, I'M BORED. IT'S MY TURN, M.O.D.O.K., CALL OFF YOUR DUMB LAND SHARKS.
THEY ARE NOT DUMB-- THEY ARE MAGNIFICENT!
BUT VERY WELL.
WELL, ARE YOU ALL READY TO SEE SOMETHING TRULY SPECIAL?!
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO YOU, LADY BULLSEYE?
WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED TO ME? KATE-FREAKING-BISHOP HAPPENED TO ME.
SHOULD WE PUT THIS ON HOLD UNTIL WE FIND HER?
NO. HE'LL RETRIEVE BISHOP. I'M NOT CONCERNED.
SHE'S ANNOYING BUT NOT PARTICULARLY POWERFUL.

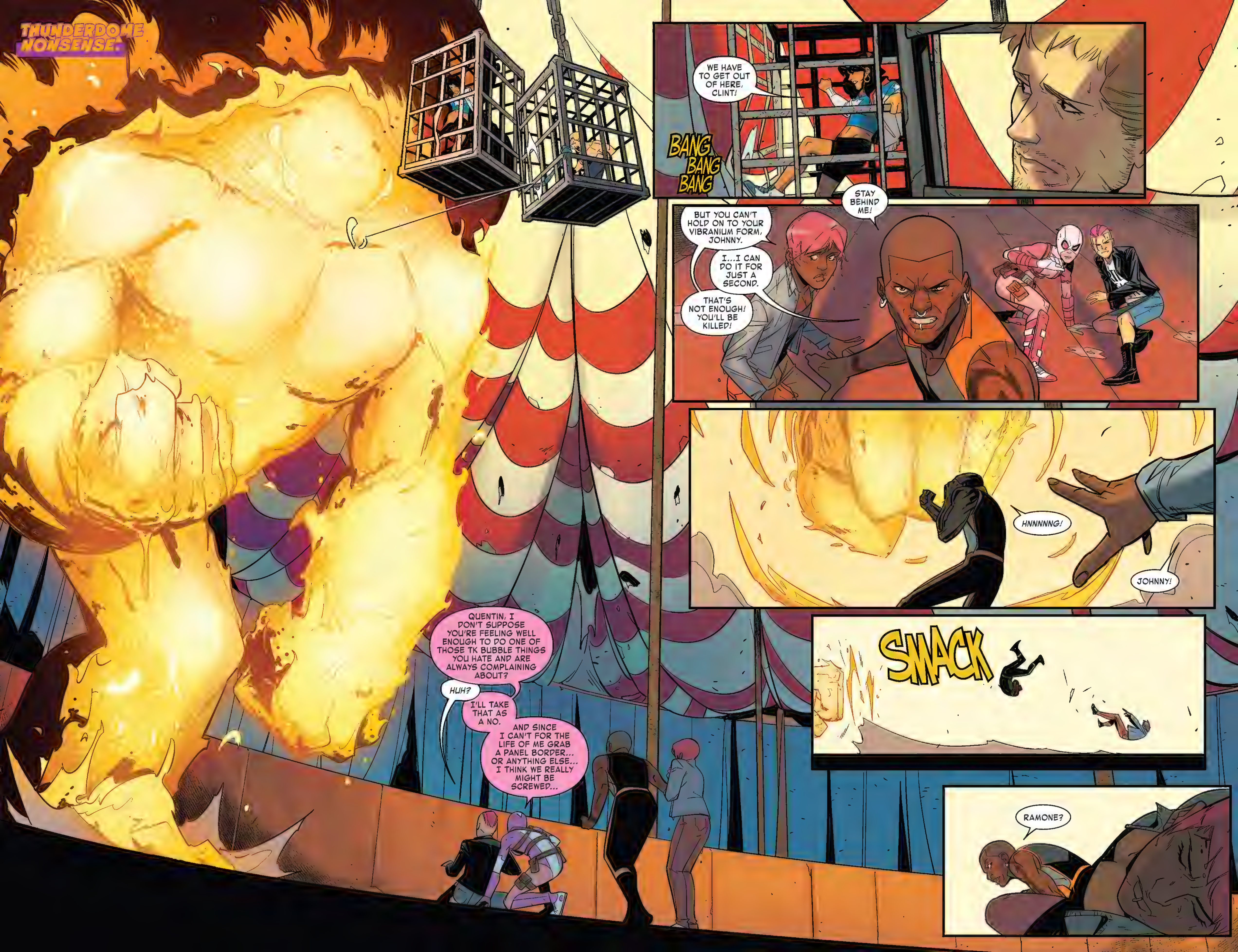

HNNNG HOPE SOMEONE...GOT THE LICENSE PLATE OF THAT TRUCK...OR TANK...OR PLANE...OR POSSIBLY CRUISE SHIP?
ARGH. NOT ENOUGH FROZEN PEAS IN THE WORLD. WELL, MAYBE IF I FILLED A BATHTUB WITH THEM? HEY, THAT'S AN IDEA.
STILL GOT MY WEAPONS AND NOT CHAINED UP OR BEING ACTIVELY TORTURED...SO I GUESS IT CAN'T BE *THAT* BAD?
KATE.
WHO...

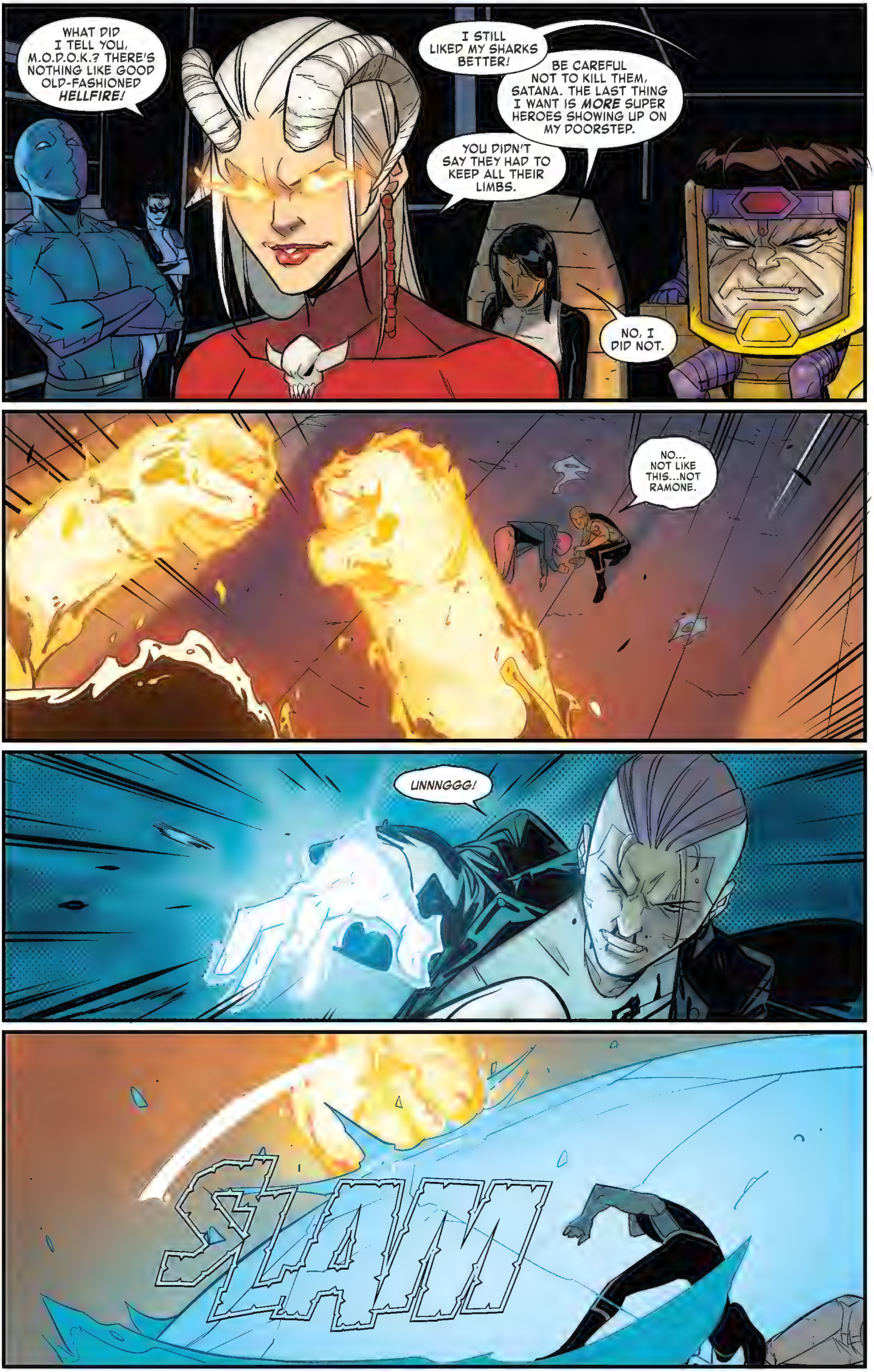

SPOKE TOO SOON. IT *IS* THAT BAD.
...NOH-VARR?
HI. SORRY ABOUT BEFORE, BUT I CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING.
NOH-VARR, A.K.A. MARVEL BOY, A.K.A....
...KATE'S EX-BOYFRIEND.

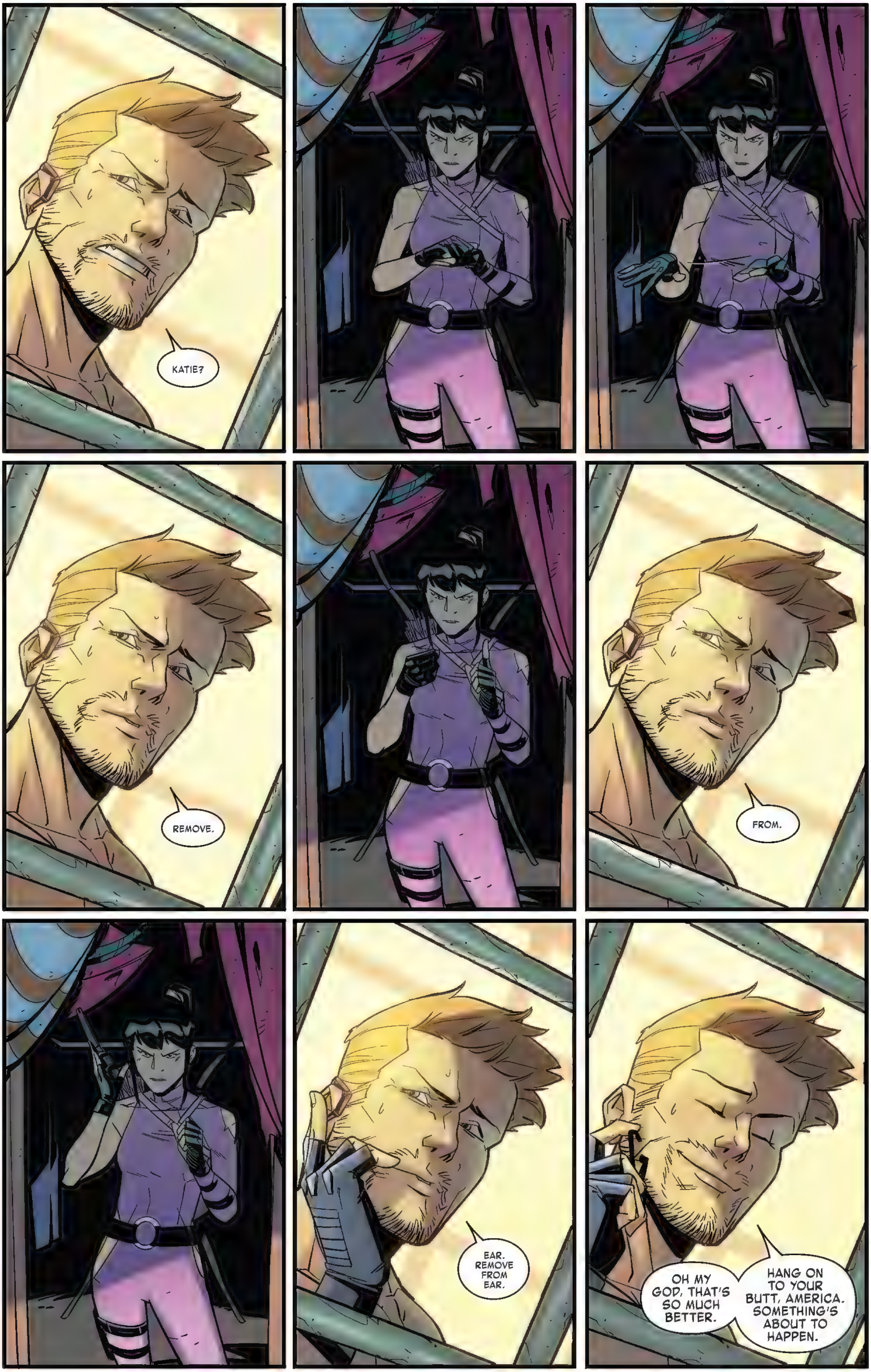


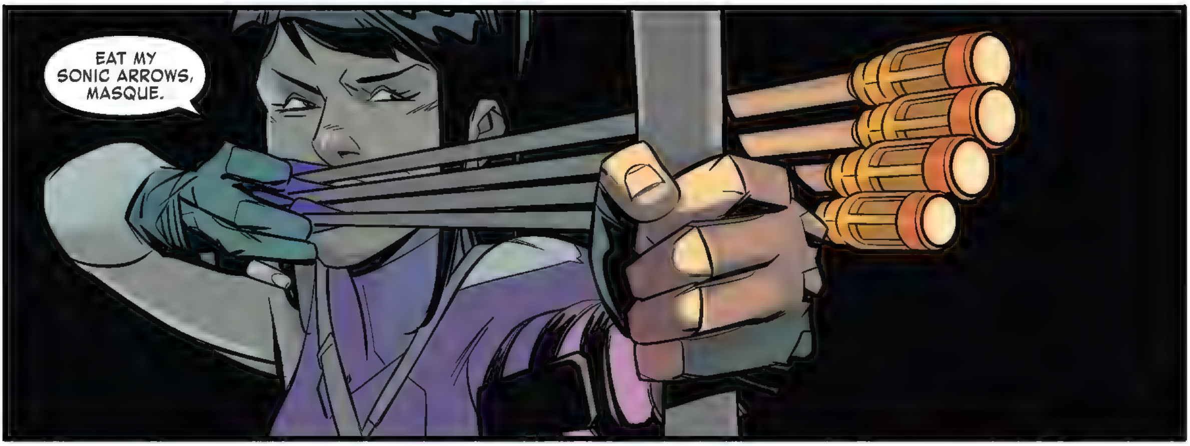
WEST COAST AVENGERS #7

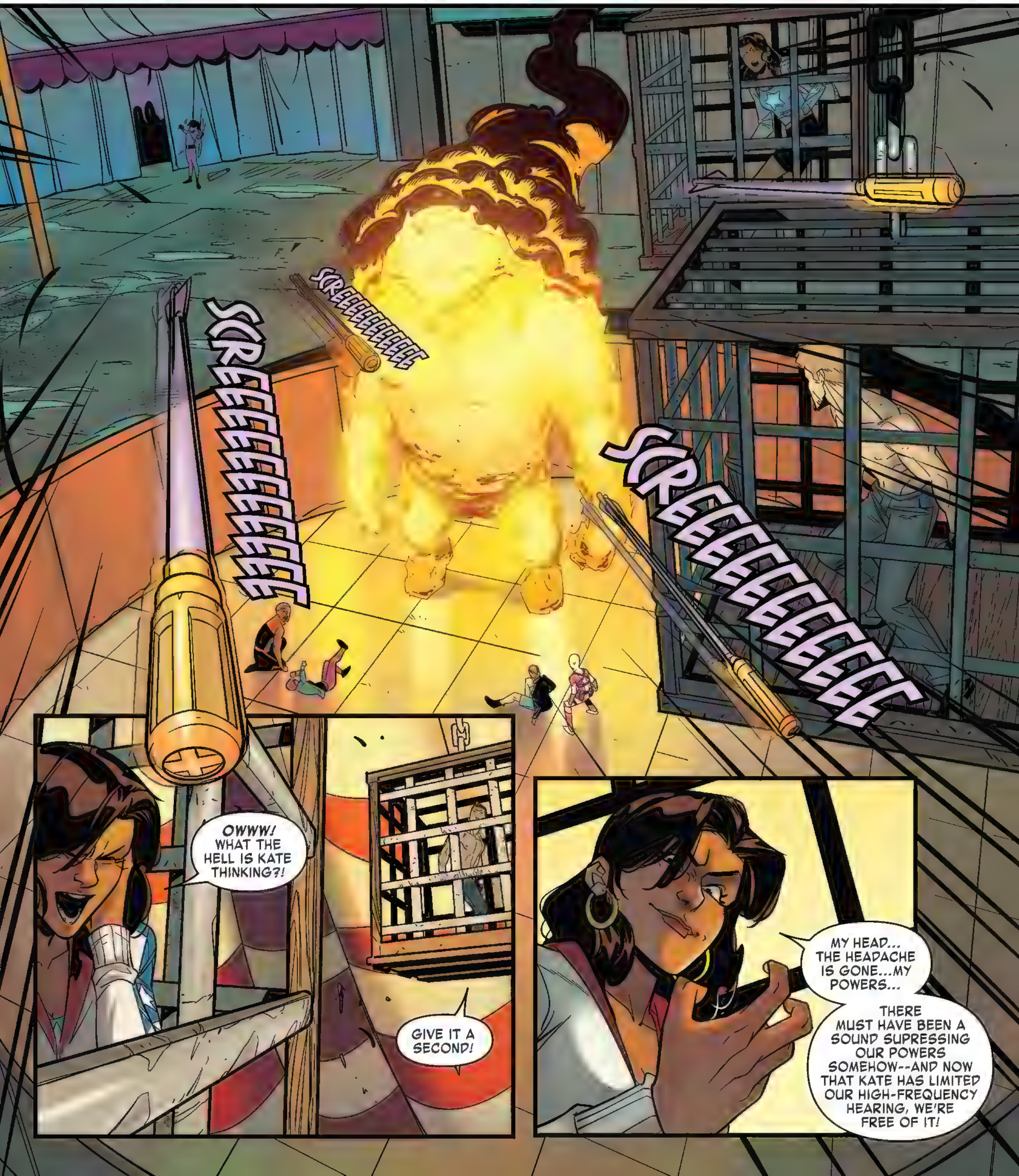

SO...YOU'VE BEEN UNDERCOVER... PRETENDING TO BE GRAVITON (WHICH IS A REALLY WEIRD CHOICE) AND WORKING WITH MASQUE BECAUSE OF SOMETHING UNRELATED TO THIS *THUNDERDOME* NONSENSE...
...SOME KIND OF MACHINE IS TRANSMITTING A SOUND THAT IS LIMITING ACCESS TO POWERS...MY TEAM IS CAPTURED...OTHERS HAVE BEEN SENT TO "ROUND ME UP"...
...AND *THAT* IS WHY YOU KICKED ME IN THE FACE?
EXACTLY!
THIS IS MY EX-BOYFRIEND, NOH-VARR. HE'S GOT ENHANCED REFLEXES, STRENGTH AND SPEED AND IS TRIPLE-JOINTED. NO COMMENT.
HE BROKE UP WITH ME. I'M OVER IT. DEFINITELY.
AND IT'S FINE THAT HE'S HERE. PERFECTLY FINE.
EVERYTHING IS FINE.
FINE.
I QUESTION YOUR DECISION-MAKING SKILLS, WHICH IS A CONSISTENT PATTERN--BUT LET'S GO SAVE MY TEAM.
YOU *ARE* GONNA PAY FOR THAT KICK TO THE FACE, THOUGH.
OH, I'M SURE.

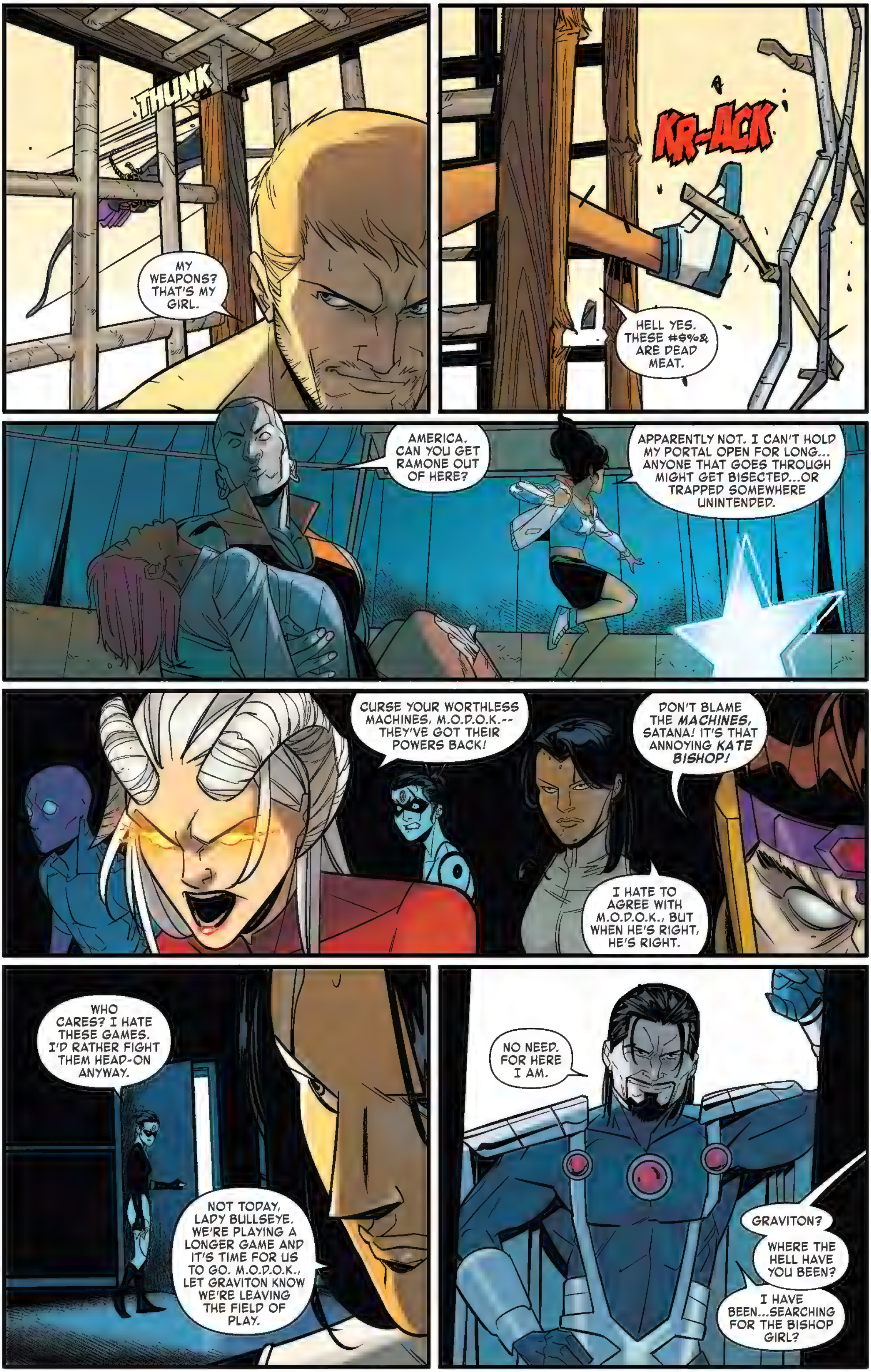

THUNDERDOME NONSENSE.
QUENTIN, I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'RE FEELING WELL ENOUGH TO DO ONE OF THOSE TK BUBBLE THINGS YOU HATE AND ARE ALWAYS COMPLAINING ABOUT?
HUH?
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A NO.
AND SINCE I CAN'T FOR THE LIFE OF ME GRAB A PANEL BORDER... OR ANYTHING ELSE... I THINK WE REALLY MIGHT BE SCREWED...
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE, CLINT!
BANG BANG BANG
STAY BEHIND ME!
BUT YOU CAN'T HOLD ON TO YOUR VIBRANIUM FORM, JOHNNY.
I...I CAN DO IT FOR JUST A SECOND.
THAT'S NOT ENOUGH! YOU'LL BE KILLED!
HNNNNNG!
JOHNNY!
SMACK
RAMONE?

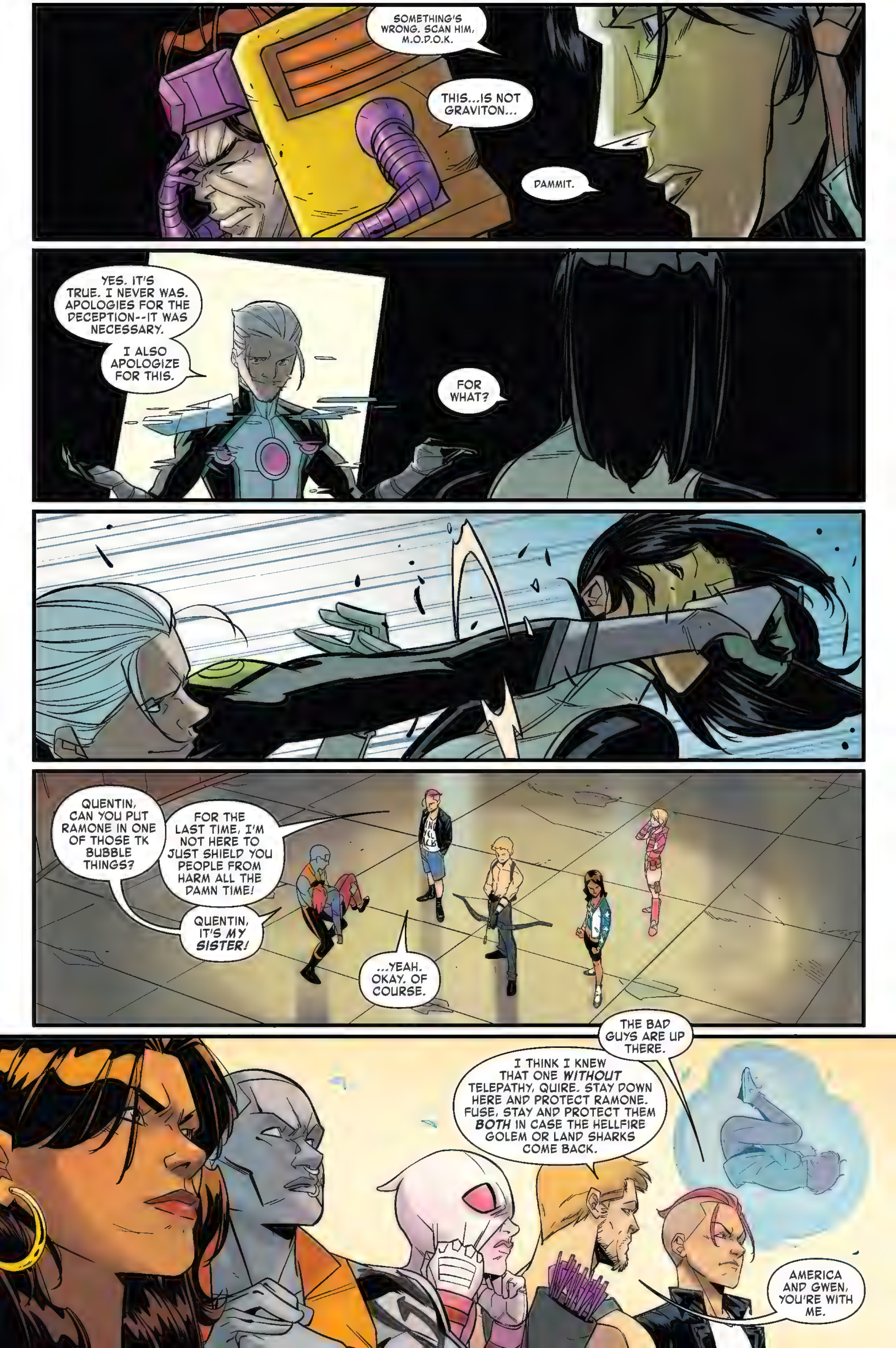

WHAT DID I TELL YOU, M.O.D.O.K.? THERE'S NOTHING LIKE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED **HELLFIRE!**
I STILL LIKED MY SHARKS BETTER!
BE CAREFUL NOT TO KILL THEM, SATANA. THE LAST THING I WANT IS ***MORE*** SUPER HEROES SHOWING UP ON MY DOORSTEP.
YOU DIDN'T SAY THEY HAD TO KEEP ALL THEIR LIMBS.
NO, I DID NOT.
NO... NOT LIKE THIS...NOT RAMONE.
UNNNGGG!
SLAM

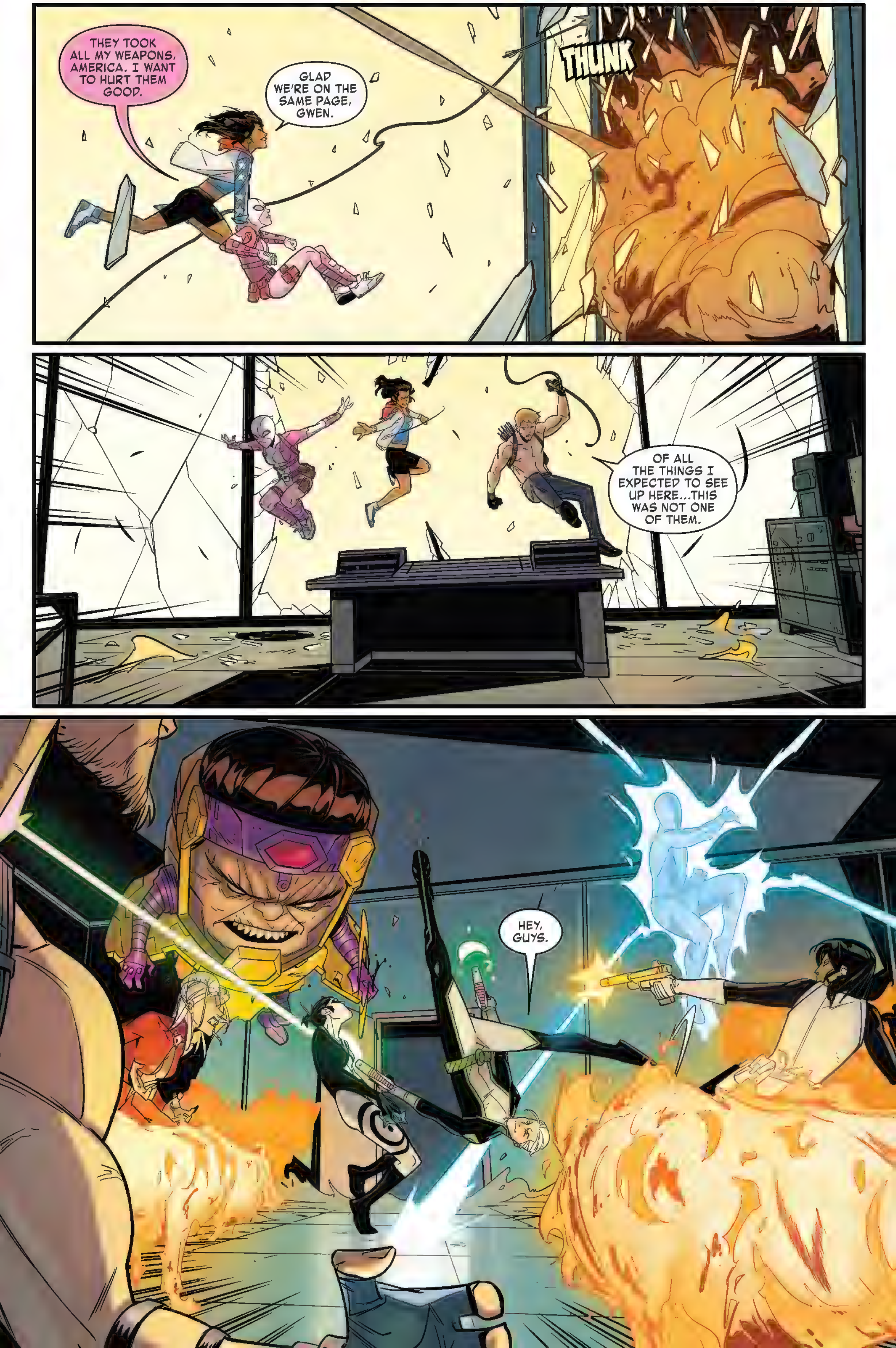

KATIE?
REMOVE.
FROM.
EAR. REMOVE FROM EAR.
OH MY GOD, THAT'S SO MUCH BETTER.
HANG ON TO YOUR BUTT, AMERICA. SOMETHING'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN.

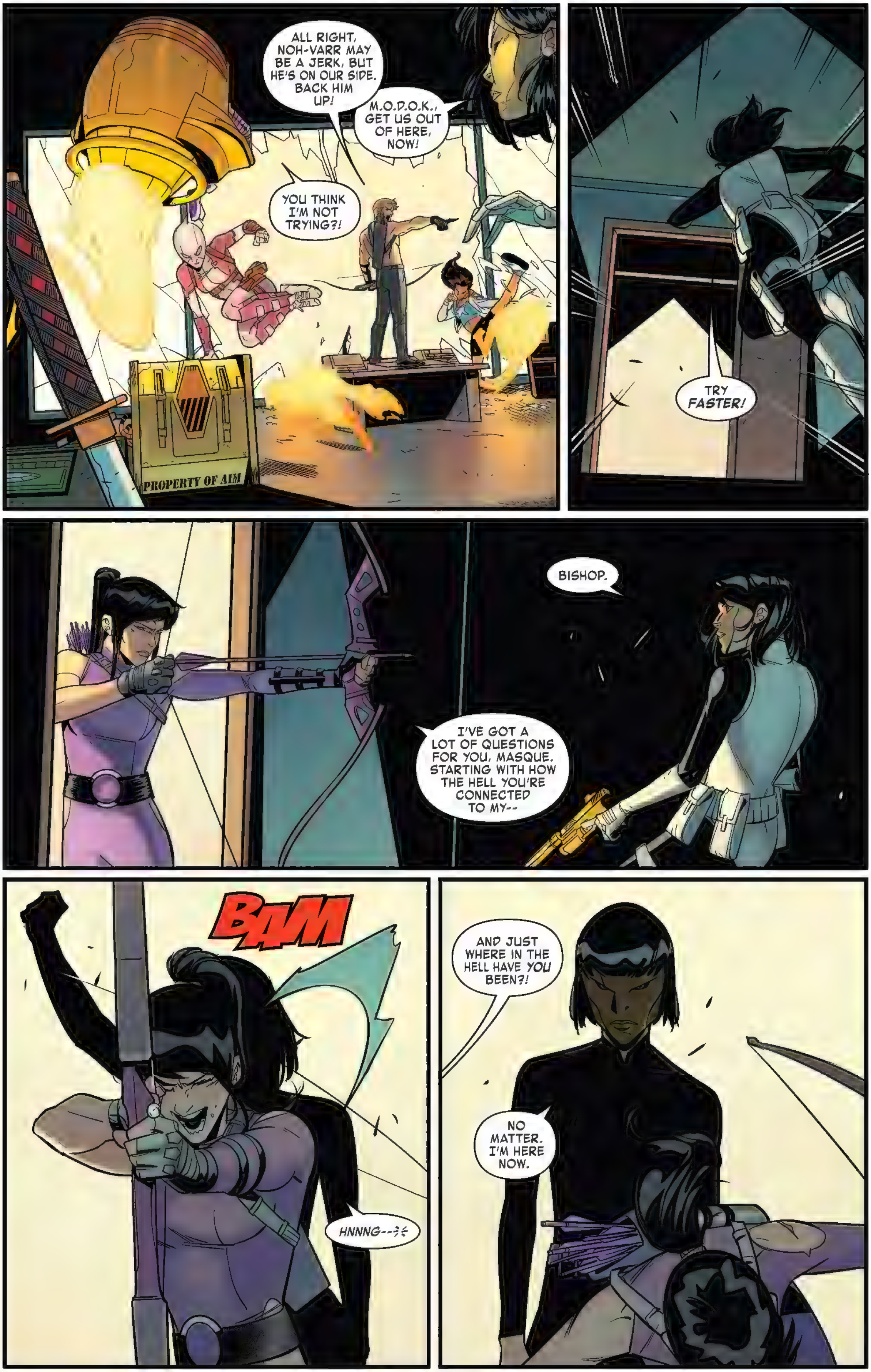

EAT MY SONIC ARROWS, MASQUE.

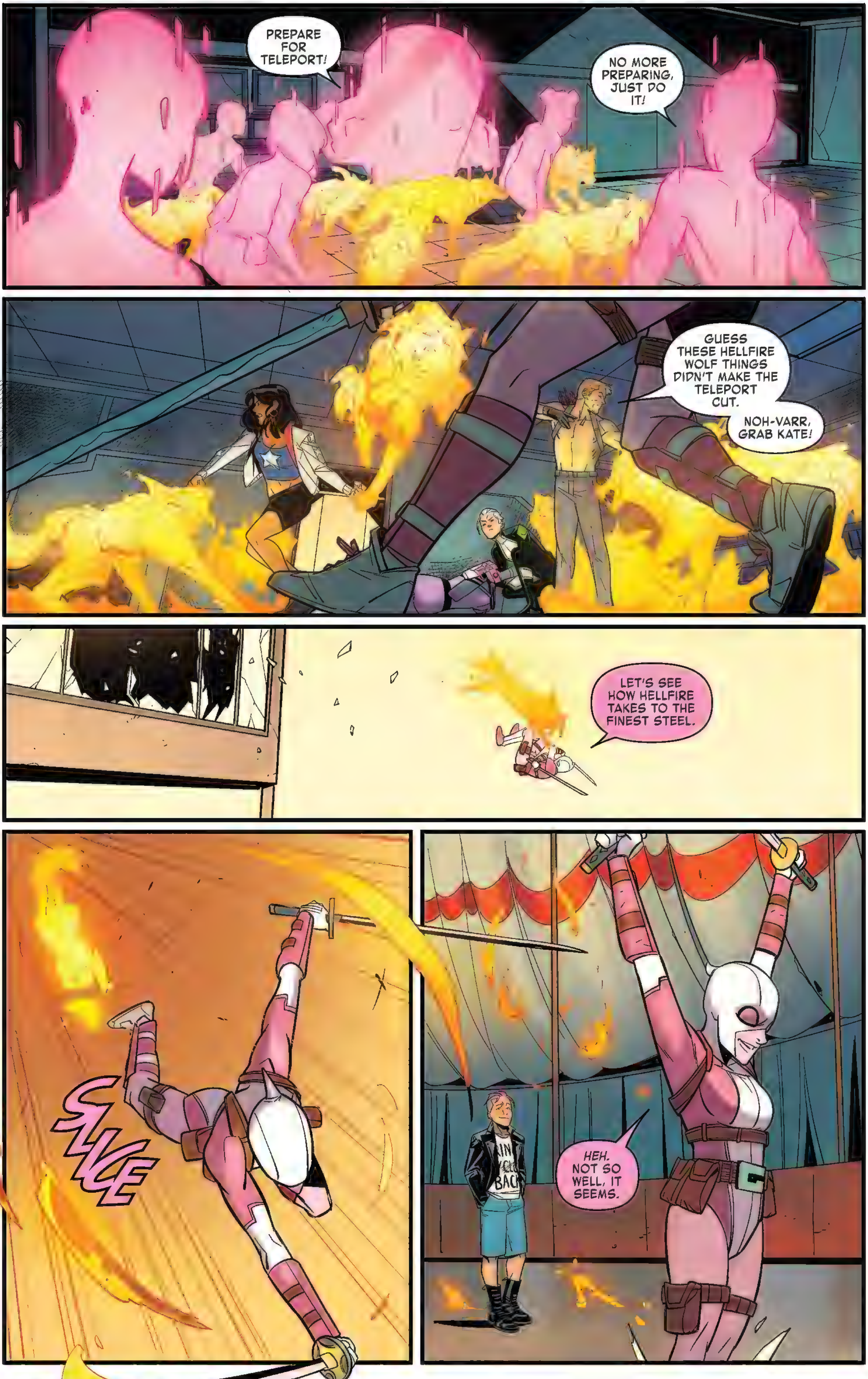

SCREEEEEEEEEEE
SCREEEEEEEEEE
SCREEEEEEEEEEEEE
OWWW! WHAT THE HELL IS KATE THINKING?!
GIVE IT A SECOND!
MY HEAD... THE HEADACHE IS GONE...MY POWERS...
THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A SOUND SUPRESSING OUR POWERS SOMEHOW--AND NOW THAT KATE HAS LIMITED OUR HIGH-FREQUENCY HEARING, WE'RE FREE OF IT!

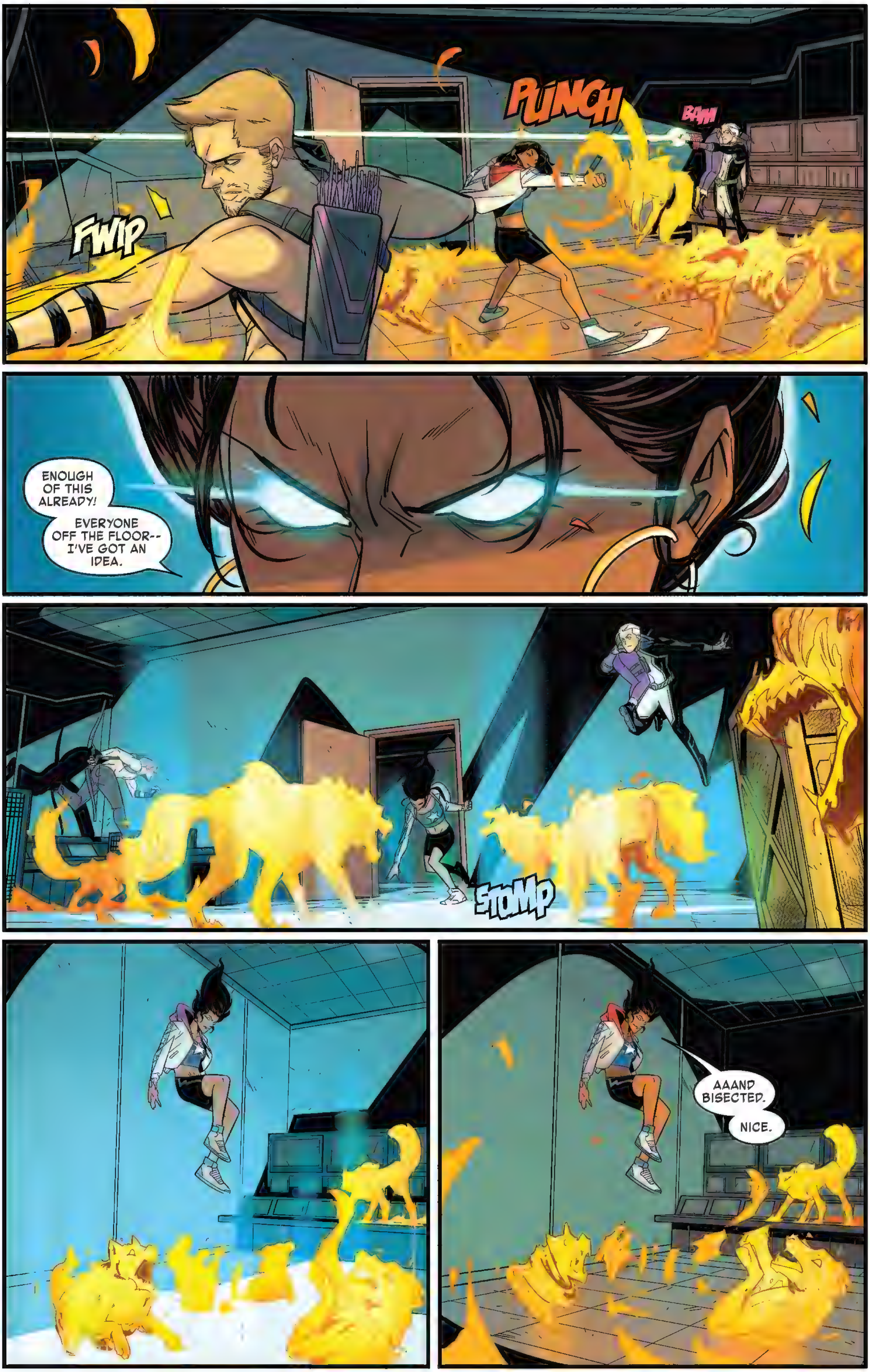

THUNK
MY WEAPONS? THAT'S MY GIRL.
KR-ACK
HELL YES. THESE #$%& ARE DEAD MEAT.
AMERICA. CAN YOU GET RAMONE OUT OF HERE?
APPARENTLY NOT. I CAN'T HOLD MY PORTAL OPEN FOR LONG... ANYONE THAT GOES THROUGH MIGHT GET BISECTED...OR TRAPPED SOMEWHERE UNINTENDED.
CURSE YOUR WORTHLESS MACHINES, M.O.D.O.K.--THEY'VE GOT THEIR POWERS BACK!
DON'T BLAME THE *MACHINES,* SATANA! IT'S THAT ANNOYING *KATE BISHOP!*
I HATE TO AGREE WITH M.O.D.O.K., BUT WHEN HE'S RIGHT, HE'S RIGHT.
WHO CARES? I HATE THESE GAMES. I'D RATHER FIGHT THEM HEAD-ON ANYWAY.
NOT TODAY, LADY BULLSEYE. WE'RE PLAYING A LONGER GAME AND IT'S TIME FOR US TO GO. M.O.D.O.K., LET GRAVITON KNOW WE'RE LEAVING THE FIELD OF PLAY.
NO NEED. FOR HERE I AM.
GRAVITON?
WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?
I HAVE BEEN...SEARCHING FOR THE BISHOP GIRL?

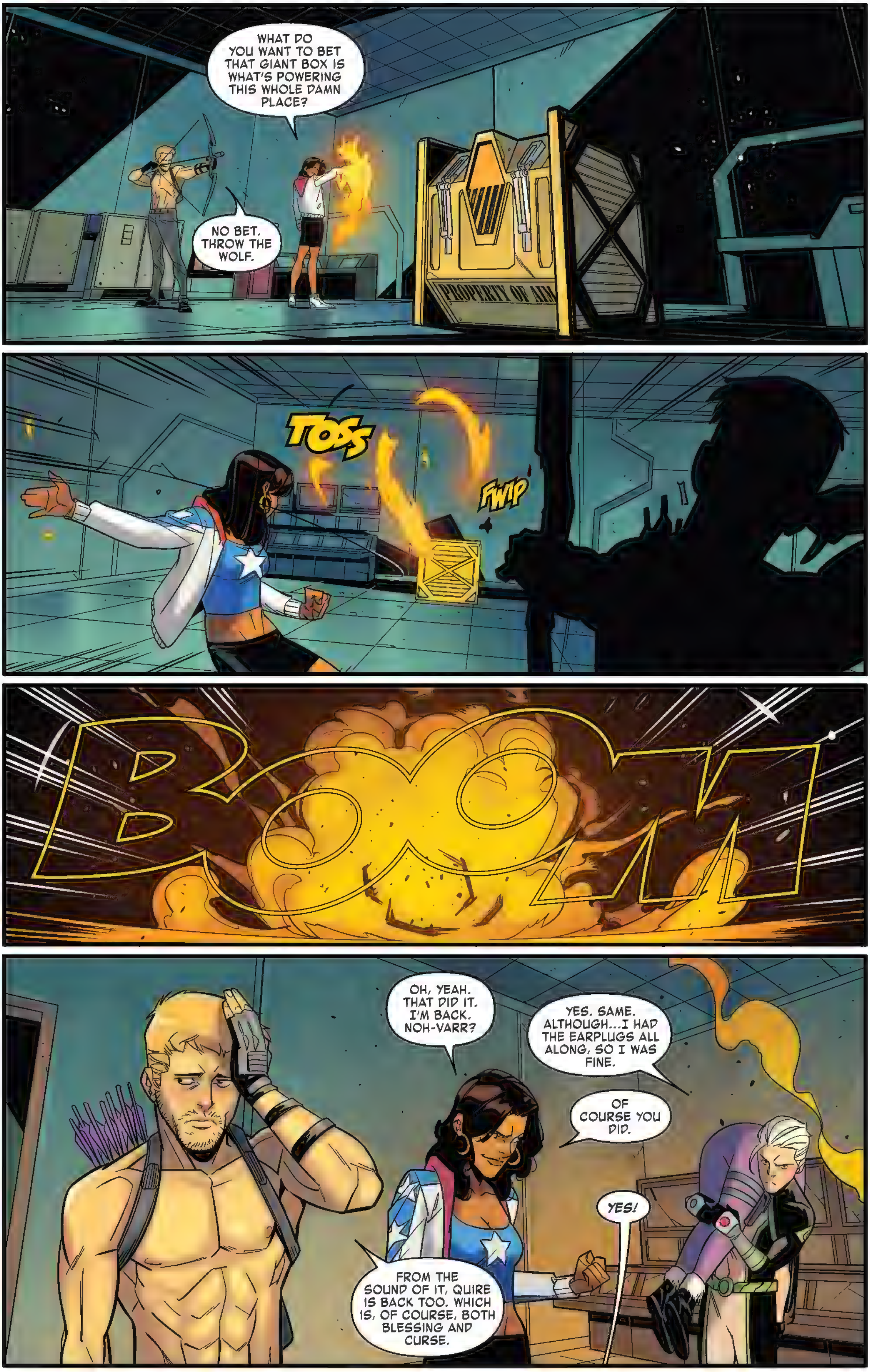

SOMETHING'S WRONG. SCAN HIM, M.O.D.O.K.
THIS...IS NOT GRAVITON...
DAMMIT.
YES. IT'S TRUE. I NEVER WAS. APOLOGIES FOR THE DECEPTION--IT WAS NECESSARY.
I ALSO APOLOGIZE FOR THIS.
FOR WHAT?
QUENTIN, CAN YOU PUT RAMONE IN ONE OF THOSE TK BUBBLE THINGS?
FOR THE LAST TIME, I'M NOT HERE TO JUST SHIELD YOU PEOPLE FROM HARM ALL THE DAMN TIME!
QUENTIN, IT'S *MY SISTER!*
...YEAH. OKAY. OF COURSE.
THE BAD GUYS ARE UP THERE.
I THINK I KNEW THAT ONE *WITHOUT* TELEPATHY, QUIRE. STAY DOWN HERE AND PROTECT RAMONE. FUSE, STAY AND PROTECT THEM *BOTH* IN CASE THE HELLFIRE GOLEM OR LAND SHARKS COME BACK.
AMERICA AND GWEN, YOU'RE WITH ME.

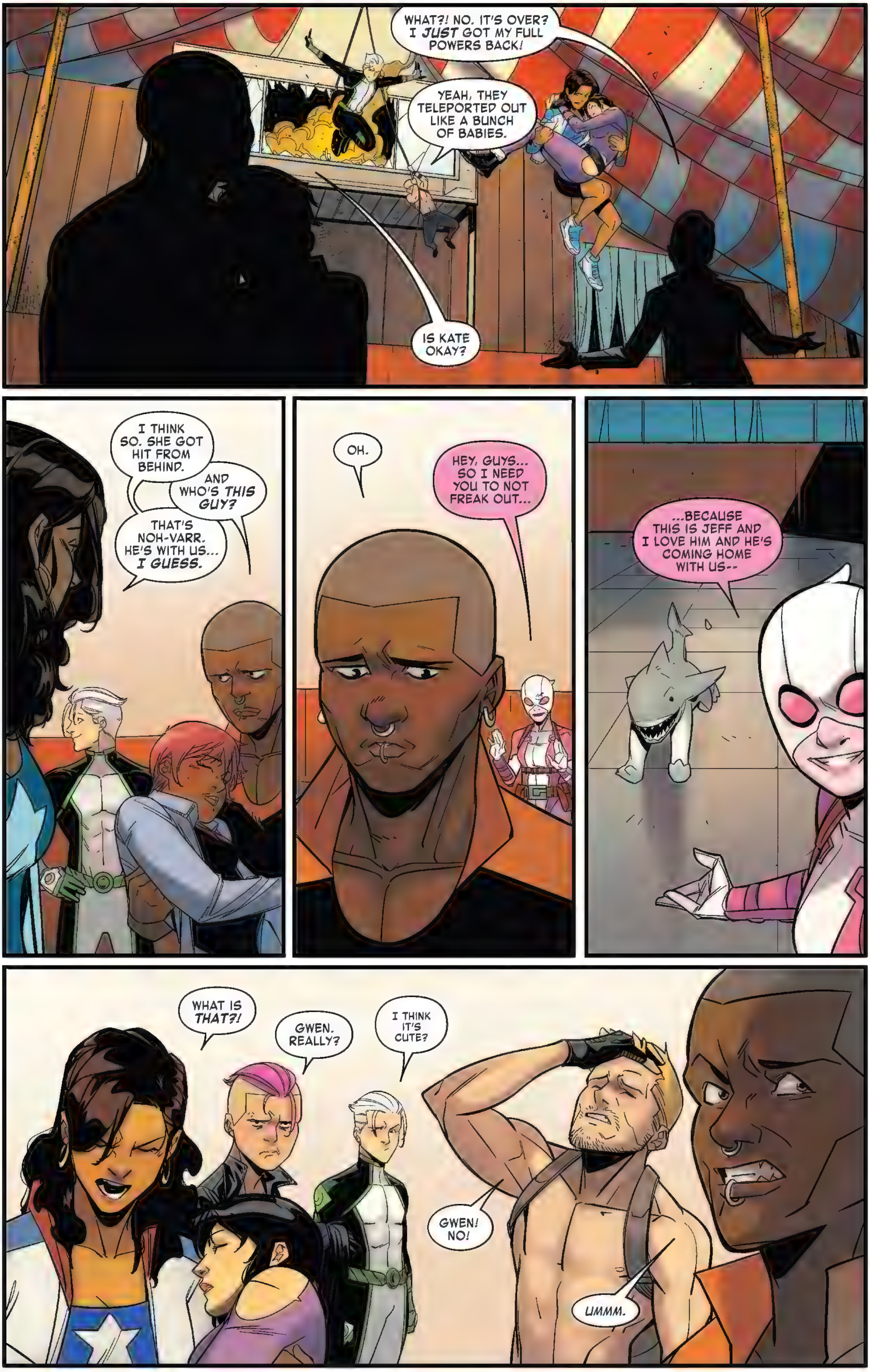

THEY TOOK ALL MY WEAPONS, AMERICA. I WANT TO HURT THEM GOOD.
GLAD WE'RE ON THE SAME PAGE, GWEN.
THUNK
OF ALL THE THINGS I EXPECTED TO SEE UP HERE...THIS WAS NOT ONE OF THEM.
HEY, GUYS.

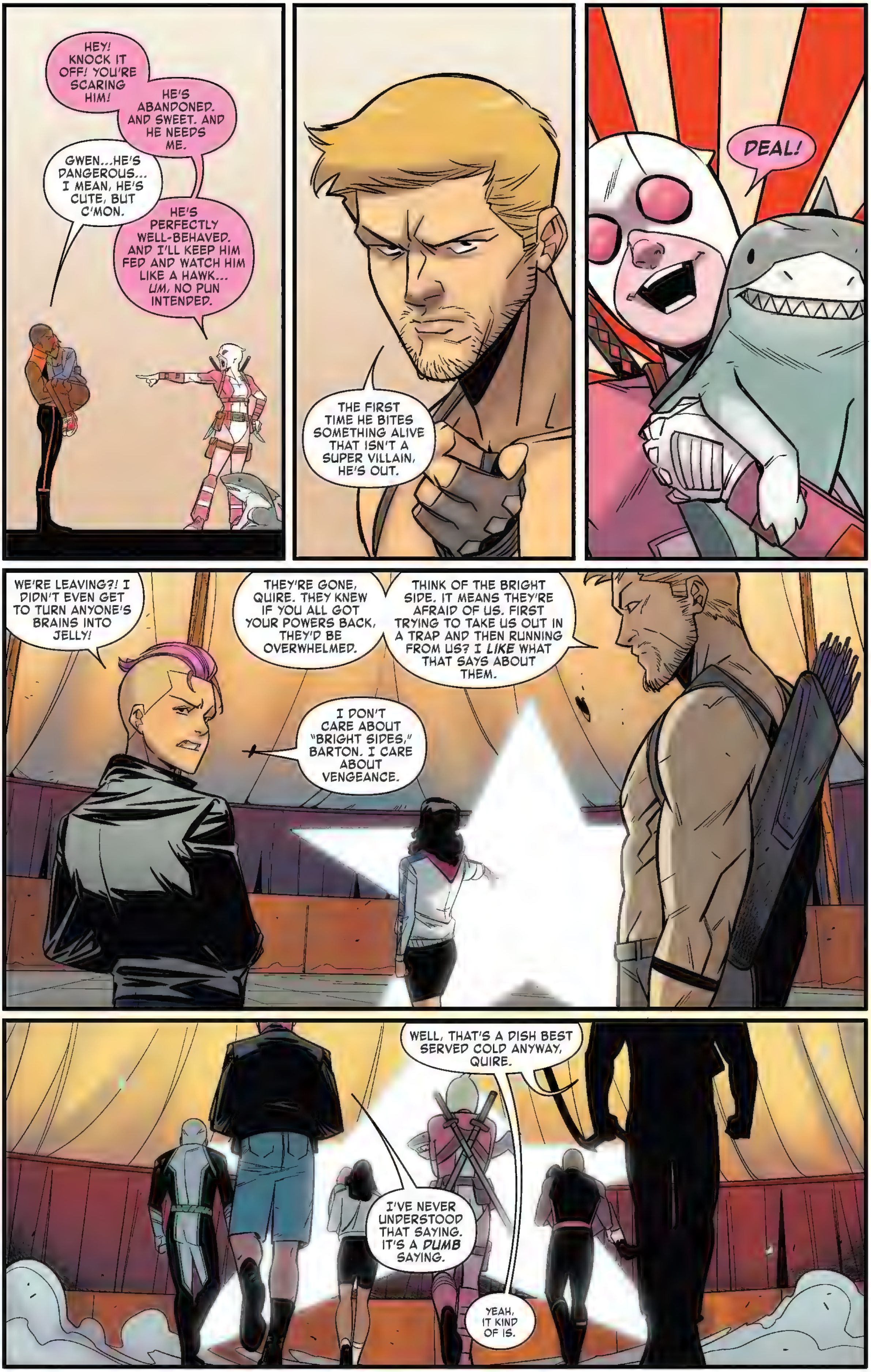

ALL RIGHT, NOH-VARR MAY BE A JERK, BUT HE'S ON OUR SIDE. BACK HIM UP!
M.O.D.O.K., GET US OUT OF HERE, NOW!
YOU THINK I'M NOT TRYING?!
PROPERTY OF AIM
TRY *FASTER!*
BISHOP.
I'VE GOT A LOT OF QUESTIONS FOR YOU, MASQUE. STARTING WITH HOW THE HELL YOU'RE CONNECTED TO MY--
BAM
HNNNG--
AND JUST WHERE IN THE HELL HAVE *YOU* BEEN?!
NO MATTER. I'M HERE NOW.

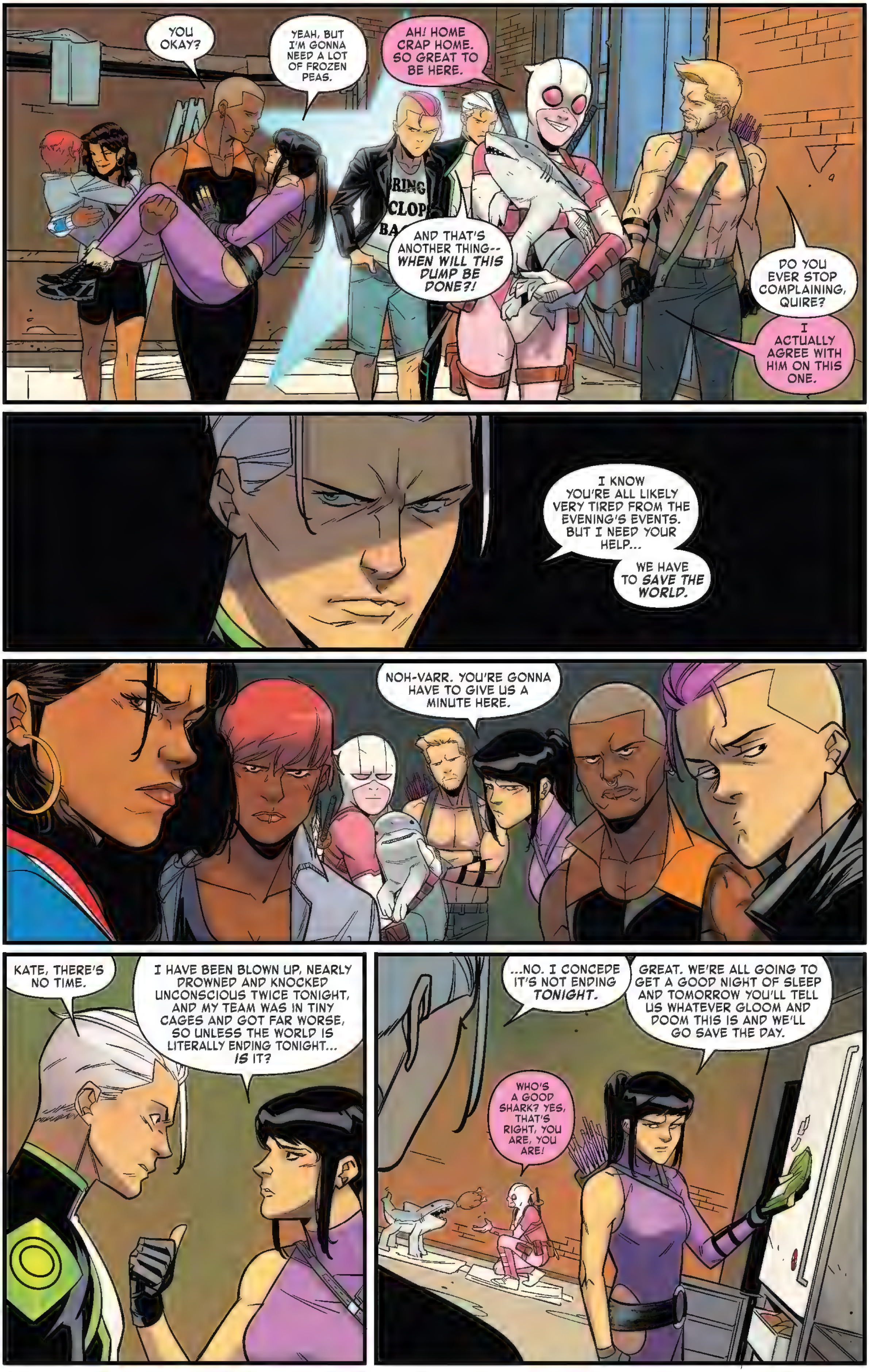

PREPARE FOR TELEPORT!
NO MORE PREPARING, JUST DO IT!
GUESS THESE HELLFIRE WOLF THINGS DIDN'T MAKE THE TELEPORT CUT.
NOH-VARR, GRAB KATE!
LET'S SEE HOW HELLFIRE TAKES TO THE FINEST STEEL.
SLICE
HEH. NOT SO WELL, IT SEEMS.

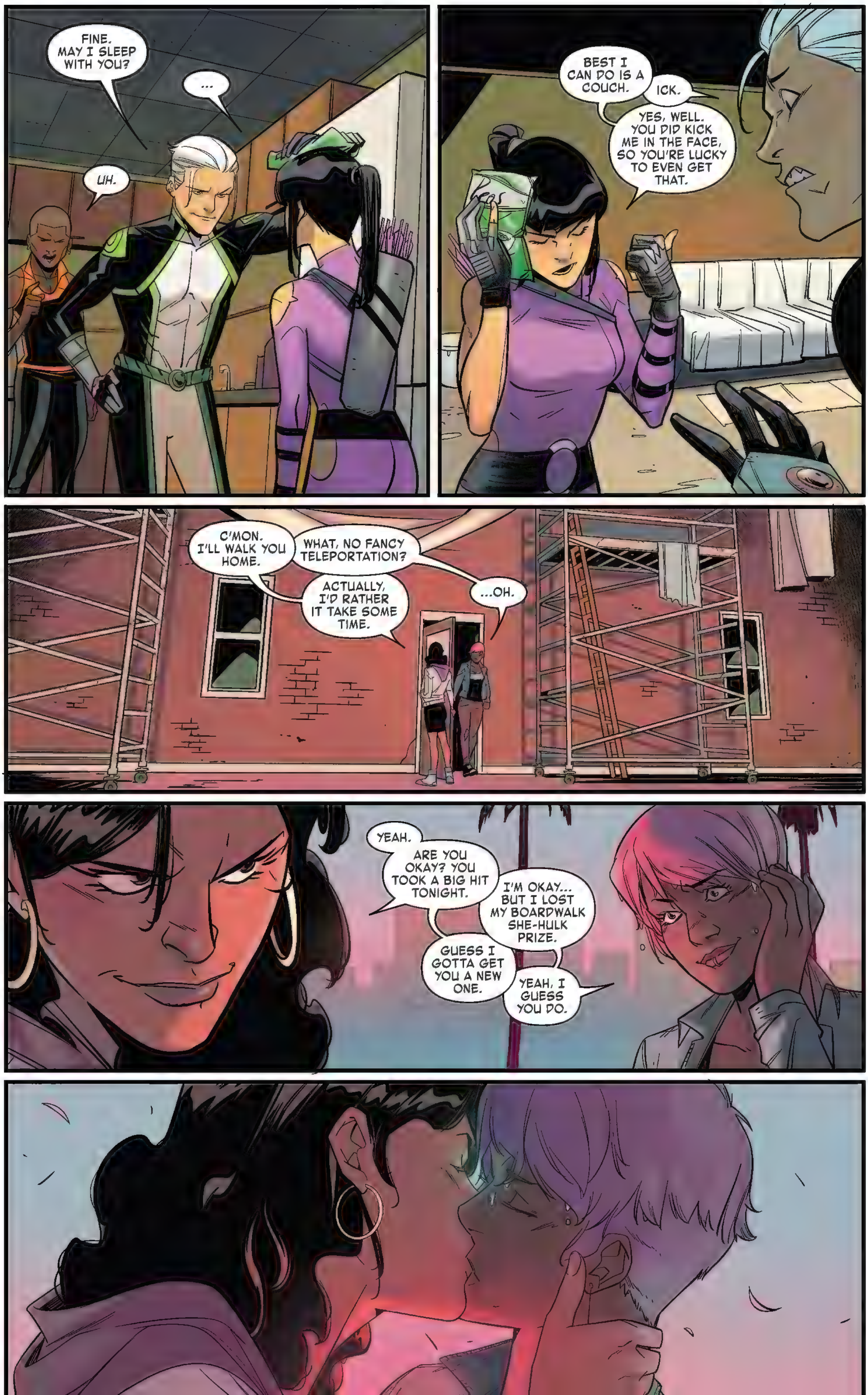

PUNCH
BAM
FWIP
ENOUGH OF THIS ALREADY!
EVERYONE OFF THE FLOOR-- I'VE GOT AN IDEA.
STOMP
AAAND BISECTED.
NICE.

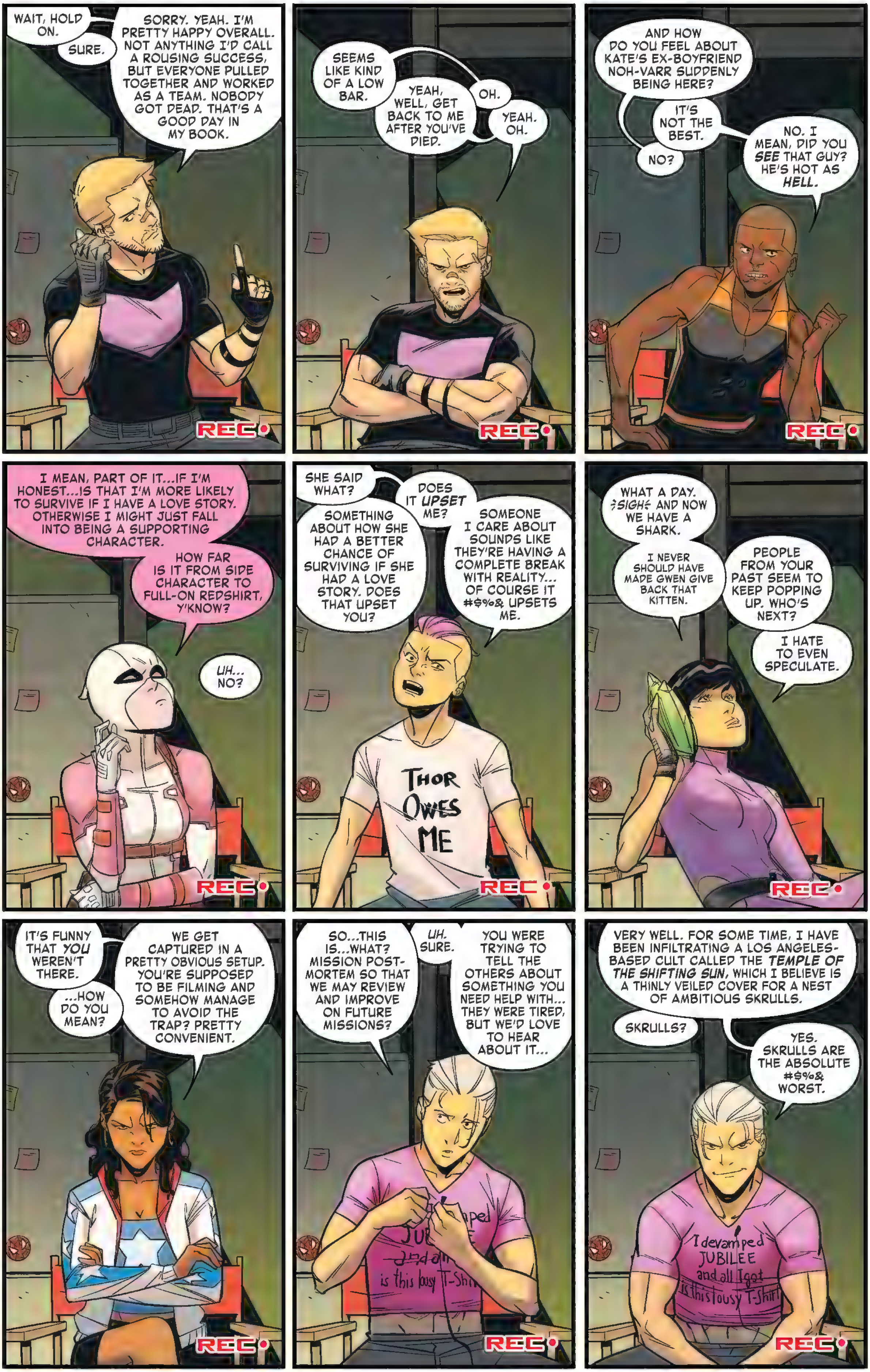

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BET THAT GIANT BOX IS WHAT'S POWERING THIS WHOLE DAMN PLACE?
NO BET. THROW THE WOLF.
PROPERTY OF AIM
TOSS
FWIP
BOOM
OH, YEAH. THAT DID IT. I'M BACK. NOH-VARR?
YES. SAME. ALTHOUGH...I HAD THE EARPLUGS ALL ALONG, SO I WAS FINE.
OF COURSE YOU DID.
YES!
FROM THE SOUND OF IT, QUIRE IS BACK TOO. WHICH IS, OF COURSE, BOTH BLESSING AND CURSE.

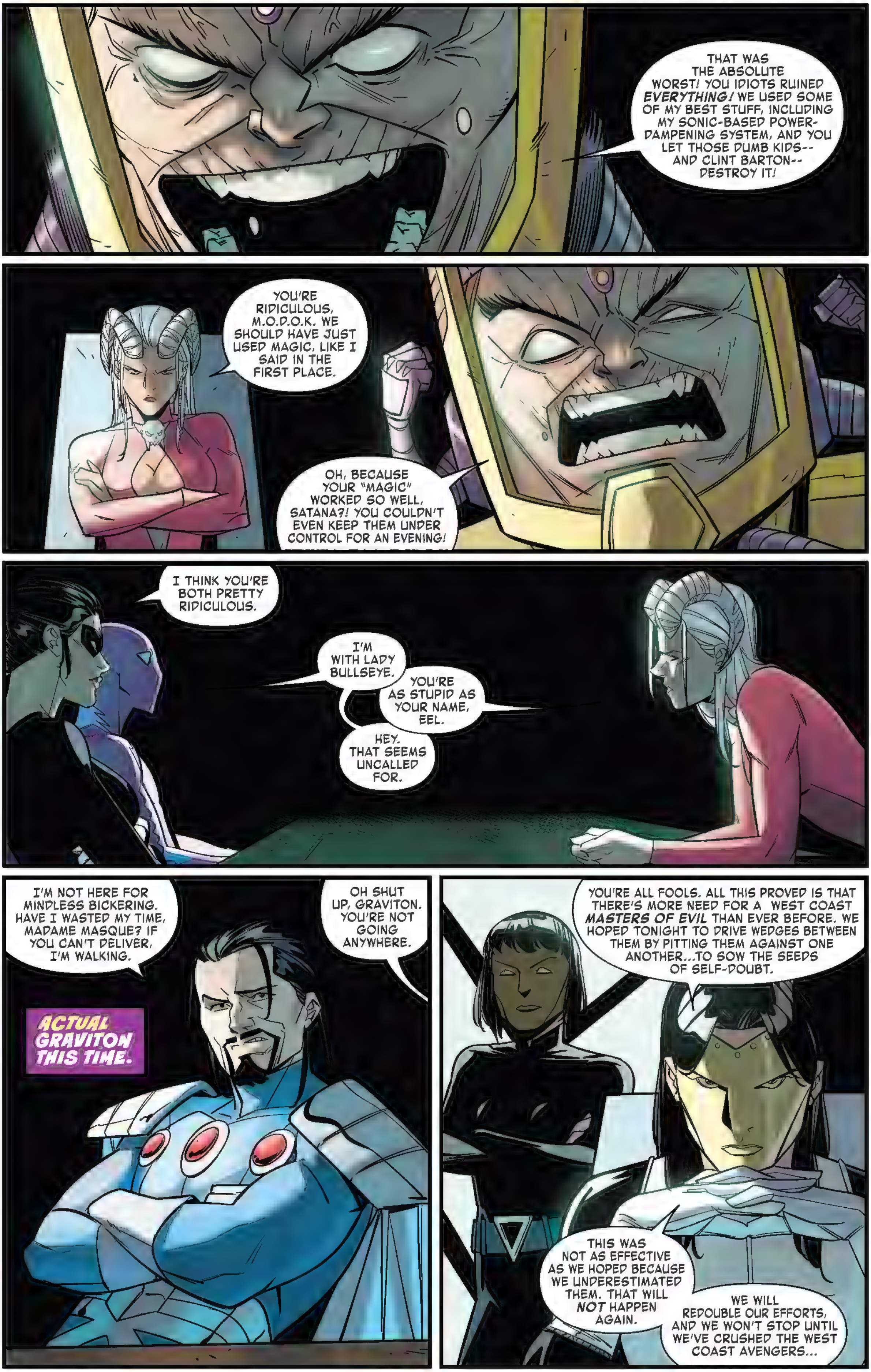

WHAT?! NO. IT'S OVER? I *JUST* GOT MY FULL POWERS BACK!
YEAH, THEY TELEPORTED OUT LIKE A BUNCH OF BABIES.
IS KATE OKAY?
I THINK SO. SHE GOT HIT FROM BEHIND.
AND WHO'S *THIS GUY?*
THAT'S NOH-VARR. HE'S WITH US... *I GUESS.*
OH.
HEY, GUYS... SO I NEED YOU TO NOT FREAK OUT...
...BECAUSE THIS IS JEFF AND I LOVE HIM AND HE'S COMING HOME WITH US--
WHAT IS *THAT?!*
GWEN. REALLY?
I THINK IT'S CUTE?
GWEN! NO!
UMMM.

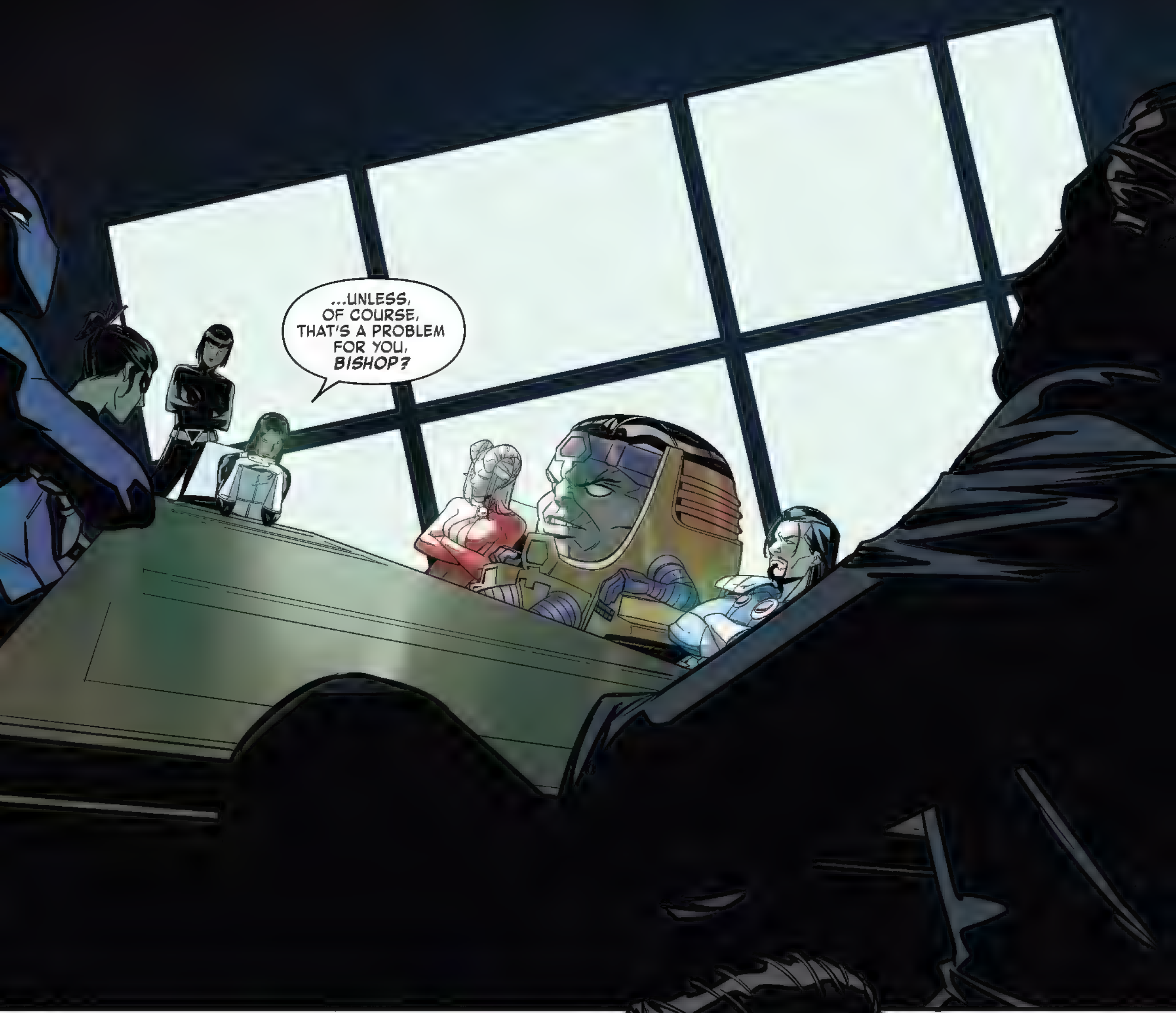

HEY! KNOCK IT OFF! YOU'RE SCARING HIM!
HE'S ABANDONED. AND SWEET. AND HE NEEDS ME.
GWEN...HE'S DANGEROUS... I MEAN, HE'S CUTE, BUT C'MON.
HE'S PERFECTLY WELL-BEHAVED. AND I'LL KEEP HIM FED AND WATCH HIM LIKE A HAWK... UM, NO PUN INTENDED.
THE FIRST TIME HE BITES SOMETHING ALIVE THAT ISN'T A SUPER VILLAIN, HE'S OUT.
DEAL!
WE'RE LEAVING?! I DIDN'T EVEN GET TO TURN ANYONE'S BRAINS INTO JELLY!
THEY'RE GONE, QUIRE. THEY KNEW IF YOU ALL GOT YOUR POWERS BACK, THEY'D BE OVERWHELMED.
THINK OF THE BRIGHT SIDE. IT MEANS THEY'RE AFRAID OF US. FIRST TRYING TO TAKE US OUT IN A TRAP AND THEN RUNNING FROM US? I LIKE WHAT THAT SAYS ABOUT THEM.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT "BRIGHT SIDES," BARTON. I CARE ABOUT VENGEANCE.
WELL, THAT'S A DISH BEST SERVED COLD ANYWAY, QUIRE.
I'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD THAT SAYING. IT'S A DUMB SAYING.
YEAH, IT KIND OF IS.

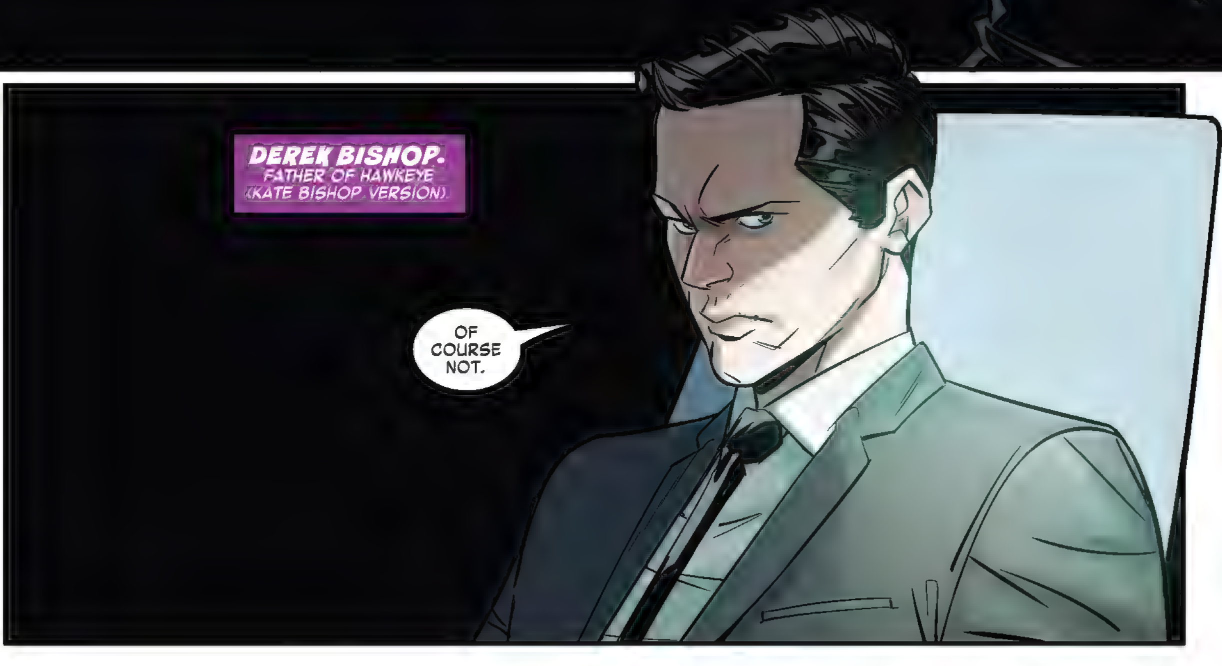

YOU OKAY?
YEAH, BUT I'M GONNA NEED A LOT OF FROZEN PEAS.
AH! HOME CRAP HOME. SO GREAT TO BE HERE.
AND THAT'S ANOTHER THING-- *WHEN WILL THIS DUMP BE DONE?!*
DO YOU EVER STOP COMPLAINING, QUIRE?
I ACTUALLY AGREE WITH HIM ON THIS ONE.
I KNOW YOU'RE ALL LIKELY VERY TIRED FROM THE EVENING'S EVENTS. BUT I NEED YOUR HELP...
WE HAVE TO *SAVE THE WORLD.*
NOH-VARR. YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO GIVE US A MINUTE HERE.
KATE, THERE'S NO TIME.
I HAVE BEEN BLOWN UP, NEARLY DROWNED AND KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS TWICE TONIGHT, AND MY TEAM WAS IN TINY CAGES AND GOT FAR WORSE, SO UNLESS THE WORLD IS LITERALLY ENDING TONIGHT... *IS* IT?
...NO. I CONCEDE IT'S NOT ENDING *TONIGHT.*
GREAT. WE'RE ALL GOING TO GET A GOOD NIGHT OF SLEEP AND TOMORROW YOU'LL TELL US WHATEVER GLOOM AND DOOM THIS IS AND WE'LL GO SAVE THE DAY.
WHO'S A GOOD SHARK? YES, THAT'S RIGHT, YOU ARE, YOU ARE!


FINE. MAY I SLEEP WITH YOU?
...
UH.
BEST I CAN DO IS A COUCH.
ICK.
YES, WELL. YOU DID KICK ME IN THE FACE, SO YOU'RE LUCKY TO EVEN GET THAT.
C'MON. I'LL WALK YOU HOME.
WHAT, NO FANCY TELEPORTATION?
ACTUALLY, I'D RATHER IT TAKE SOME TIME.
...OH.
YEAH.
ARE YOU OKAY? YOU TOOK A BIG HIT TONIGHT.
I'M OKAY... BUT I LOST MY BOARDWALK SHE-HULK PRIZE.
GUESS I GOTTA GET YOU A NEW ONE.
YEAH, I GUESS YOU DO.


WAIT, HOLD ON.
SURE.
SORRY. YEAH. I'M PRETTY HAPPY OVERALL. NOT ANYTHING I'D CALL A ROUSING SUCCESS, BUT EVERYONE PULLED TOGETHER AND WORKED AS A TEAM. NOBODY GOT DEAD. THAT'S A GOOD DAY IN MY BOOK.
REC
SEEMS LIKE KIND OF A LOW BAR.
YEAH, WELL, GET BACK TO ME AFTER YOU'VE DIED.
OH.
YEAH. OH.
REC
AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT KATE'S EX-BOYFRIEND NOH-VARR SUDDENLY BEING HERE?
IT'S NOT THE BEST.
NO?
NO. I MEAN, DID YOU *SEE* THAT GUY? HE'S HOT AS *HELL*.
REC
I MEAN, PART OF IT...IF I'M HONEST...IS THAT I'M MORE LIKELY TO SURVIVE IF I HAVE A LOVE STORY. OTHERWISE I MIGHT JUST FALL INTO BEING A SUPPORTING CHARACTER.
HOW FAR IS IT FROM SIDE CHARACTER TO FULL-ON REDSHIRT, Y'KNOW?
UH... NO?
REC
SHE SAID WHAT?
SOMETHING ABOUT HOW SHE HAD A BETTER CHANCE OF SURVIVING IF SHE HAD A LOVE STORY. DOES THAT UPSET YOU?
DOES IT *UPSET* ME?
SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE HAVING A COMPLETE BREAK WITH REALITY... OF COURSE IT #$%& UPSETS ME.
THOR OWES ME
REC
WHAT A DAY. ⸗SIGH⸗ AND NOW WE HAVE A SHARK.
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE MADE GWEN GIVE BACK THAT KITTEN.
PEOPLE FROM YOUR PAST SEEM TO KEEP POPPING UP. WHO'S NEXT?
I HATE TO EVEN SPECULATE.
REC
IT'S FUNNY THAT *YOU* WEREN'T THERE.
...HOW DO YOU MEAN?
WE GET CAPTURED IN A PRETTY OBVIOUS SETUP. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FILMING AND SOMEHOW MANAGE TO AVOID THE TRAP? PRETTY CONVENIENT.
REC
SO...THIS IS...WHAT? MISSION POST-MORTEM SO THAT WE MAY REVIEW AND IMPROVE ON FUTURE MISSIONS?
UH. SURE.
YOU WERE TRYING TO TELL THE OTHERS ABOUT SOMETHING YOU NEED HELP WITH... THEY WERE TIRED, BUT WE'D LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT IT...
REC
VERY WELL. FOR SOME TIME, I HAVE BEEN INFILTRATING A LOS ANGELES-BASED CULT CALLED THE *TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN*, WHICH I BELIEVE IS A THINLY VEILED COVER FOR A NEST OF AMBITIOUS SKRULLS.
SKRULLS?
YES. SKRULLS ARE THE ABSOLUTE #$%& WORST.
I devamped JUBILEE and all I got is this lousy T-Shirt
REC

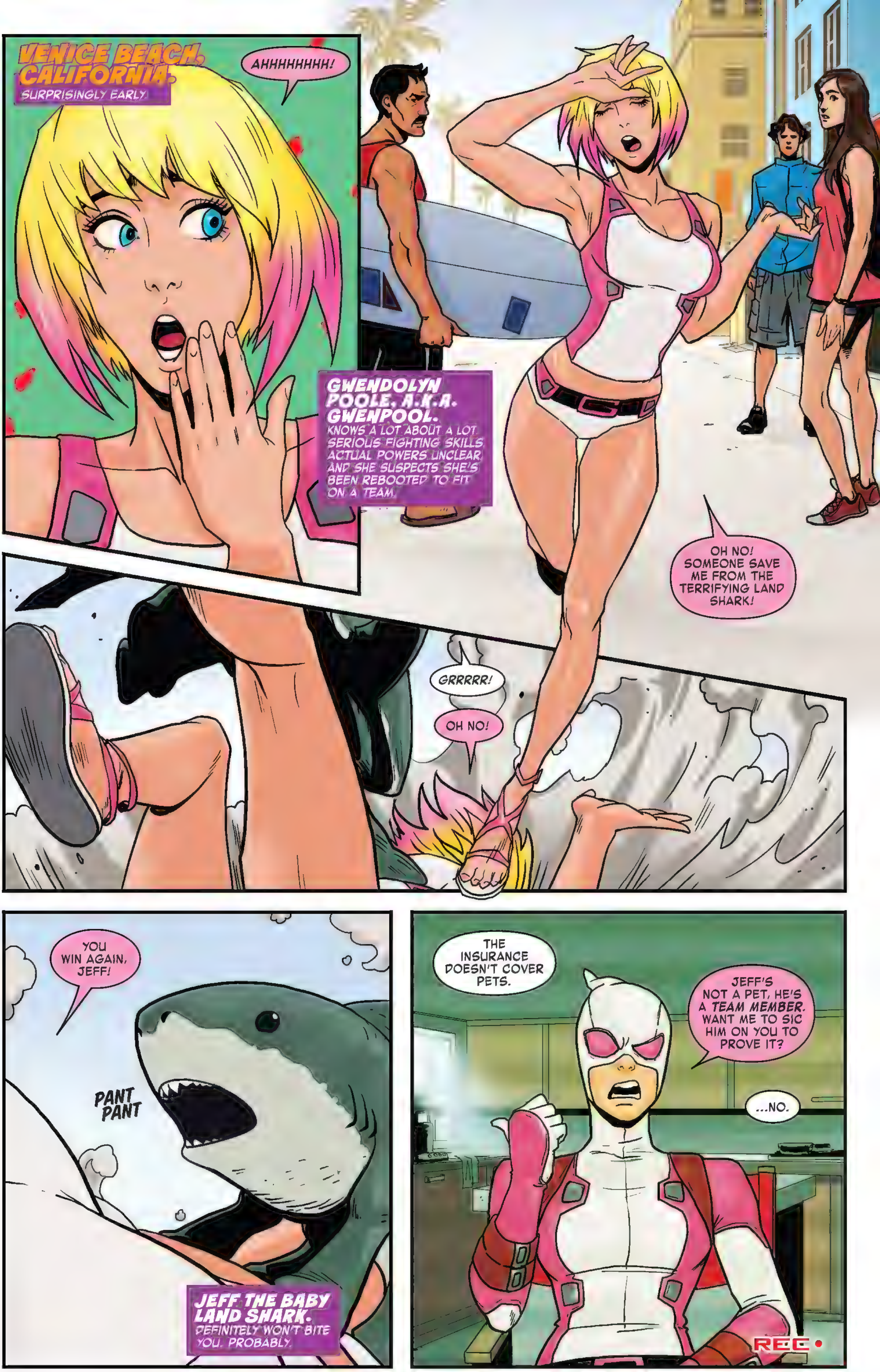

THAT WAS THE ABSOLUTE WORST! YOU IDIOTS RUINED *EVERYTHING!* WE USED SOME OF MY BEST STUFF, INCLUDING MY SONIC-BASED POWER-DAMPENING SYSTEM, AND YOU LET THOSE DUMB KIDS-- AND CLINT BARTON-- DESTROY IT!
YOU'RE RIDICULOUS, M.O.D.O.K. WE SHOULD HAVE JUST USED MAGIC, LIKE I SAID IN THE FIRST PLACE.
OH, BECAUSE YOUR "MAGIC" WORKED SO WELL, SATANA?! YOU COULDN'T EVEN KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL FOR AN EVENING!
I THINK YOU'RE BOTH PRETTY RIDICULOUS.
I'M WITH LADY BULLSEYE.
YOU'RE AS STUPID AS YOUR NAME, EEL.
HEY. THAT SEEMS UNCALLED FOR.
I'M NOT HERE FOR MINDLESS BICKERING. HAVE I WASTED MY TIME, MADAME MASQUE? IF YOU CAN'T DELIVER, I'M WALKING.
OH SHUT UP, GRAVITON. YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
ACTUAL GRAVITON THIS TIME.
YOU'RE ALL FOOLS. ALL THIS PROVED IS THAT THERE'S MORE NEED FOR A WEST COAST *MASTERS OF EVIL* THAN EVER BEFORE. WE HOPED TONIGHT TO DRIVE WEDGES BETWEEN THEM BY PITTING THEM AGAINST ONE ANOTHER...TO SOW THE SEEDS OF SELF-DOUBT.
THIS WAS NOT AS EFFECTIVE AS WE HOPED BECAUSE WE UNDERESTIMATED THEM. THAT WILL *NOT* HAPPEN AGAIN.
WE WILL REDOUBLE OUR EFFORTS, AND WE WON'T STOP UNTIL WE'VE CRUSHED THE WEST COAST AVENGERS...

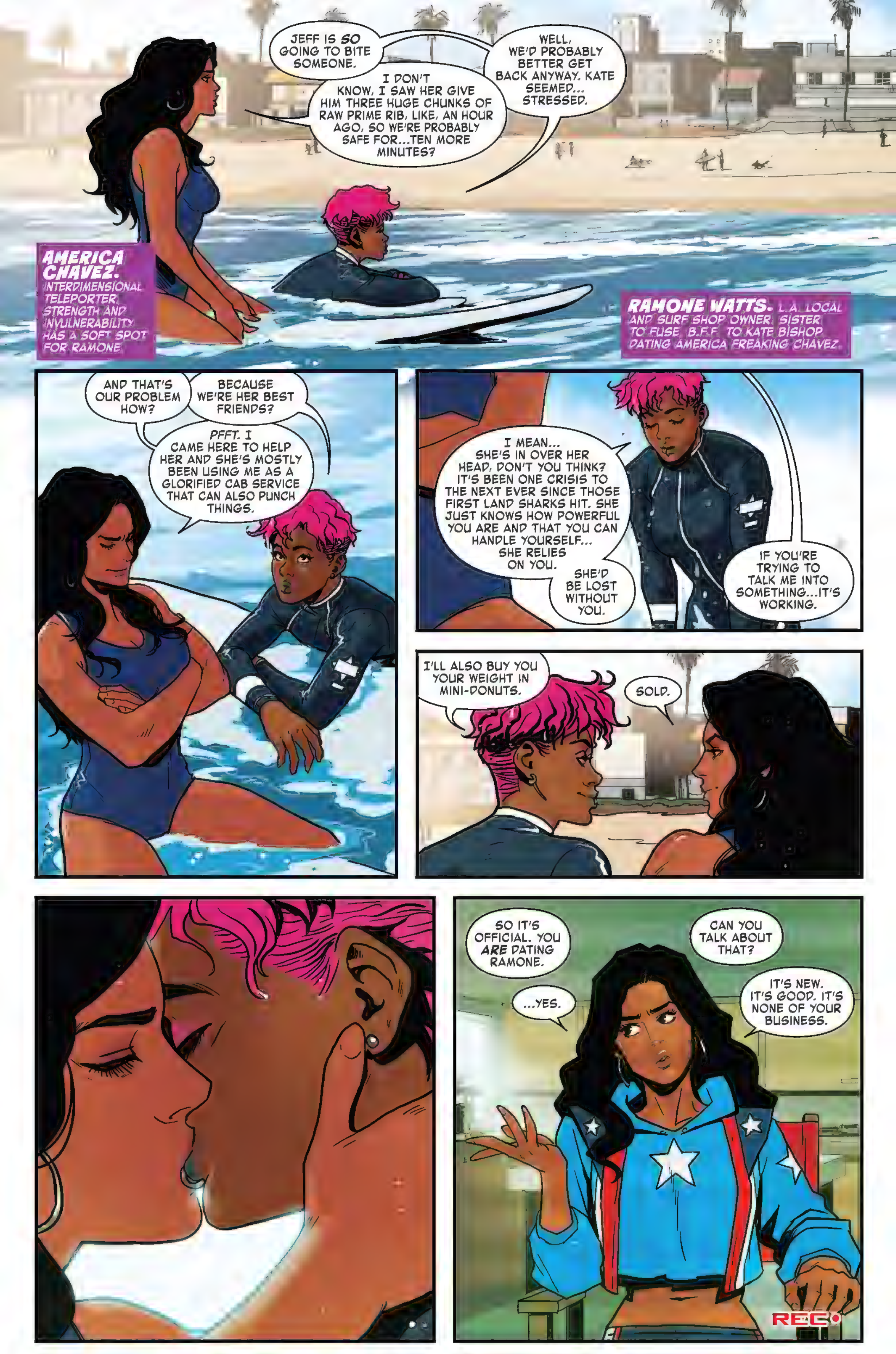

...UNLESS, OF COURSE, THAT'S A PROBLEM FOR YOU, *BISHOP?*

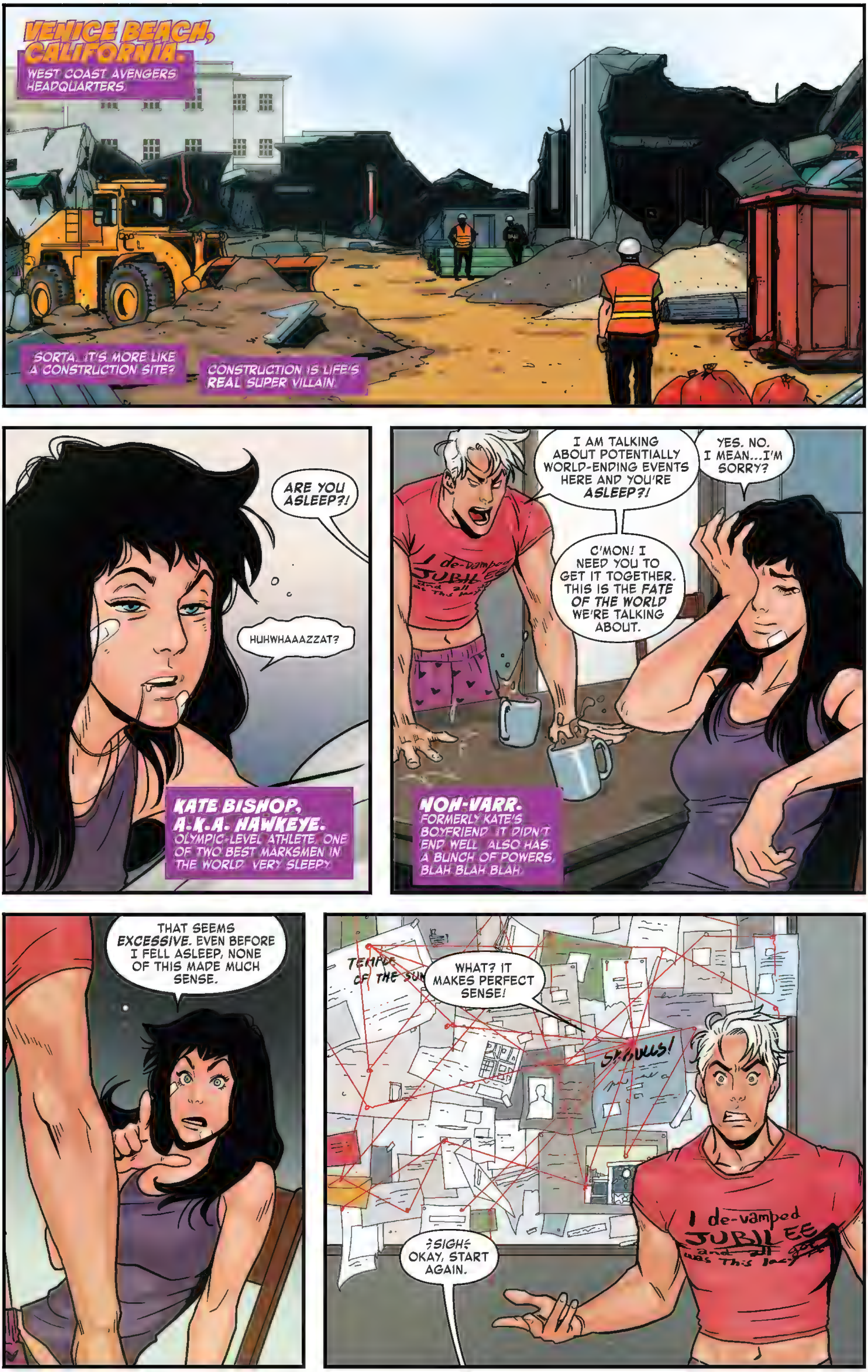

DEREK BISHOP.
FATHER OF HAWKEYE (KATE BISHOP VERSION).
OF COURSE NOT.

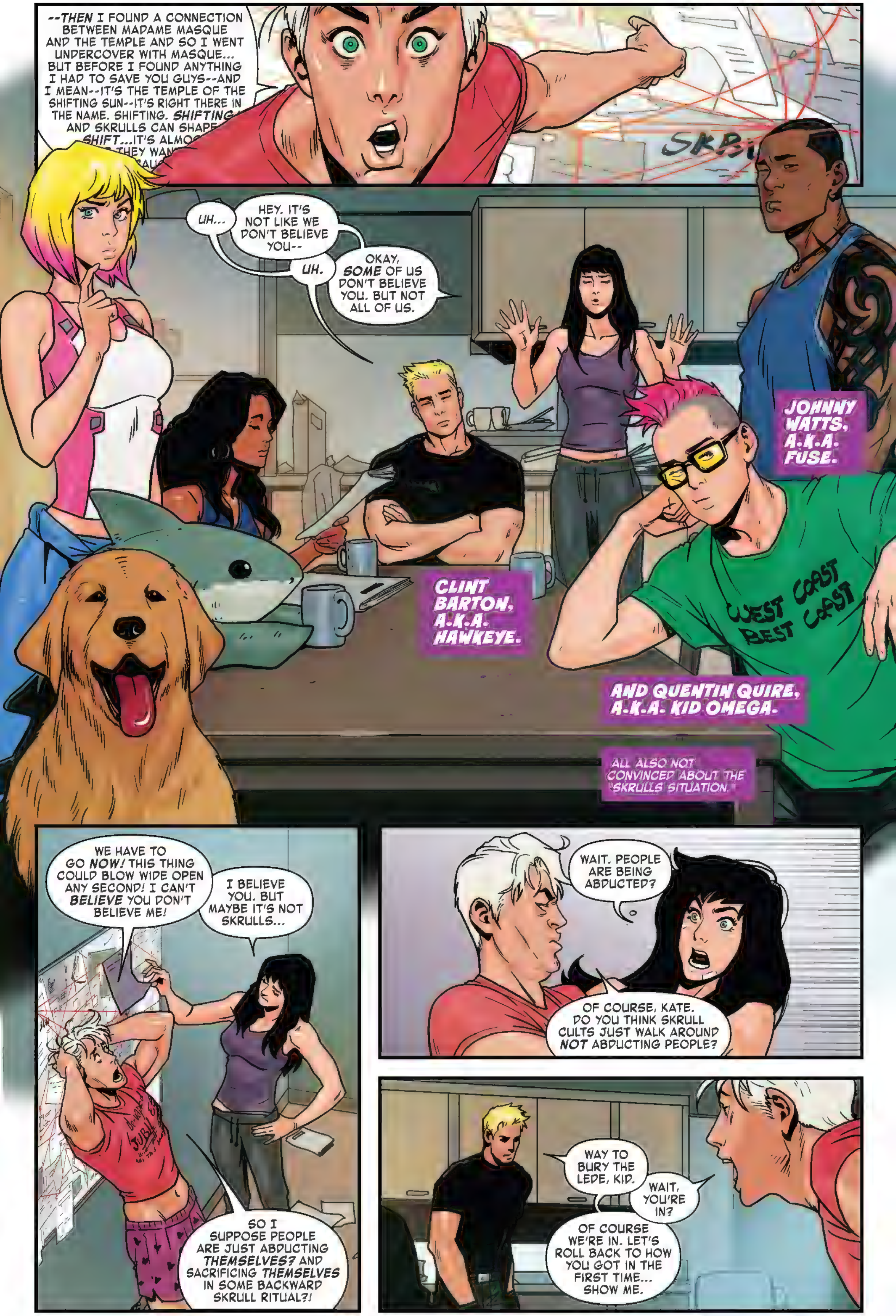
EdJubey
PETROVICH

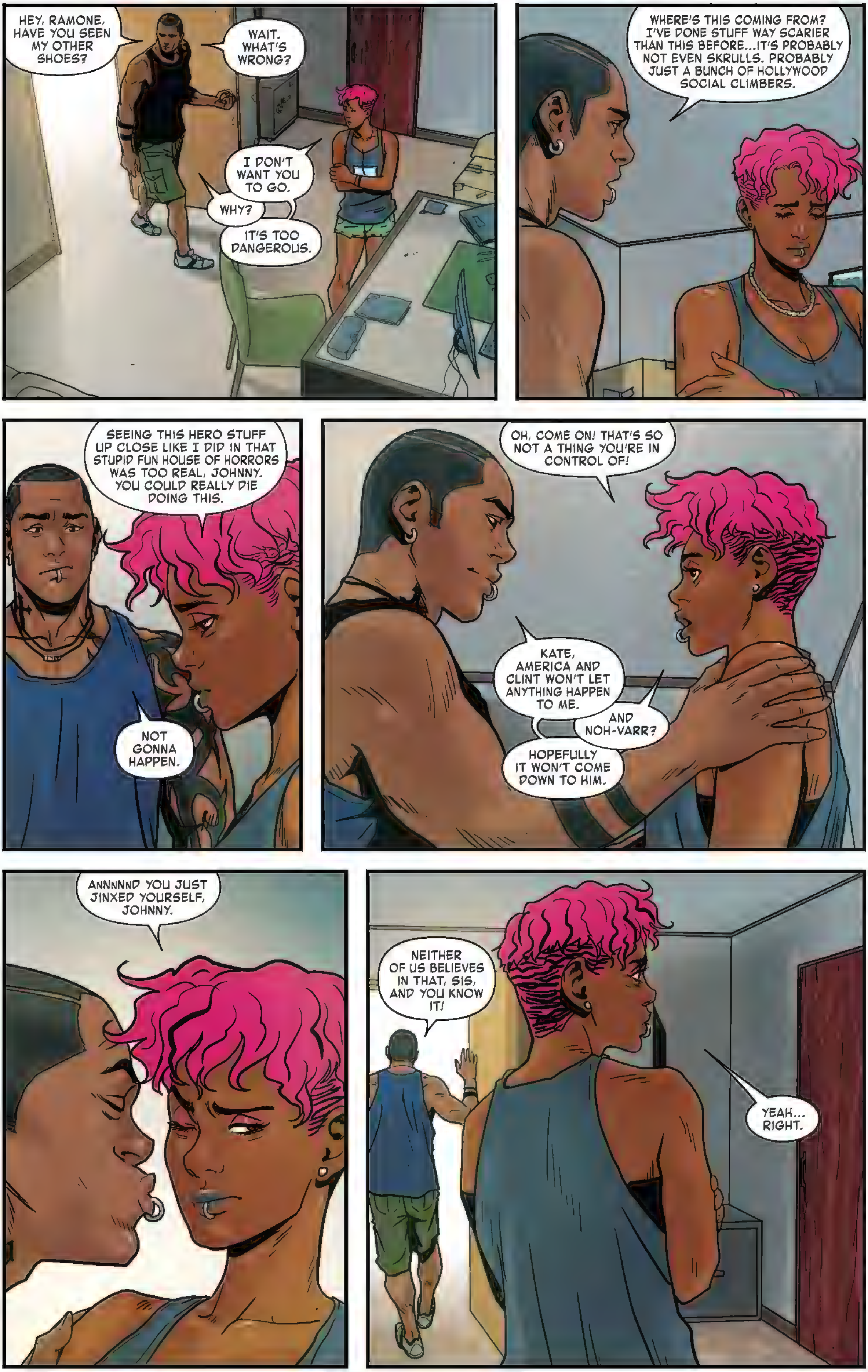
WEST COAST AVENGERS #8

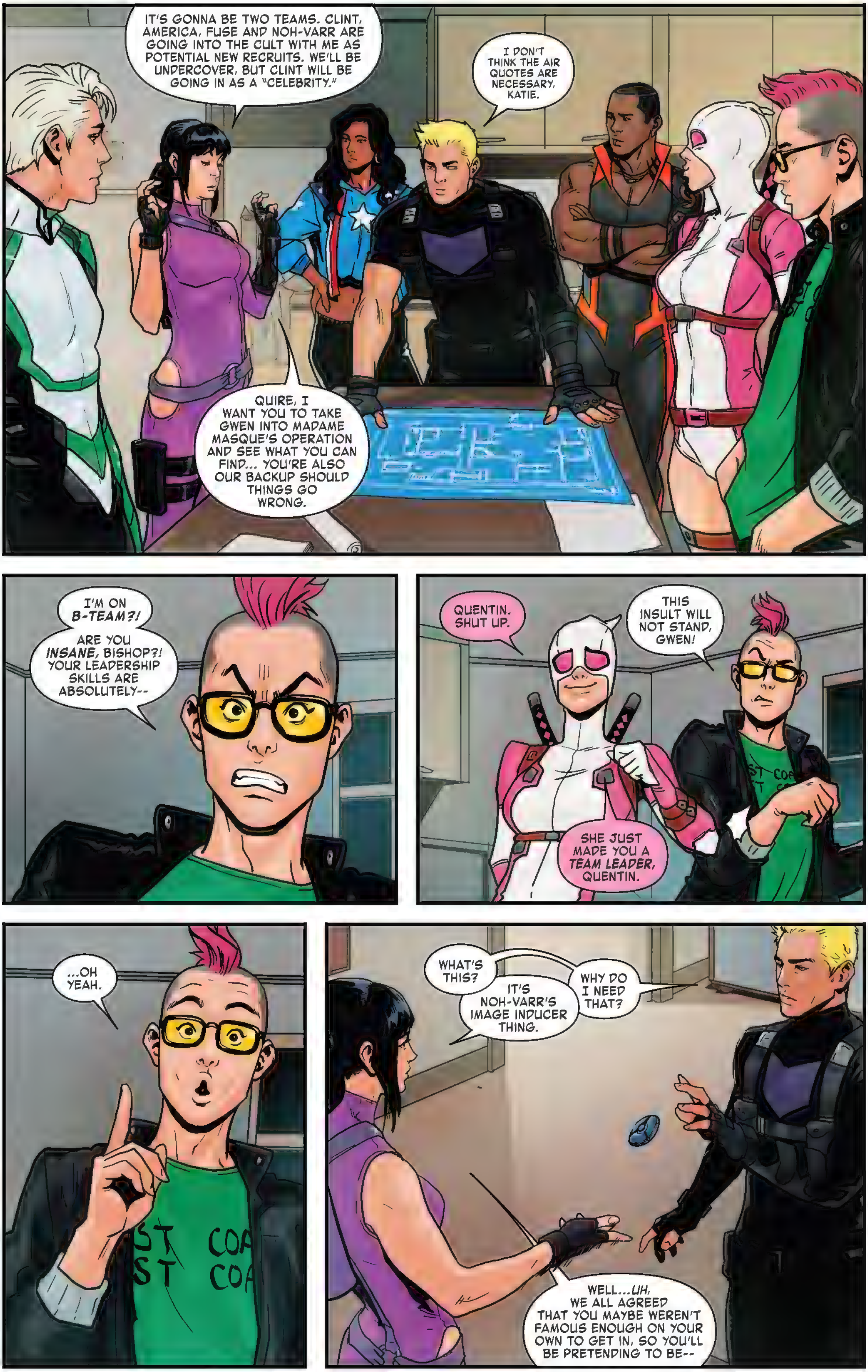

VENICE BEACH, CALIFORNIA.
SURPRISINGLY EARLY.
AHHHHHHHH!
GWENDOLYN POOLE, A.K.A. GWENPOOL.
KNOWS A LOT ABOUT A LOT. SERIOUS FIGHTING SKILLS. ACTUAL POWERS UNCLEAR AND SHE SUSPECTS SHE'S BEEN REBOOTED TO FIT ON A TEAM.
OH NO! SOMEONE SAVE ME FROM THE TERRIFYING LAND SHARK!
GRRRRR!
OH NO!
YOU WIN AGAIN, JEFF!
PANT PANT
JEFF THE BABY LAND SHARK.
DEFINITELY WON'T BITE YOU. PROBABLY.
THE INSURANCE DOESN'T COVER PETS.
JEFF'S NOT A PET, HE'S A TEAM MEMBER. WANT ME TO SIC HIM ON YOU TO PROVE IT?
...NO.
REC

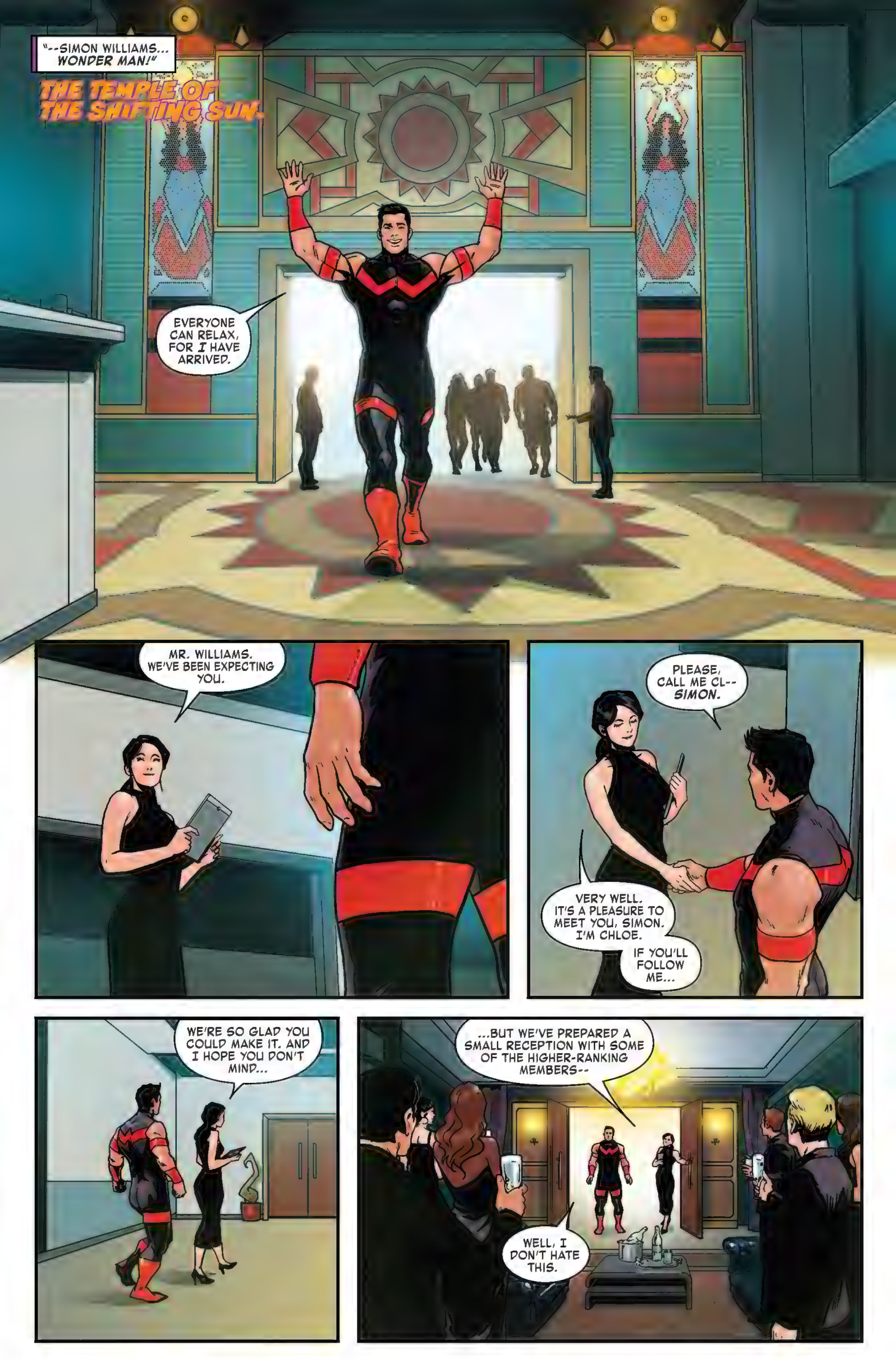

JEFF IS *SO* GOING TO BITE SOMEONE.
I DON'T KNOW, I SAW HER GIVE HIM THREE HUGE CHUNKS OF RAW PRIME RIB, LIKE, AN HOUR AGO, SO WE'RE PROBABLY SAFE FOR...TEN MORE MINUTES?
WELL, WE'D PROBABLY BETTER GET BACK ANYWAY. KATE SEEMED... STRESSED.
AMERICA CHAVEZ. INTERDIMENSIONAL TELEPORTER. STRENGTH AND INVULNERABILITY. HAS A SOFT SPOT FOR RAMONE.
RAMONE WATTS. L.A. LOCAL AND SURF SHOP OWNER. SISTER TO FUSE. B.F.F. TO KATE BISHOP. DATING AMERICA FREAKING CHAVEZ.
AND THAT'S OUR PROBLEM HOW?
BECAUSE WE'RE HER BEST FRIENDS?
PFFT. I CAME HERE TO HELP HER AND SHE'S MOSTLY BEEN USING ME AS A GLORIFIED CAB SERVICE THAT CAN ALSO PUNCH THINGS.
I MEAN... SHE'S IN OVER HER HEAD, DON'T YOU THINK? IT'S BEEN ONE CRISIS TO THE NEXT EVER SINCE THOSE FIRST LAND SHARKS HIT. SHE JUST KNOWS HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE AND THAT YOU CAN HANDLE YOURSELF... SHE RELIES ON YOU.
SHE'D BE LOST WITHOUT YOU.
IF YOU'RE TRYING TO TALK ME INTO SOMETHING...IT'S WORKING.
I'LL ALSO BUY YOU YOUR WEIGHT IN MINI-DONUTS.
SOLD.
SO IT'S OFFICIAL. YOU *ARE* DATING RAMONE.
...YES.
CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THAT?
IT'S NEW. IT'S GOOD. IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
REC

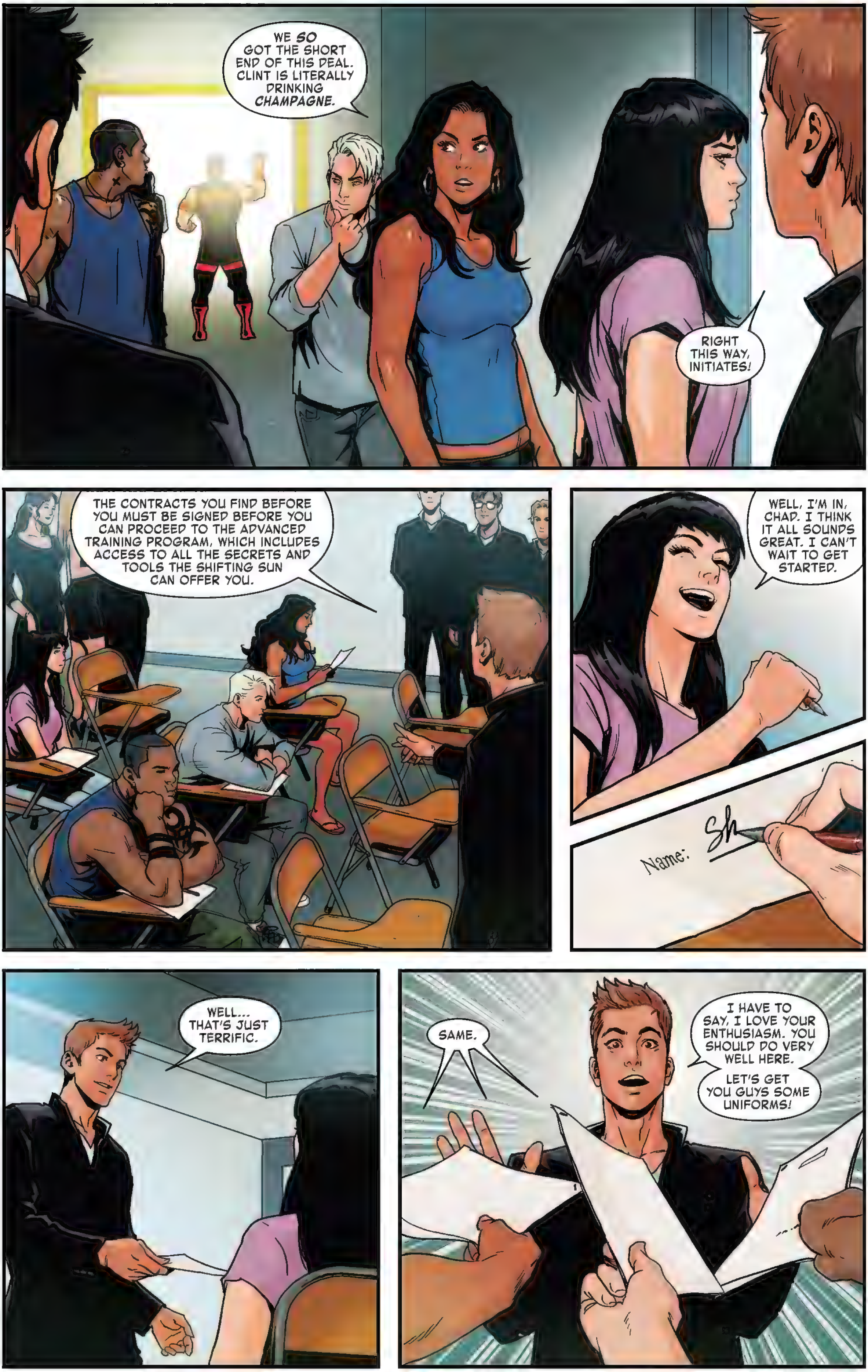

VENICE BEACH, CALIFORNIA.
WEST COAST AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS.
SORTA. IT'S MORE LIKE A CONSTRUCTION SITE?
CONSTRUCTION IS LIFE'S REAL SUPER VILLAIN.
ARE YOU ASLEEP?!
HUHWHAAAZZAT?
KATE BISHOP, A.K.A. HAWKEYE. OLYMPIC-LEVEL ATHLETE. ONE OF TWO BEST MARKSMEN IN THE WORLD. VERY SLEEPY.
I AM TALKING ABOUT POTENTIALLY WORLD-ENDING EVENTS HERE AND YOU'RE ASLEEP?!
C'MON! I NEED YOU TO GET IT TOGETHER. THIS IS THE FATE OF THE WORLD WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.
YES. NO. I MEAN...I'M SORRY?
NOH-VARR. FORMERLY KATE'S BOYFRIEND. IT DIDN'T END WELL. ALSO HAS A BUNCH OF POWERS. BLAH BLAH BLAH.
I de-vamped JUBILEE
THAT SEEMS EXCESSIVE. EVEN BEFORE I FELL ASLEEP, NONE OF THIS MADE MUCH SENSE.
TEMPLE OF THE SUN
WHAT? IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE!
SKRULLS!
SIGH OKAY, START AGAIN.

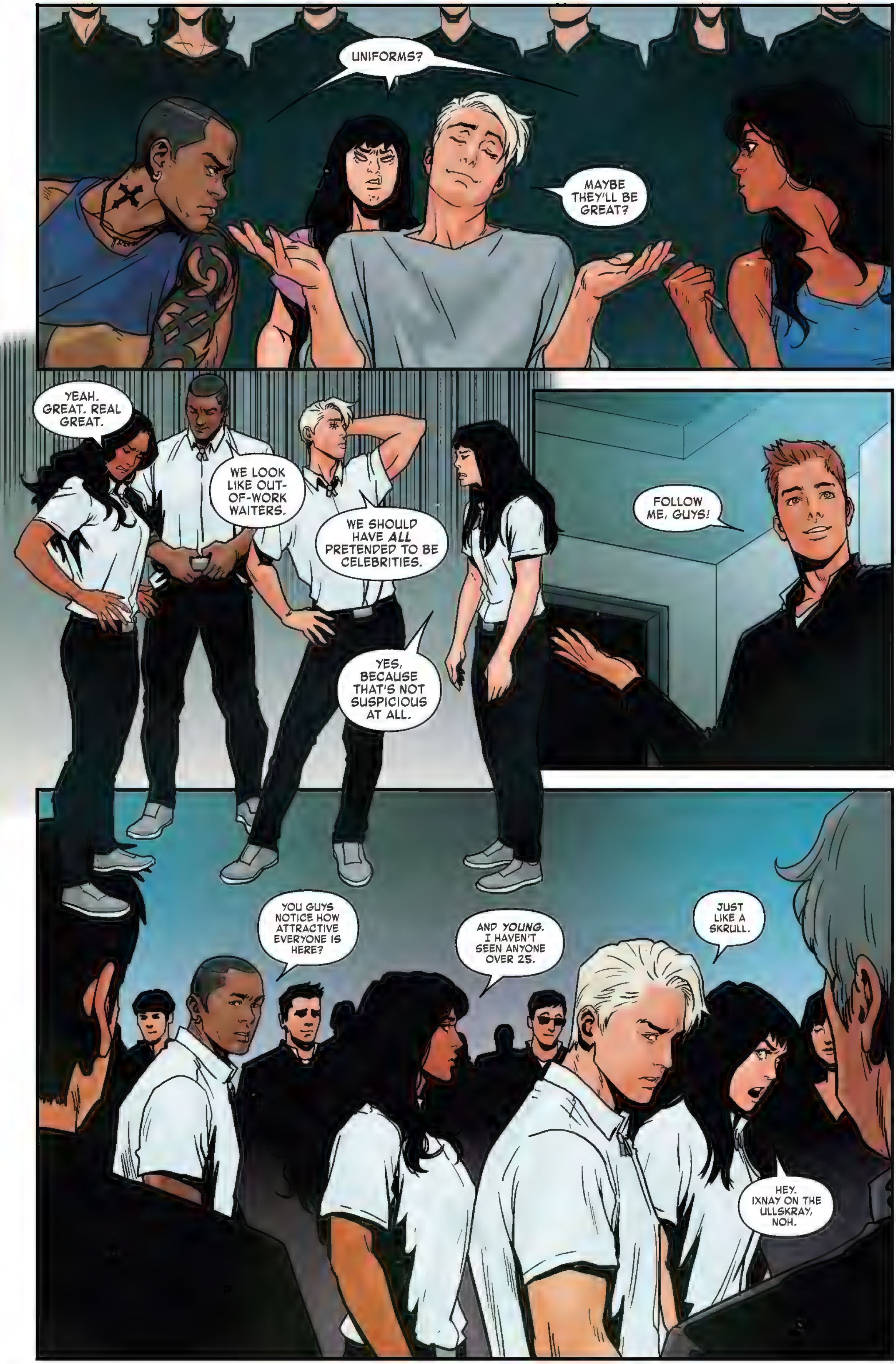

--*THEN* I FOUND A CONNECTION BETWEEN MADAME MASQUE AND THE TEMPLE AND SO I WENT UNDERCOVER WITH MASQUE... BUT BEFORE I FOUND ANYTHING I HAD TO SAVE YOU GUYS--AND I MEAN--IT'S THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN--IT'S RIGHT THERE IN THE NAME. SHIFTING. *SHIFTING* AND SKRULLS CAN SHAPE *SHIFT*...IT'S ALMO THEY WAN BAU
SKR
UH...
HEY. IT'S NOT LIKE WE DON'T BELIEVE YOU--
UH.
OKAY, *SOME* OF US DON'T BELIEVE YOU. BUT NOT ALL OF US.
JOHNNY WATTS, A.K.A. FUSE.
CLINT BARTON, A.K.A. HAWKEYE.
WEST COAST BEST COAST
AND QUENTIN QUIRE, A.K.A. KID OMEGA.
ALL ALSO NOT CONVINCED ABOUT THE "SKRULLS SITUATION."
WE HAVE TO GO *NOW!* THIS THING COULD BLOW WIDE OPEN ANY SECOND! I CAN'T *BELIEVE* YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME!
I BELIEVE YOU. BUT MAYBE IT'S NOT SKRULLS...
JUBI
SO I SUPPOSE PEOPLE ARE JUST ABDUCTING *THEMSELVES?* AND SACRIFICING *THEMSELVES* IN SOME BACKWARD SKRULL RITUAL?!
WAIT. PEOPLE ARE BEING ABDUCTED?
OF COURSE, KATE. DO YOU THINK SKRULL CULTS JUST WALK AROUND *NOT* ABDUCTING PEOPLE?
WAY TO BURY THE LEDE, KID.
WAIT, YOU'RE IN?
OF COURSE WE'RE IN. LET'S ROLL BACK TO HOW YOU GOT IN THE FIRST TIME... SHOW ME.

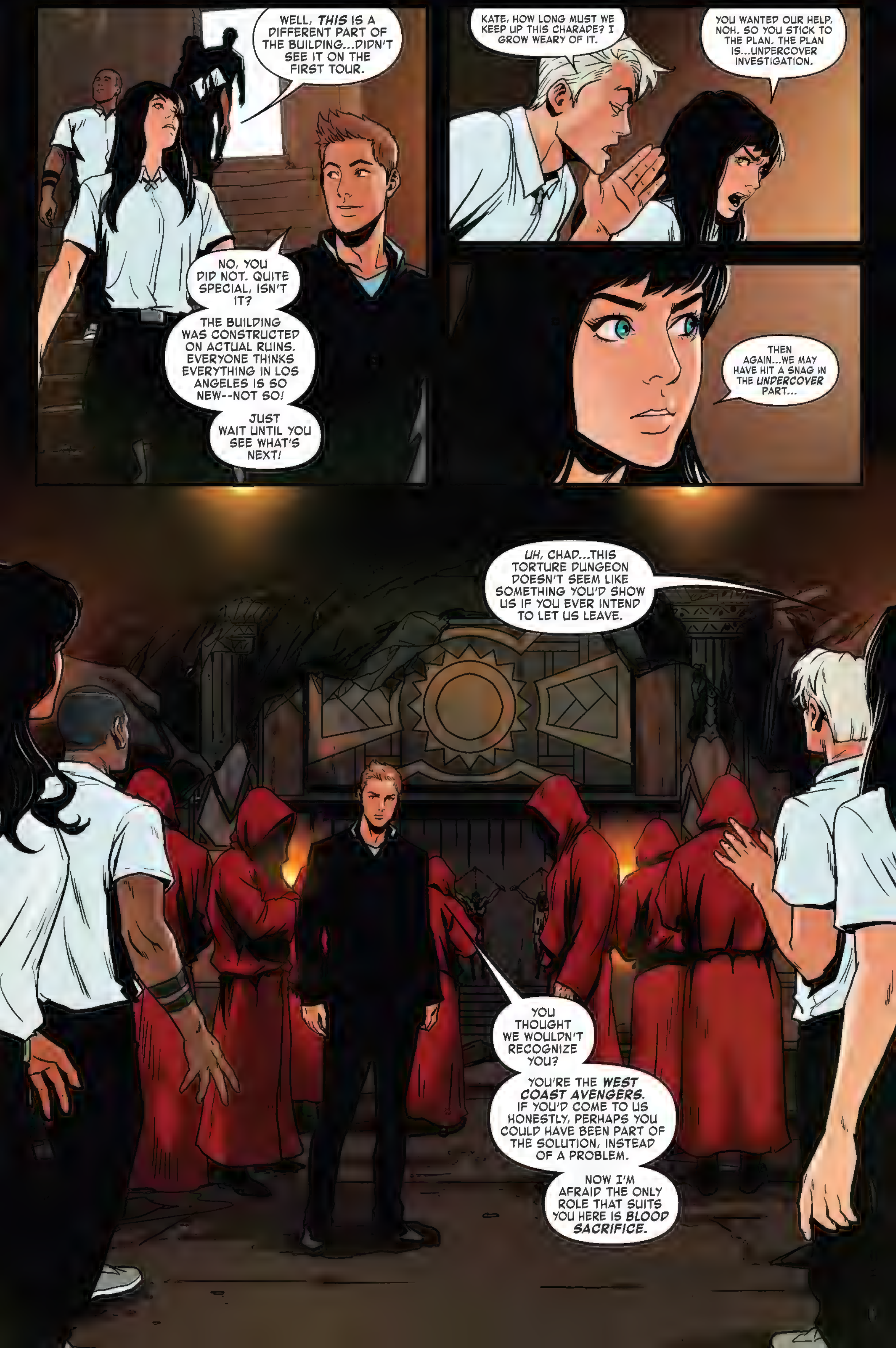

HEY, RAMONE, HAVE YOU SEEN MY OTHER SHOES?
WAIT. WHAT'S WRONG?
I DON'T WANT YOU TO GO.
WHY?
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.
WHERE'S THIS COMING FROM? I'VE DONE STUFF WAY SCARIER THAN THIS BEFORE...IT'S PROBABLY NOT EVEN SKRULLS. PROBABLY JUST A BUNCH OF HOLLYWOOD SOCIAL CLIMBERS.
SEEING THIS HERO STUFF UP CLOSE LIKE I DID IN THAT STUPID FUN HOUSE OF HORRORS WAS TOO REAL, JOHNNY. YOU COULD REALLY DIE DOING THIS.
NOT GONNA HAPPEN.
OH, COME ON! THAT'S SO NOT A THING YOU'RE IN CONTROL OF!
KATE, AMERICA AND CLINT WON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO ME.
AND NOH-VARR?
HOPEFULLY IT WON'T COME DOWN TO HIM.
ANNNNND YOU JUST JINXED YOURSELF, JOHNNY.
NEITHER OF US BELIEVES IN THAT, SIS, AND YOU KNOW IT!
YEAH... RIGHT.

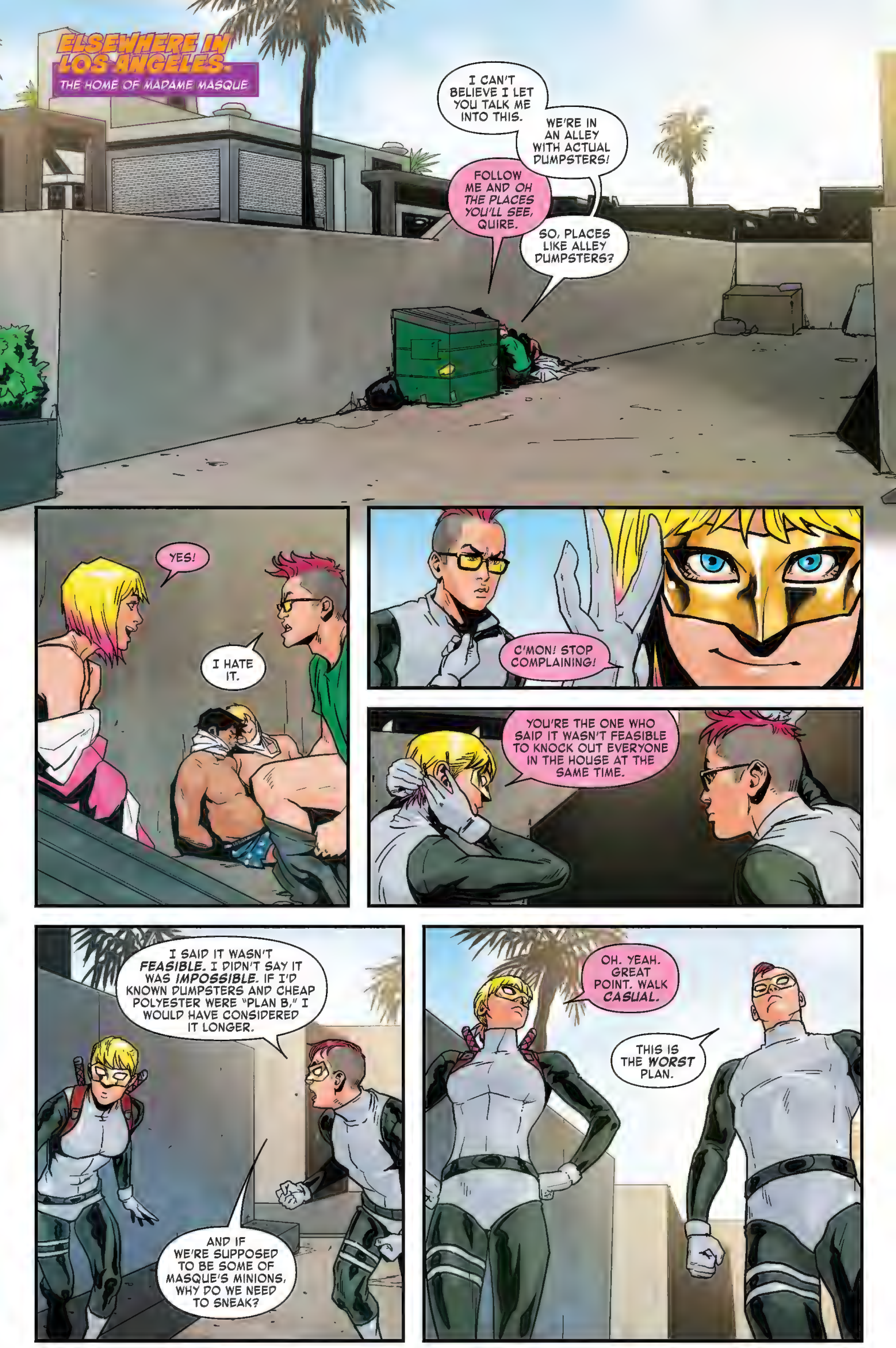

IT'S GONNA BE TWO TEAMS. CLINT, AMERICA, FUSE AND NOH-VARR ARE GOING INTO THE CULT WITH ME AS POTENTIAL NEW RECRUITS. WE'LL BE UNDERCOVER, BUT CLINT WILL BE GOING IN AS A "CELEBRITY."
I DON'T THINK THE AIR QUOTES ARE NECESSARY, KATIE.
QUIRE, I WANT YOU TO TAKE GWEN INTO MADAME MASQUE'S OPERATION AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND... YOU'RE ALSO OUR BACKUP SHOULD THINGS GO WRONG.
I'M ON *B-TEAM?!*
ARE YOU *INSANE,* BISHOP?! YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS ARE ABSOLUTELY--
QUENTIN. SHUT UP.
THIS INSULT WILL NOT STAND, GWEN!
SHE JUST MADE YOU A *TEAM LEADER,* QUENTIN.
...OH YEAH.
WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S NOH-VARR'S IMAGE INDUCER THING.
WHY DO I NEED THAT?
WELL... *UH,* WE ALL AGREED THAT YOU MAYBE WEREN'T FAMOUS ENOUGH ON YOUR OWN TO GET IN, SO YOU'LL BE PRETENDING TO BE--

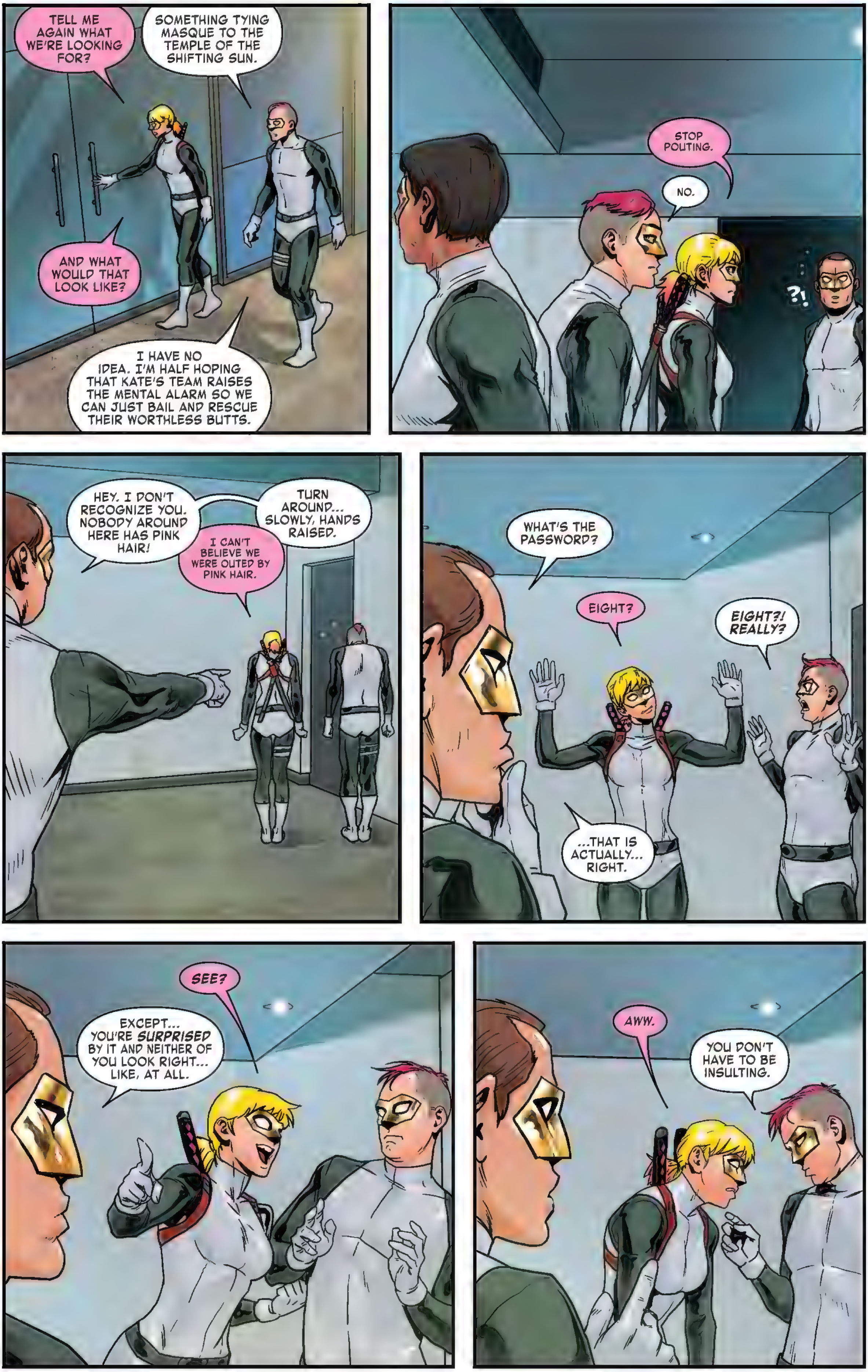

"--SIMON WILLIAMS... WONDER MAN!"
THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN.
EVERYONE CAN RELAX, FOR *I* HAVE ARRIVED.
MR. WILLIAMS. WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
PLEASE, CALL ME CL-- *SIMON.*
VERY WELL. IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, SIMON. I'M CHLOE.
IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME...
WE'RE SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT. AND I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND...
...BUT WE'VE PREPARED A SMALL RECEPTION WITH SOME OF THE HIGHER-RANKING MEMBERS--
WELL, I DON'T HATE THIS.

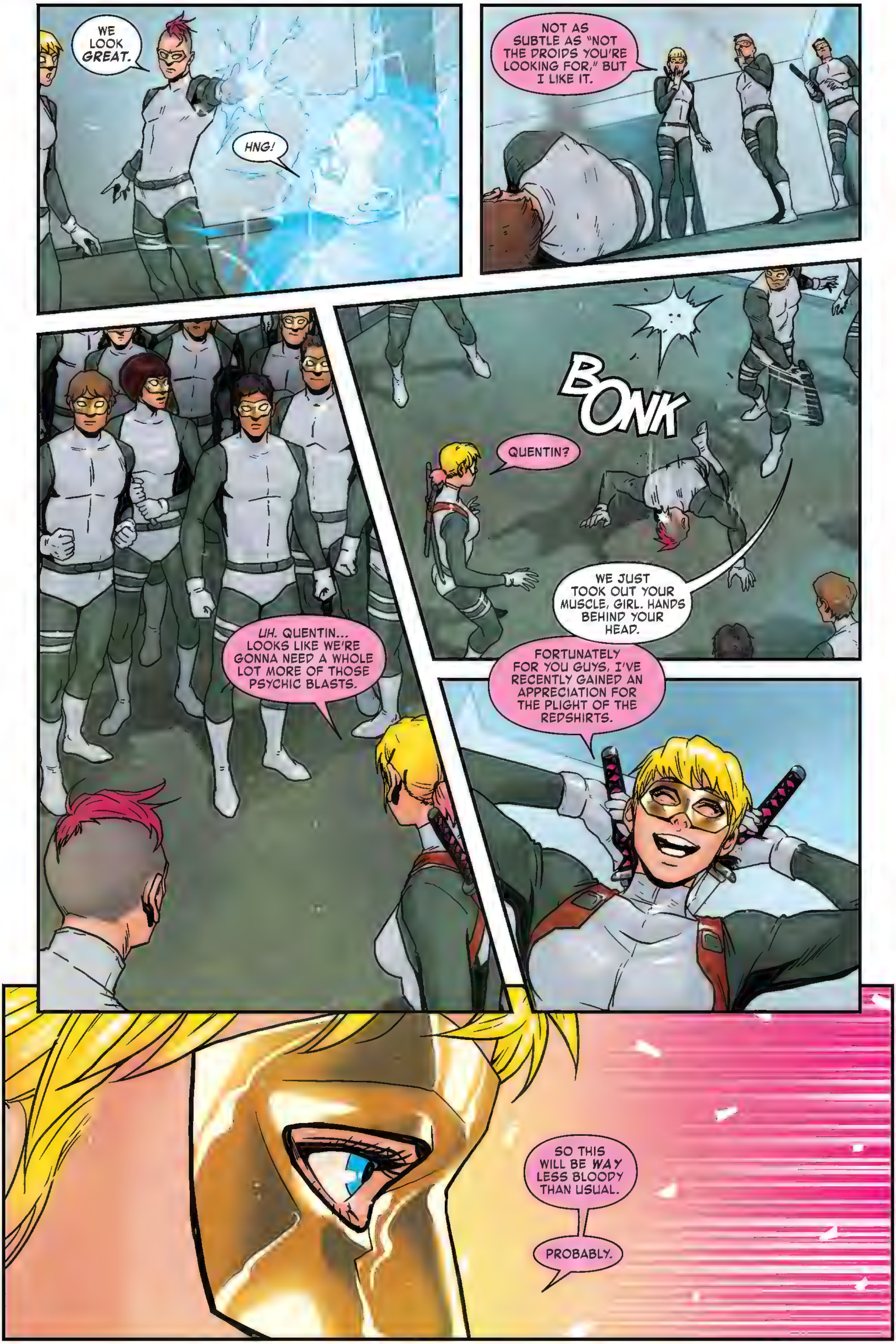

WE *SO* GOT THE SHORT END OF THIS DEAL. CLINT IS LITERALLY DRINKING *CHAMPAGNE*.
RIGHT THIS WAY, INITIATES!
THE CONTRACTS YOU FIND BEFORE YOU MUST BE SIGNED BEFORE YOU CAN PROCEED TO THE ADVANCED TRAINING PROGRAM, WHICH INCLUDES ACCESS TO ALL THE SECRETS AND TOOLS THE SHIFTING SUN CAN OFFER YOU.
WELL, I'M IN, CHAD. I THINK IT ALL SOUNDS GREAT. I CAN'T WAIT TO GET STARTED.
Name: Sh
WELL... THAT'S JUST TERRIFIC.
SAME.
I HAVE TO SAY, I LOVE YOUR ENTHUSIASM. YOU SHOULD DO VERY WELL HERE.
LET'S GET YOU GUYS SOME UNIFORMS!

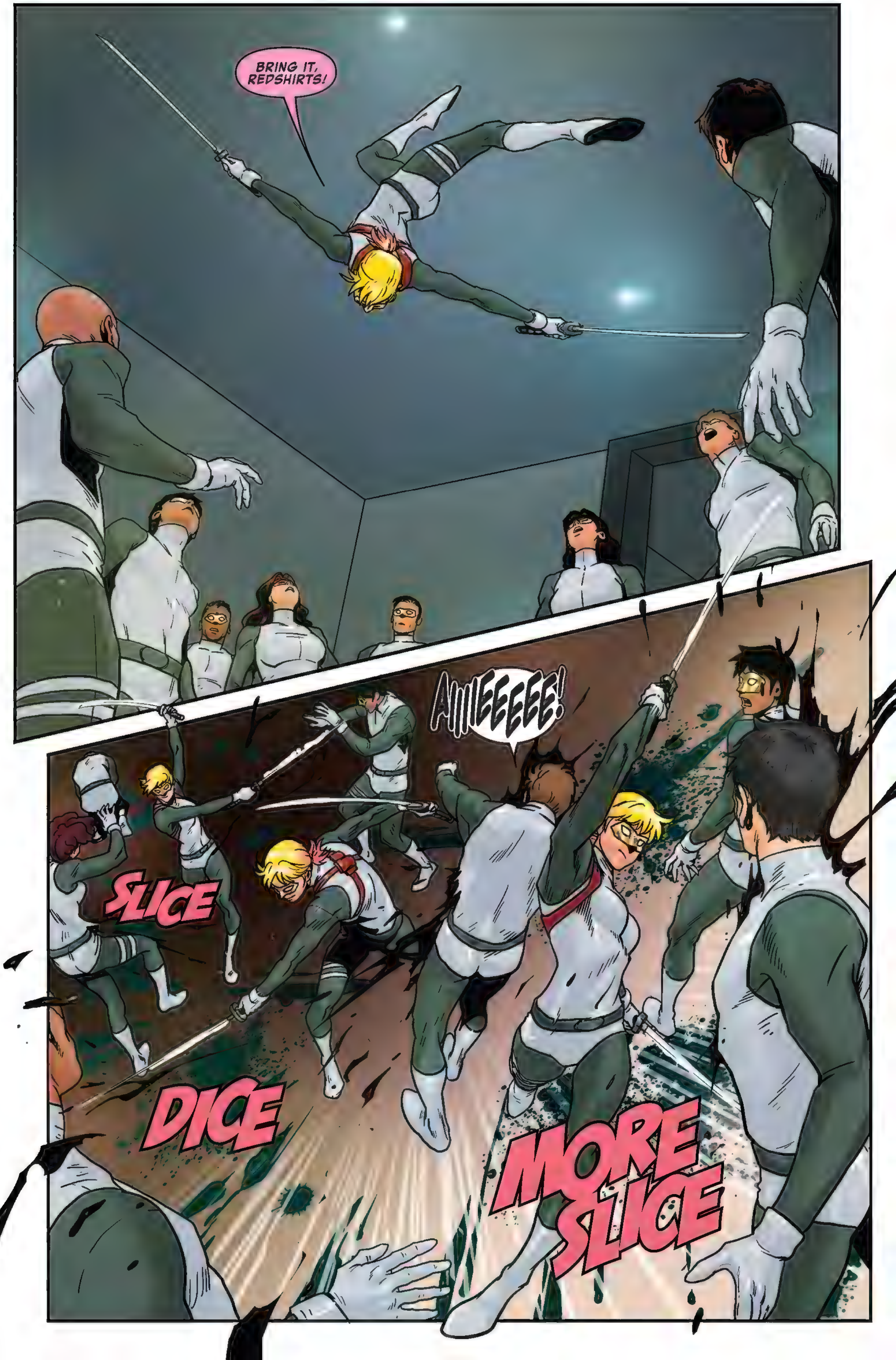

UNIFORMS?
MAYBE THEY'LL BE GREAT?
YEAH. GREAT. REAL GREAT.
WE LOOK LIKE OUT-OF-WORK WAITERS.
WE SHOULD HAVE *ALL* PRETENDED TO BE CELEBRITIES.
YES, BECAUSE THAT'S NOT SUSPICIOUS AT ALL.
FOLLOW ME, GUYS!
YOU GUYS NOTICE HOW ATTRACTIVE EVERYONE IS HERE?
AND *YOUNG*. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYONE OVER 25.
JUST LIKE A SKRULL.
HEY. IXNAY ON THE ULLSKRAY, NOH.

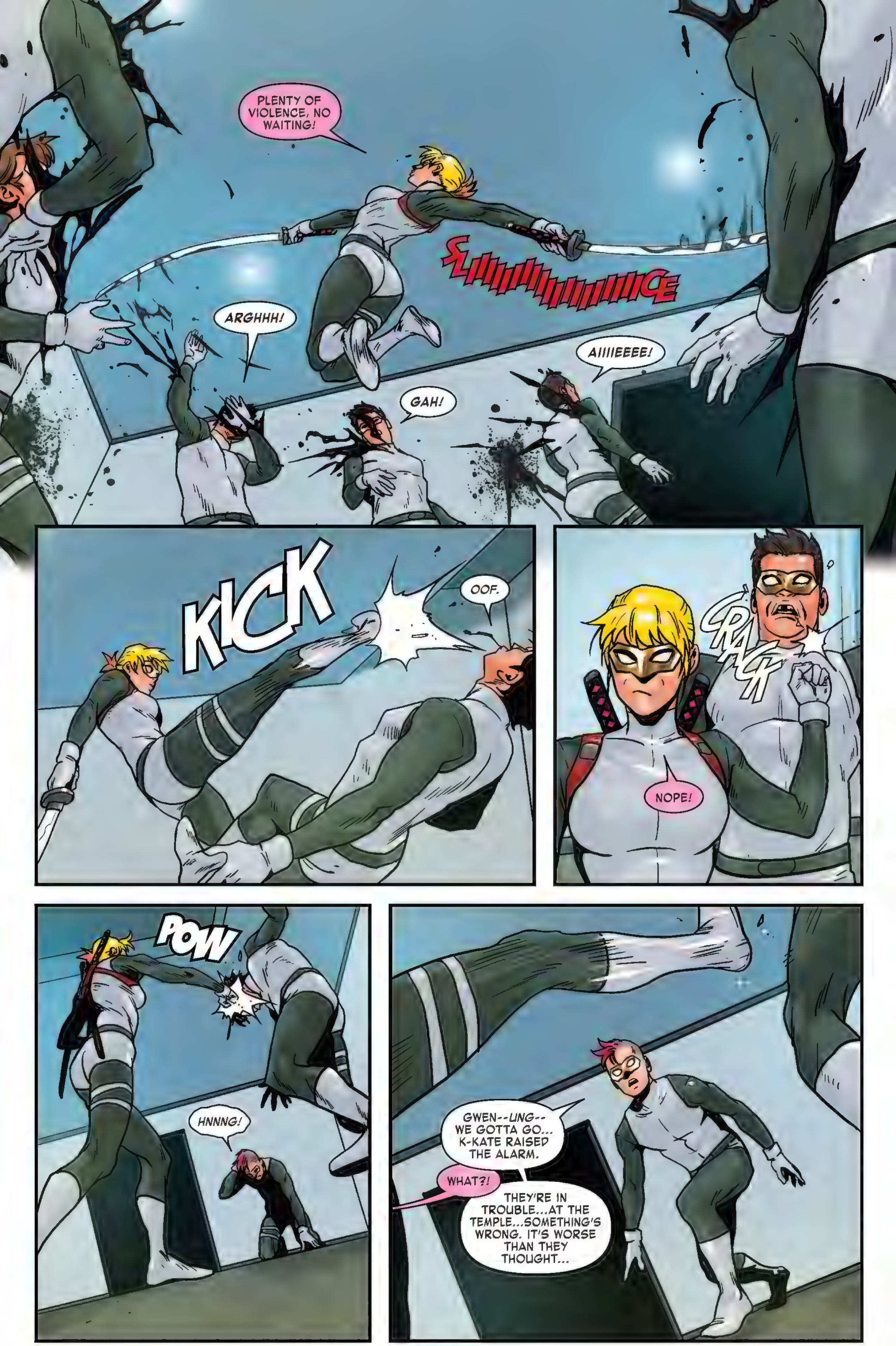

WELL, *THIS* IS A DIFFERENT PART OF THE BUILDING...DIDN'T SEE IT ON THE FIRST TOUR.
NO, YOU DID NOT. QUITE SPECIAL, ISN'T IT?
THE BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED ON ACTUAL RUINS. EVERYONE THINKS EVERYTHING IN LOS ANGELES IS SO NEW--NOT SO!
JUST WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE WHAT'S NEXT!
KATE, HOW LONG MUST WE KEEP UP THIS CHARADE? I GROW WEARY OF IT.
YOU WANTED OUR HELP, NOH. SO YOU STICK TO THE PLAN. THE PLAN IS...UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION.
THEN AGAIN...WE MAY HAVE HIT A SNAG IN THE *UNDERCOVER* PART...
UH, CHAD...THIS TORTURE DUNGEON DOESN'T SEEM LIKE SOMETHING YOU'D SHOW US IF YOU EVER INTEND TO LET US LEAVE.
YOU THOUGHT WE WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU?
YOU'RE THE *WEST COAST AVENGERS*. IF YOU'D COME TO US HONESTLY, PERHAPS YOU COULD HAVE BEEN PART OF THE SOLUTION, INSTEAD OF A PROBLEM.
NOW I'M AFRAID THE ONLY ROLE THAT SUITS YOU HERE IS *BLOOD SACRIFICE*.

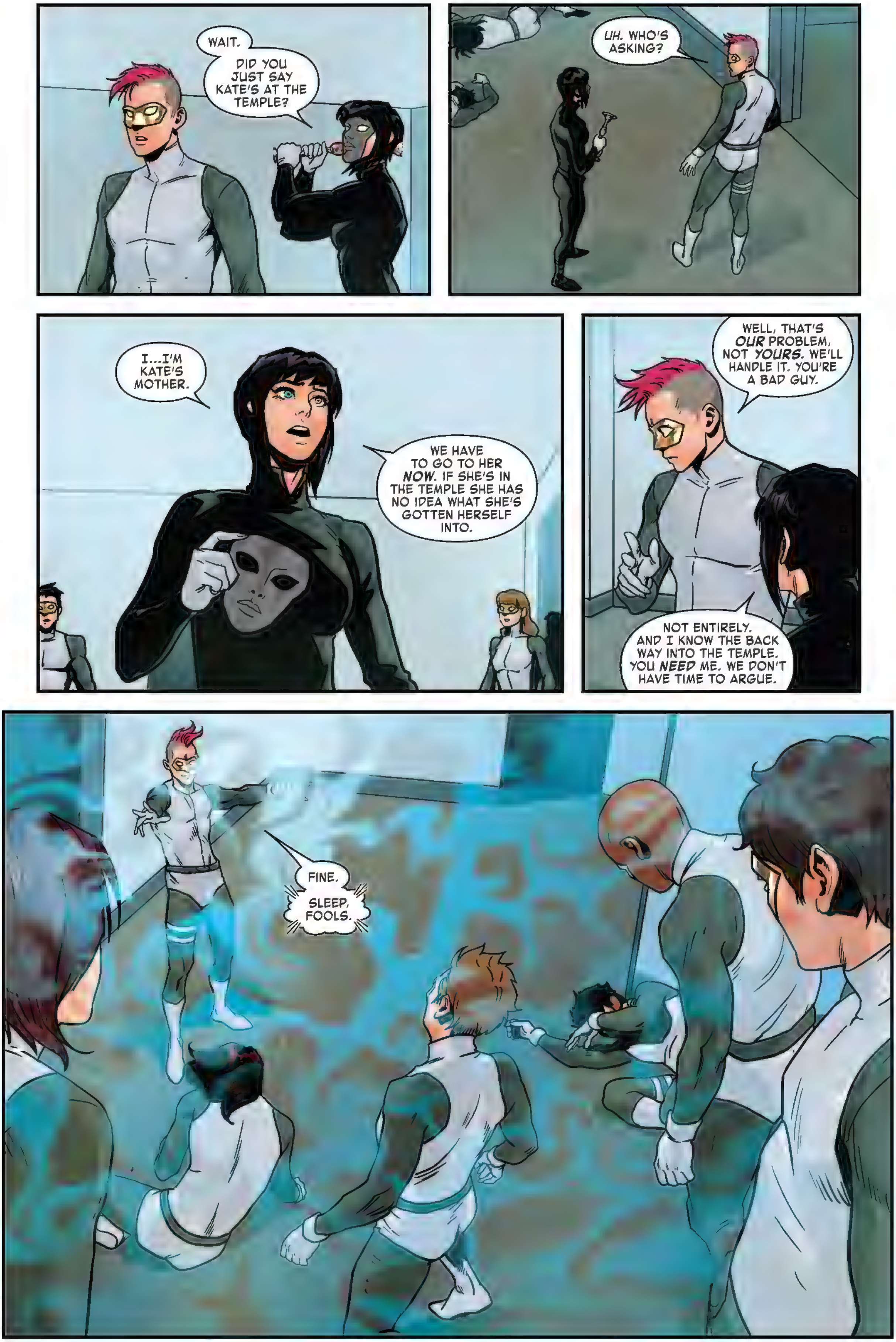

ELSEWHERE IN LOS ANGELES.
THE HOME OF MADAME MASQUE
I CAN'T BELIEVE I LET YOU TALK ME INTO THIS.
WE'RE IN AN ALLEY WITH ACTUAL DUMPSTERS!
FOLLOW ME AND OH THE PLACES YOU'LL SEE, QUIRE.
SO, PLACES LIKE ALLEY DUMPSTERS?
YES!
I HATE IT.
C'MON! STOP COMPLAINING!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID IT WASN'T FEASIBLE TO KNOCK OUT EVERYONE IN THE HOUSE AT THE SAME TIME.
I SAID IT WASN'T *FEASIBLE*. I DIDN'T SAY IT WAS *IMPOSSIBLE*. IF I'D KNOWN DUMPSTERS AND CHEAP POLYESTER WERE "PLAN B," I WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED IT LONGER.
AND IF WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SOME OF MASQUE'S MINIONS, WHY DO WE NEED TO SNEAK?
OH. YEAH. GREAT POINT. WALK *CASUAL*.
THIS IS THE *WORST* PLAN.

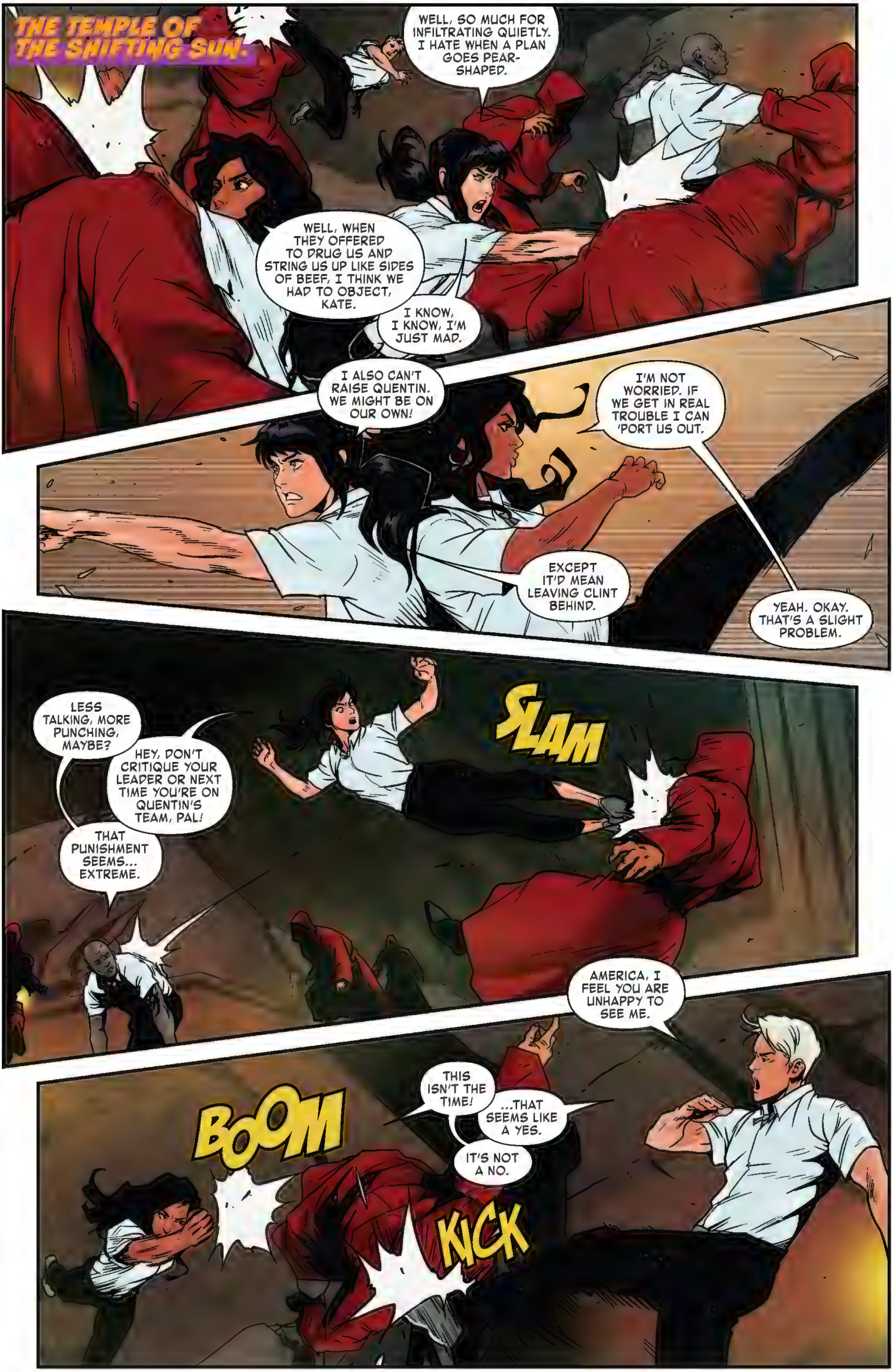

TELL ME AGAIN WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR?
SOMETHING TYING MASQUE TO THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN.
AND WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE?
I HAVE NO IDEA. I'M HALF HOPING THAT KATE'S TEAM RAISES THE MENTAL ALARM SO WE CAN JUST BAIL AND RESCUE THEIR WORTHLESS BUTTS.
STOP POUTING.
NO.
?!
HEY. I DON'T RECOGNIZE YOU. NOBODY AROUND HERE HAS PINK HAIR!
TURN AROUND... SLOWLY, HANDS RAISED.
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE WERE OUTED BY PINK HAIR.
WHAT'S THE PASSWORD?
EIGHT?
EIGHT?! REALLY?
...THAT IS ACTUALLY... RIGHT.
SEE?
EXCEPT... YOU'RE *SURPRISED* BY IT AND NEITHER OF YOU LOOK RIGHT... LIKE, AT ALL.
AWW.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE INSULTING.

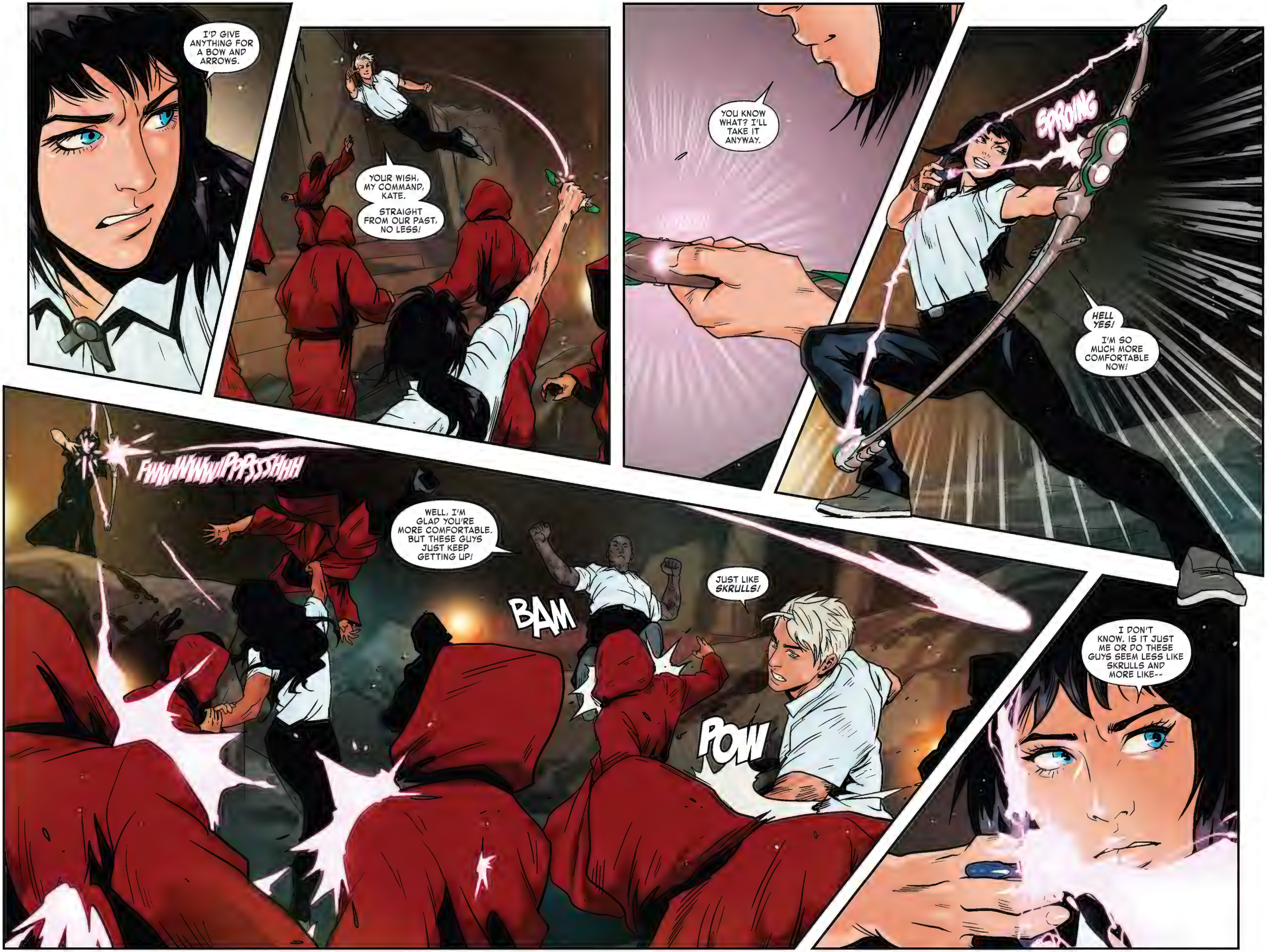

WE LOOK *GREAT.*
HNG!
NOT AS SUBTLE AS "NOT THE DROIDS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR," BUT I LIKE IT.
UH. QUENTIN... LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GONNA NEED A WHOLE LOT MORE OF THOSE PSYCHIC BLASTS.
BONK
QUENTIN?
WE JUST TOOK OUT YOUR MUSCLE, GIRL. HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD.
FORTUNATELY FOR YOU GUYS, I'VE RECENTLY GAINED AN APPRECIATION FOR THE PLIGHT OF THE REDSHIRTS.
SO THIS WILL BE *WAY* LESS BLOODY THAN USUAL.
PROBABLY.

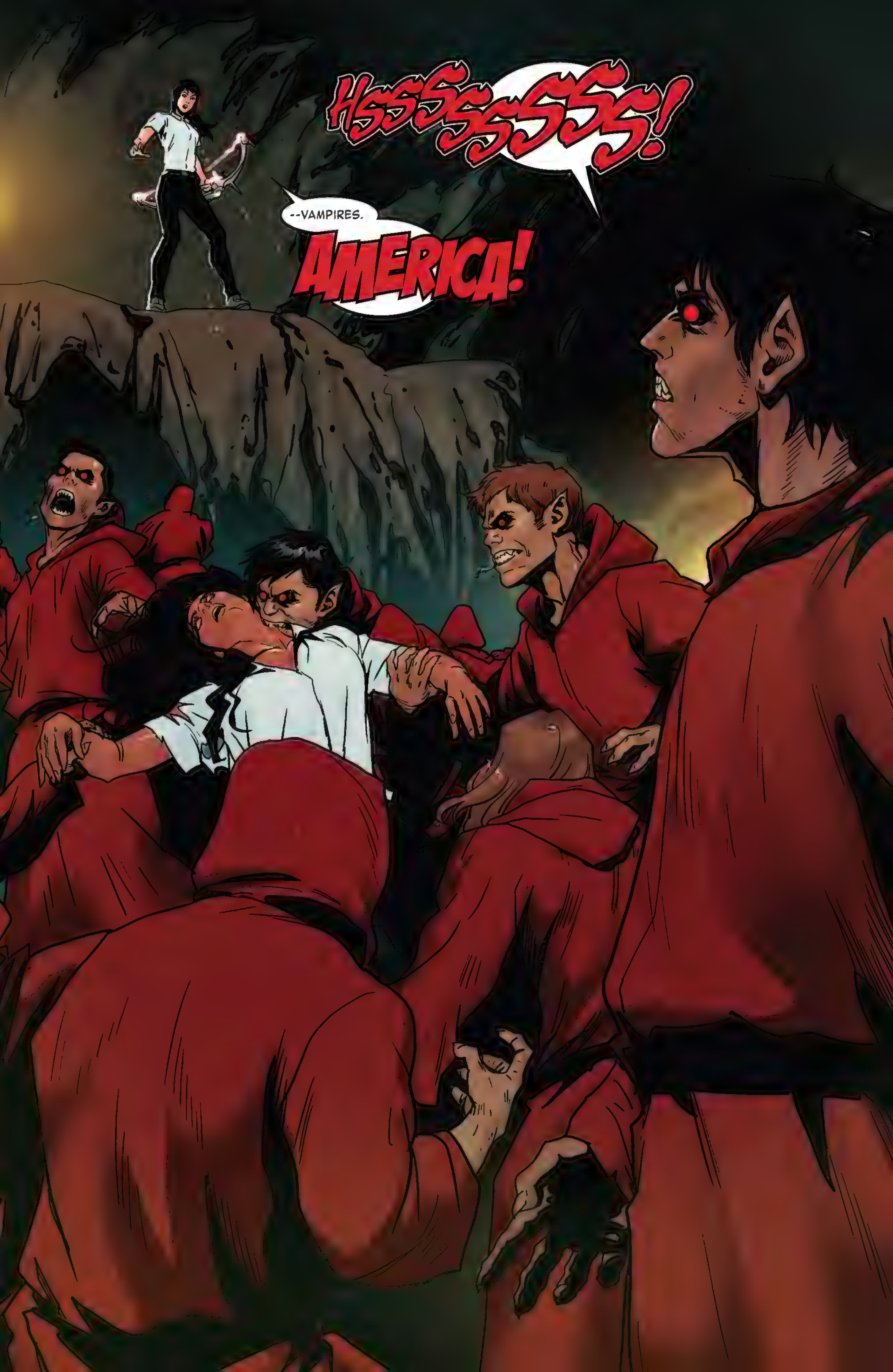

BRING IT, REDSHIRTS!
AIIIEEEEEE!
SLICE
DICE
MORE SLICE


PLENTY OF VIOLENCE, NO WAITING!
SLIIIIIIIIIIIIIICE
ARGHHH!
GAH!
AIIIIEEEE!
KICK
OOF.
CRACK
NOPE!
POW
HNNNG!
GWEN--*UNG*--WE GOTTA GO... K-KATE RAISED THE ALARM.
WHAT?!
THEY'RE IN TROUBLE...AT THE TEMPLE...SOMETHING'S WRONG. IT'S WORSE THAN THEY THOUGHT...

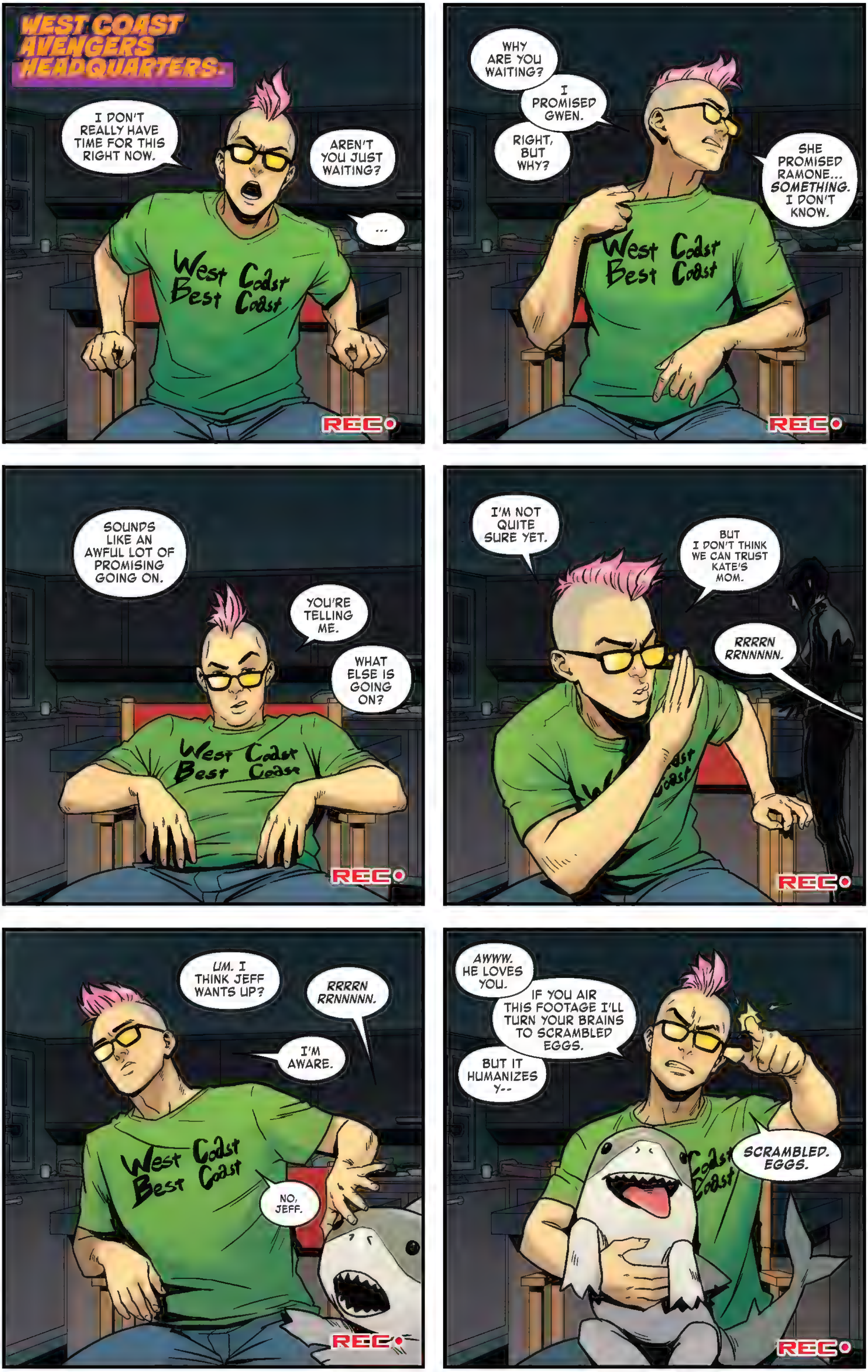

WAIT.
DID YOU JUST SAY KATE'S AT THE TEMPLE?
UH. WHO'S ASKING?
I...I'M KATE'S MOTHER.
WE HAVE TO GO TO HER *NOW*. IF SHE'S IN THE TEMPLE SHE HAS NO IDEA WHAT SHE'S GOTTEN HERSELF INTO.
WELL, THAT'S *OUR* PROBLEM, NOT *YOURS*. WE'LL HANDLE IT. YOU'RE A BAD GUY.
NOT ENTIRELY. AND I KNOW THE BACK WAY INTO THE TEMPLE. YOU *NEED* ME. WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO ARGUE.
FINE.
SLEEP, FOOLS.

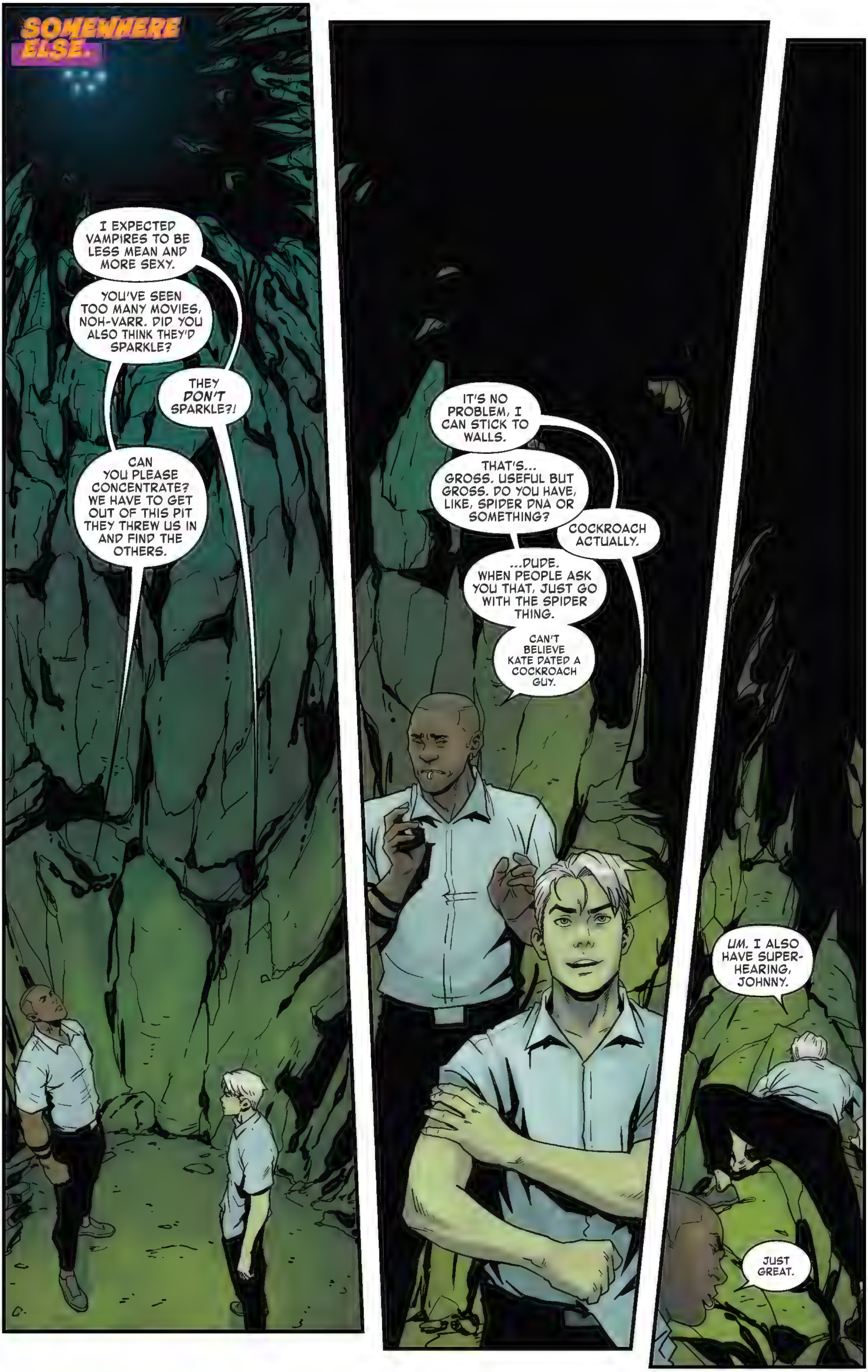

THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN.
WELL, SO MUCH FOR INFILTRATING QUIETLY. I HATE WHEN A PLAN GOES PEAR-SHAPED.
WELL, WHEN THEY OFFERED TO DRUG US AND STRING US UP LIKE SIDES OF BEEF, I THINK WE HAD TO OBJECT, KATE.
I KNOW, I KNOW, I'M JUST MAD.
I ALSO CAN'T RAISE QUENTIN. WE MIGHT BE ON OUR OWN!
I'M NOT WORRIED. IF WE GET IN REAL TROUBLE I CAN 'PORT US OUT.
EXCEPT IT'D MEAN LEAVING CLINT BEHIND.
YEAH. OKAY. THAT'S A SLIGHT PROBLEM.
LESS TALKING, MORE PUNCHING, MAYBE?
HEY, DON'T CRITIQUE YOUR LEADER OR NEXT TIME YOU'RE ON QUENTIN'S TEAM, PAL!
THAT PUNISHMENT SEEMS... EXTREME.
SLAM
AMERICA, I FEEL YOU ARE UNHAPPY TO SEE ME.
THIS ISN'T THE TIME!
...THAT SEEMS LIKE A YES.
IT'S NOT A NO.
BOOM
KICK

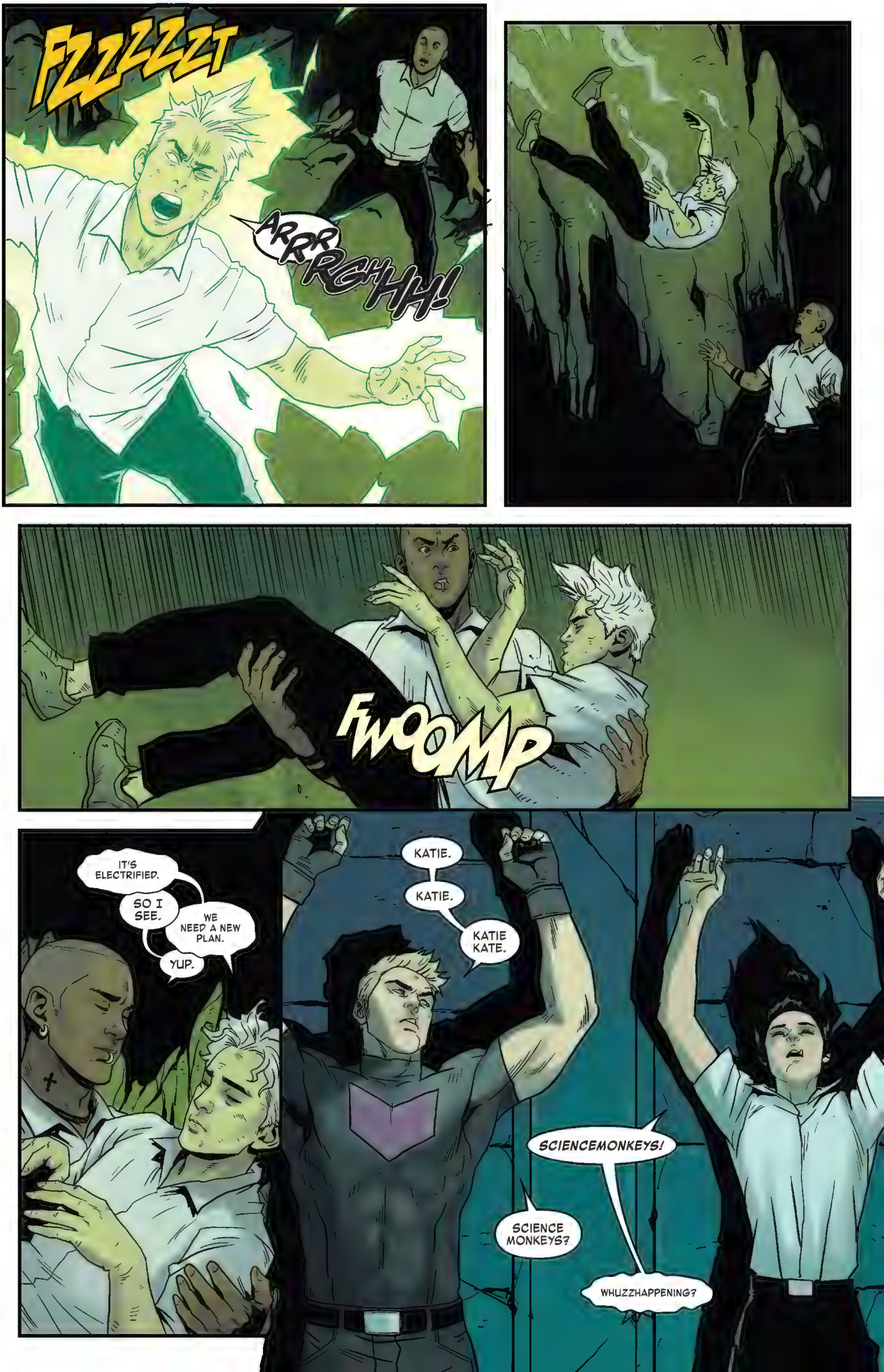

I'D GIVE ANYTHING FOR A BOW AND ARROWS.
YOUR WISH, MY COMMAND, KATE.
STRAIGHT FROM OUR PAST, NO LESS!
YOU KNOW WHAT? I'LL TAKE IT ANYWAY.
SPROING
HELL YES!
I'M SO MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE NOW!
FWWWWWIPPPSSSHHH
WELL, I'M GLAD YOU'RE MORE COMFORTABLE. BUT THESE GUYS JUST KEEP GETTING UP!
BAM
JUST LIKE SKRULLS!
POW
I DON'T KNOW. IS IT JUST ME OR DO THESE GUYS SEEM LESS LIKE SKRULLS AND MORE LIKE--

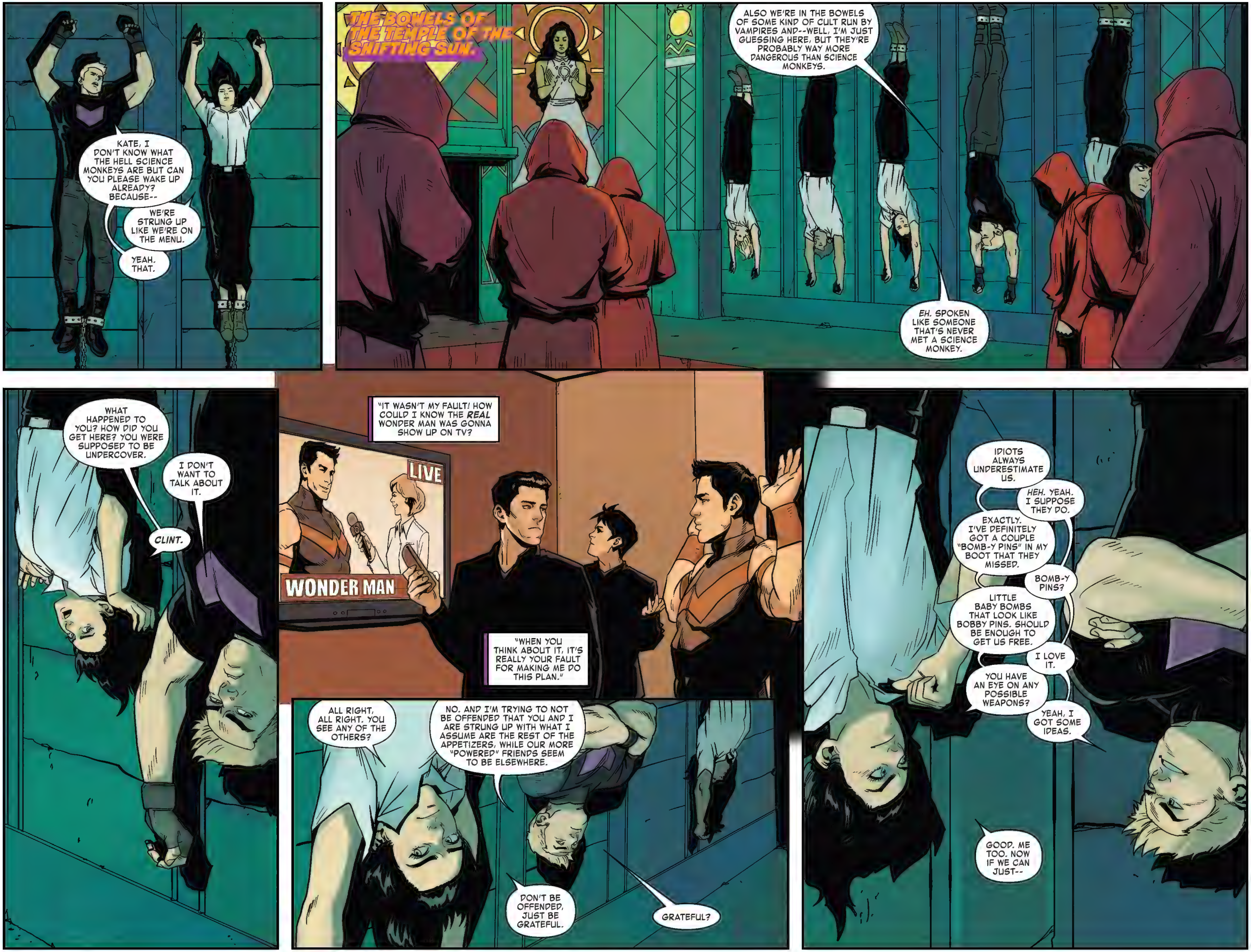

HSSSSSSSS!
--VAMPIRES.
AMERICA!

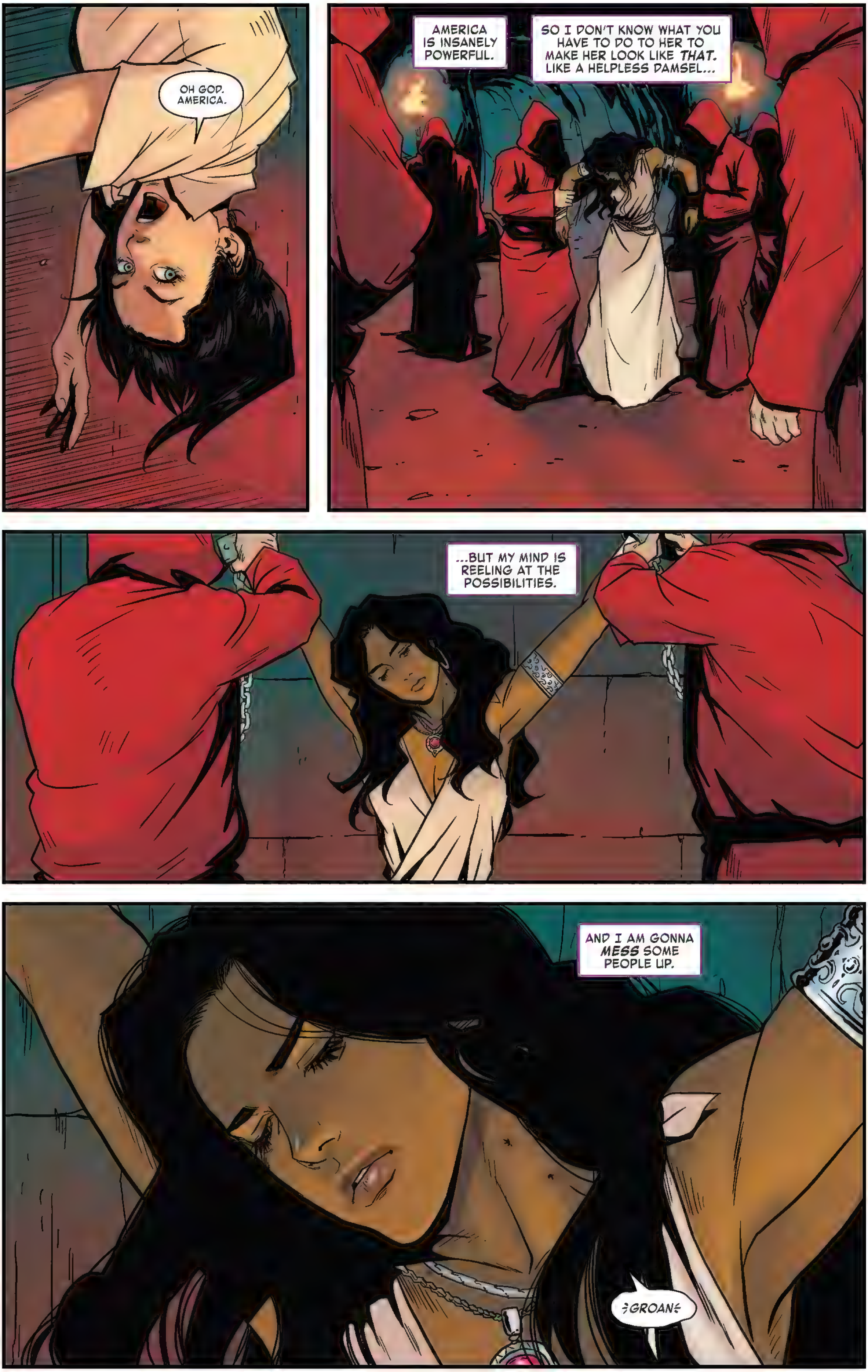
WEST COAST AVENGERS #9

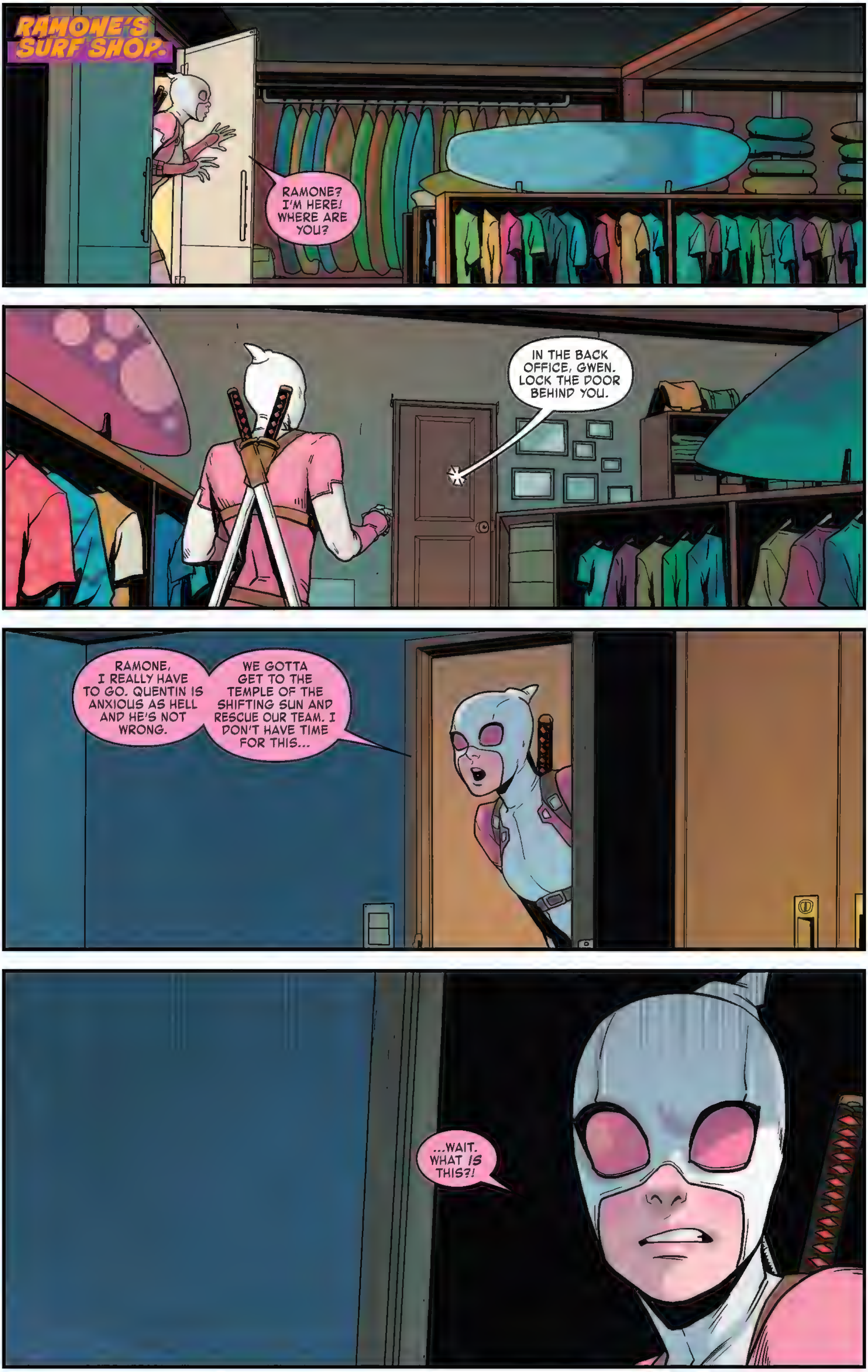

WEST COAST AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS.
I DON'T REALLY HAVE TIME FOR THIS RIGHT NOW.
AREN'T YOU JUST WAITING?
...
West Coast Best Coast
REC
WHY ARE YOU WAITING?
I PROMISED GWEN.
RIGHT, BUT WHY?
SHE PROMISED RAMONE... SOMETHING. I DON'T KNOW.
West Coast Best Coast
REC
SOUNDS LIKE AN AWFUL LOT OF PROMISING GOING ON.
YOU'RE TELLING ME.
WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?
West Coast Best Coast
REC
I'M NOT QUITE SURE YET.
BUT I DON'T THINK WE CAN TRUST KATE'S MOM.
RRRRN RRNNNNN.
REC
UM. I THINK JEFF WANTS UP?
RRRRN RRNNNNN.
I'M AWARE.
West Coast Best Coast
NO, JEFF.
REC
AWWW. HE LOVES YOU.
IF YOU AIR THIS FOOTAGE I'LL TURN YOUR BRAINS TO SCRAMBLED EGGS.
BUT IT HUMANIZES Y--
SCRAMBLED. EGGS.
REC

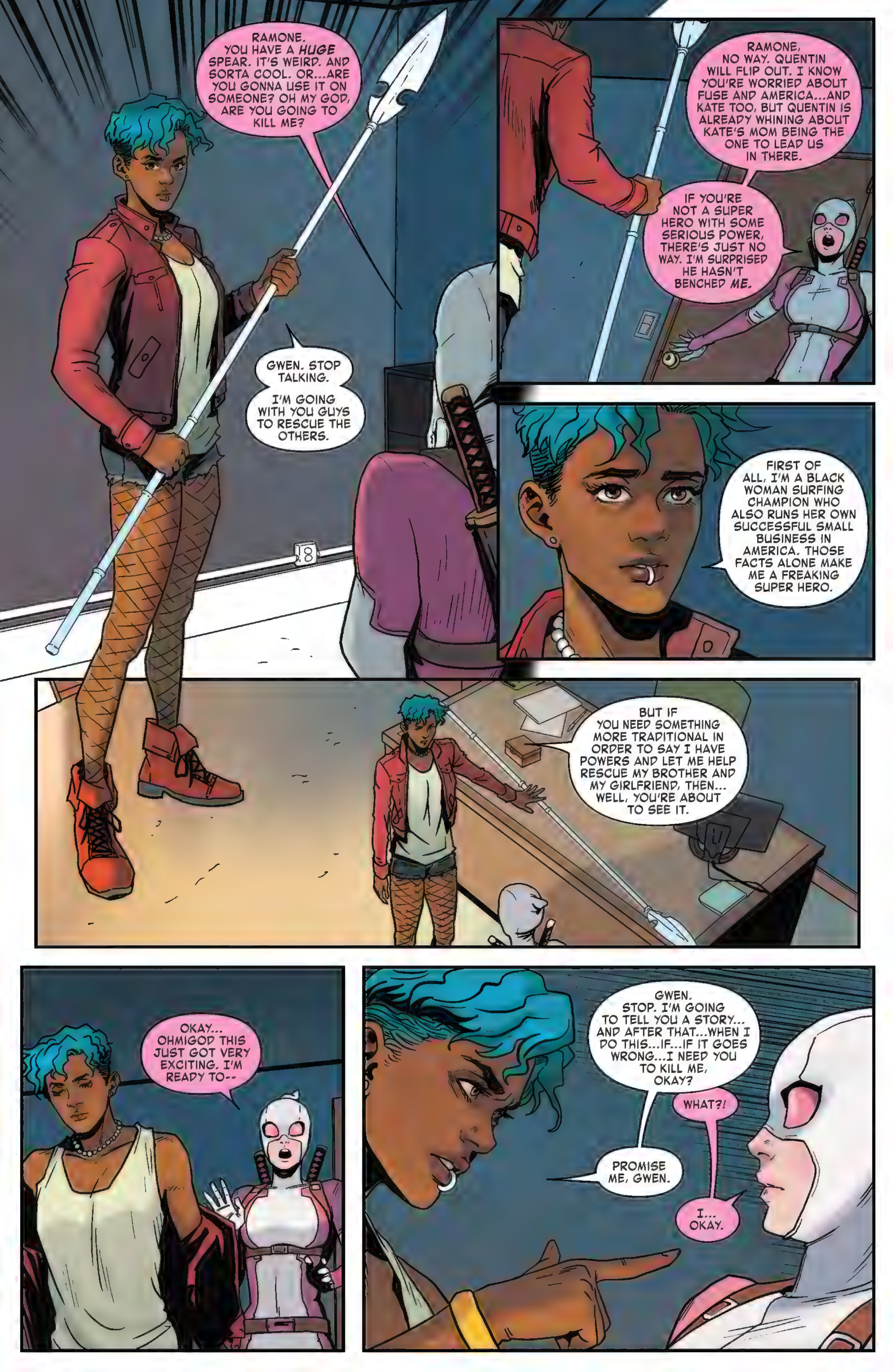

SOMEWHERE ELSE.
I EXPECTED VAMPIRES TO BE LESS MEAN AND MORE SEXY.
YOU'VE SEEN TOO MANY MOVIES, NOH-VARR. DID YOU ALSO THINK THEY'D SPARKLE?
THEY *DON'T* SPARKLE?!
CAN YOU PLEASE CONCENTRATE? WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF THIS PIT THEY THREW US IN AND FIND THE OTHERS.
IT'S NO PROBLEM, I CAN STICK TO WALLS.
THAT'S... GROSS. USEFUL BUT GROSS. DO YOU HAVE, LIKE, SPIDER DNA OR SOMETHING?
COCKROACH ACTUALLY.
...DUDE. WHEN PEOPLE ASK YOU THAT, JUST GO WITH THE SPIDER THING.
CAN'T BELIEVE KATE DATED A COCKROACH GUY.
UM. I ALSO HAVE SUPER-HEARING, JOHNNY.
JUST GREAT.

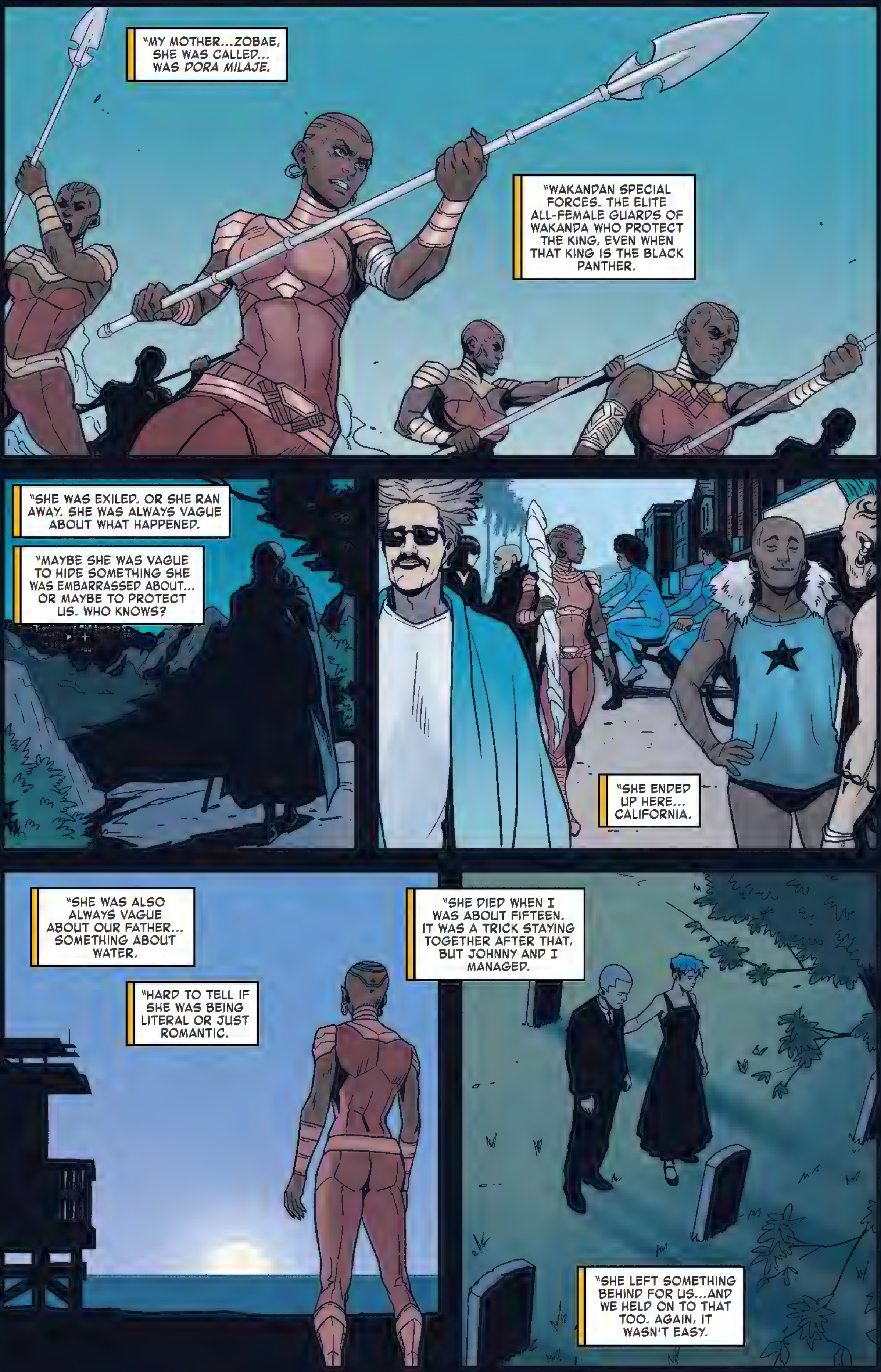

FZZZZZT
ARRRRGHHH!
FWOOMP
IT'S ELECTRIFIED.
SO I SEE.
WE NEED A NEW PLAN.
YUP.
KATIE.
KATIE.
KATIE KATE.
SCIENCEMONKEYS!
SCIENCE MONKEYS?
WHUZZHAPPENING?

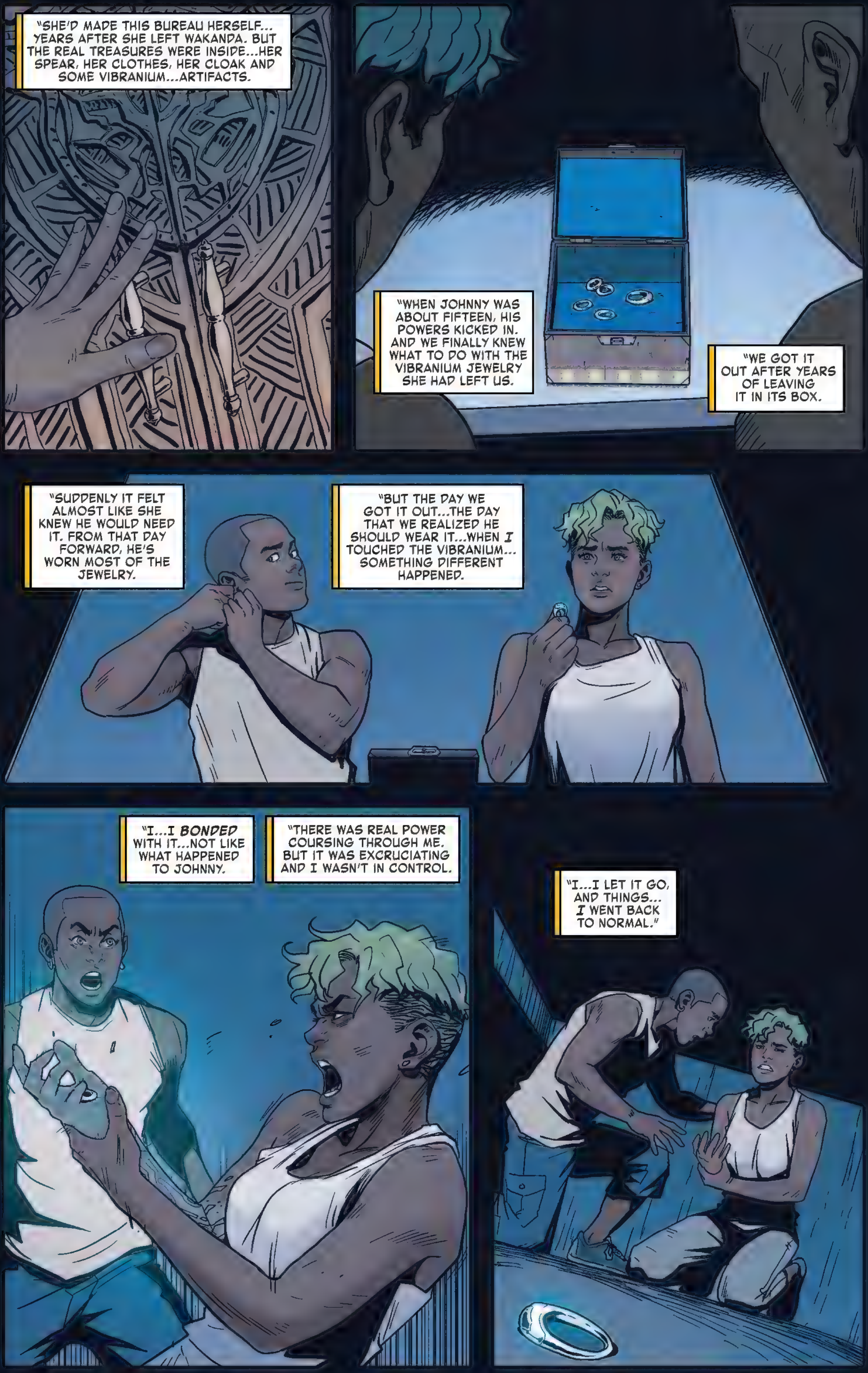

KATE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL SCIENCE MONKEYS ARE BUT CAN YOU PLEASE WAKE UP ALREADY? BECAUSE--
WE'RE STRUNG UP LIKE WE'RE ON THE MENU.
YEAH. THAT.
THE BOWELS OF THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN.
ALSO WE'RE IN THE BOWELS OF SOME KIND OF CULT RUN BY VAMPIRES AND--WELL, I'M JUST GUESSING HERE, BUT THEY'RE PROBABLY WAY MORE DANGEROUS THAN SCIENCE MONKEYS.
EH. SPOKEN LIKE SOMEONE THAT'S NEVER MET A SCIENCE MONKEY.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? HOW DID YOU GET HERE? YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE UNDERCOVER.
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
CLINT.
"IT WASN'T MY FAULT! HOW COULD I KNOW THE *REAL* WONDER MAN WAS GONNA SHOW UP ON TV?
LIVE
WONDER MAN
"WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IT'S REALLY YOUR FAULT FOR MAKING ME DO THIS PLAN."
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. YOU SEE ANY OF THE OTHERS?
NO. AND I'M TRYING TO NOT BE OFFENDED THAT YOU AND I ARE STRUNG UP WITH WHAT I ASSUME ARE THE REST OF THE APPETIZERS, WHILE OUR MORE "POWERED" FRIENDS SEEM TO BE ELSEWHERE.
DON'T BE OFFENDED, JUST BE GRATEFUL.
GRATEFUL?
IDIOTS ALWAYS UNDERESTIMATE US.
HEH. YEAH. I SUPPOSE THEY DO.
EXACTLY. I'VE DEFINITELY GOT A COUPLE "BOMB-Y PINS" IN MY BOOT THAT THEY MISSED.
BOMB-Y PINS?
LITTLE BABY BOMBS THAT LOOK LIKE BOBBY PINS. SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO GET US FREE.
I LOVE IT.
YOU HAVE AN EYE ON ANY POSSIBLE WEAPONS?
YEAH, I GOT SOME IDEAS.
GOOD. ME TOO. NOW IF WE CAN JUST--

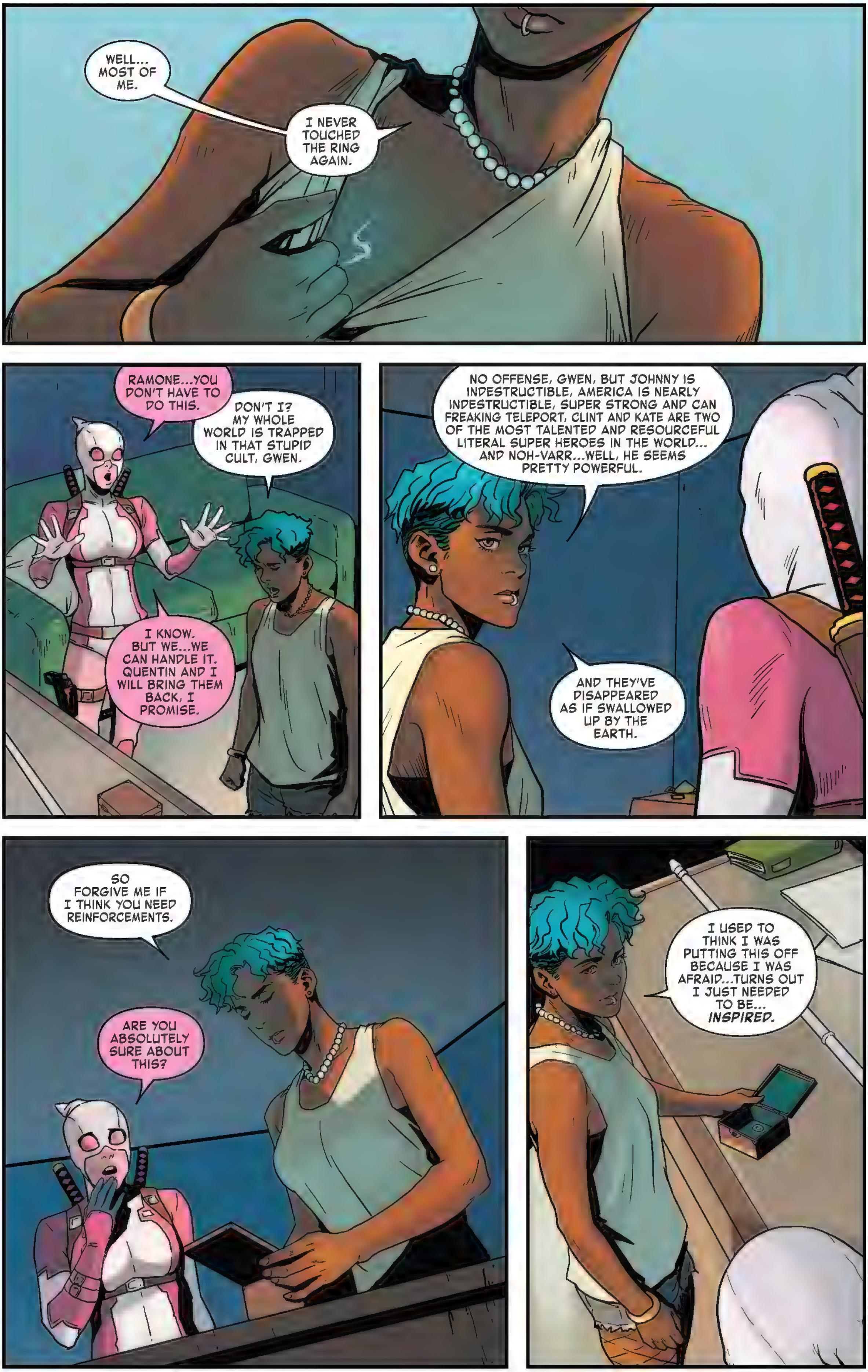

OH GOD. AMERICA.
AMERICA IS INSANELY POWERFUL.
SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO HER TO MAKE HER LOOK LIKE *THAT.* LIKE A HELPLESS DAMSEL...
...BUT MY MIND IS REELING AT THE POSSIBILITIES.
AND I AM GONNA *MESS* SOME PEOPLE UP.
GROAN

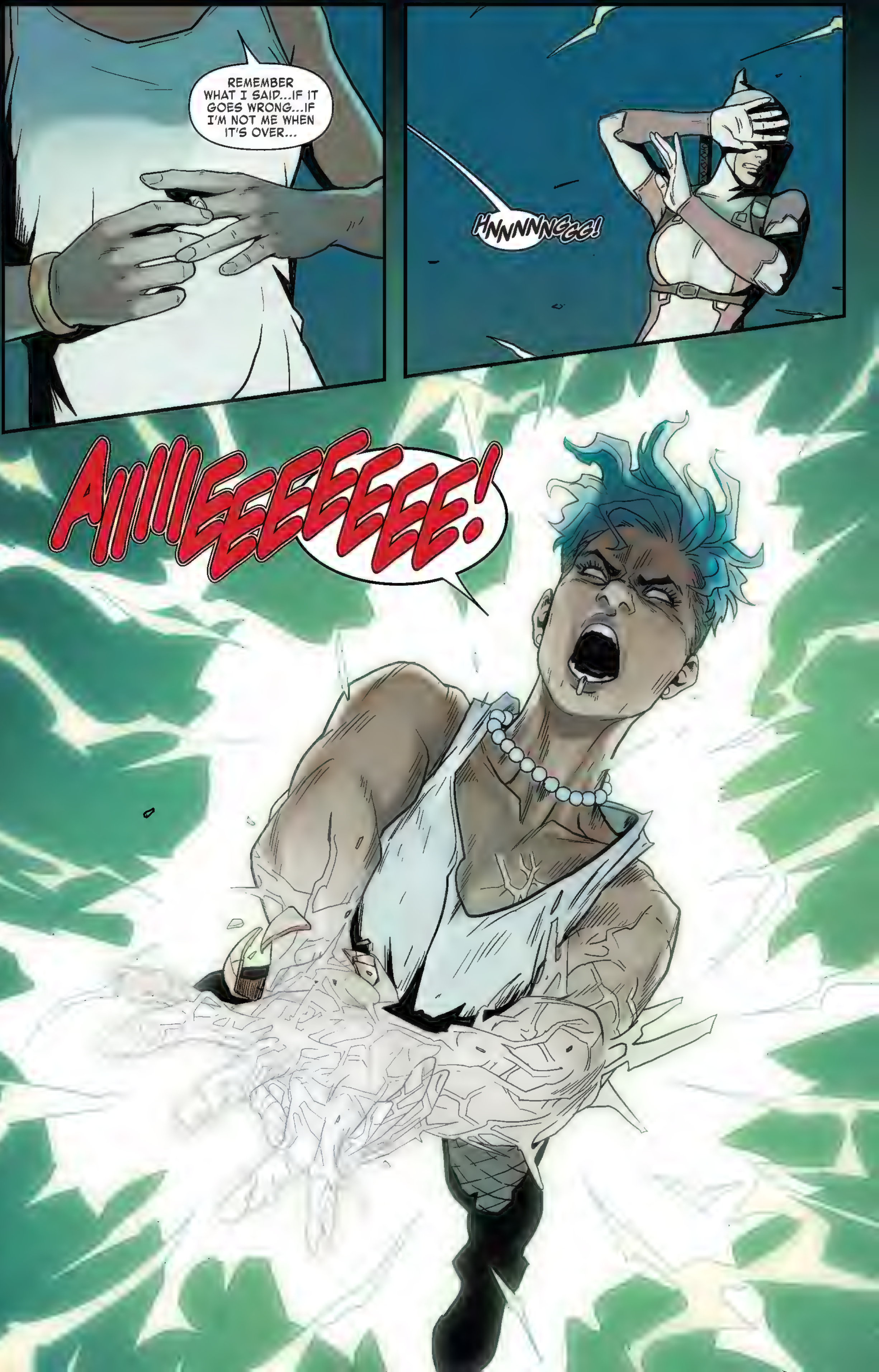

RAMONE'S SURF SHOP.
RAMONE? I'M HERE! WHERE ARE YOU?
IN THE BACK OFFICE, GWEN. LOCK THE DOOR BEHIND YOU.
RAMONE, I REALLY HAVE TO GO. QUENTIN IS ANXIOUS AS HELL AND HE'S NOT WRONG.
WE GOTTA GET TO THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN AND RESCUE OUR TEAM. I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS...
...WAIT. WHAT *IS* THIS?!

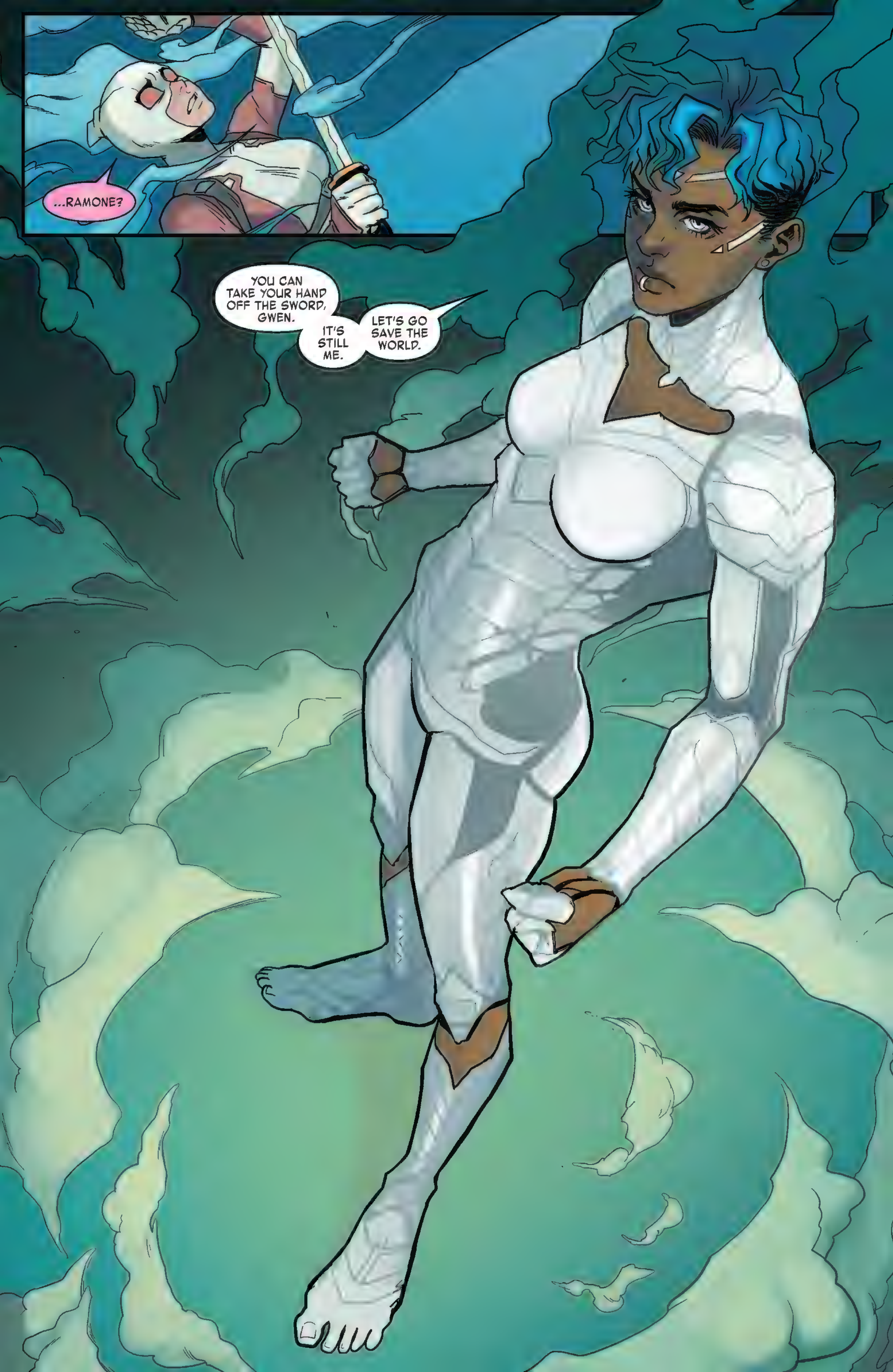

RAMONE. YOU HAVE A *HUGE* SPEAR. IT'S WEIRD. AND SORTA COOL. OR...ARE YOU GONNA USE IT ON SOMEONE? OH MY GOD, ARE YOU GOING TO KILL ME?
GWEN. STOP TALKING.
I'M GOING WITH YOU GUYS TO RESCUE THE OTHERS.
RAMONE, NO WAY. QUENTIN WILL FLIP OUT. I KNOW YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT FUSE AND AMERICA...AND KATE TOO, BUT QUENTIN IS ALREADY WHINING ABOUT KATE'S MOM BEING THE ONE TO LEAD US IN THERE.
IF YOU'RE NOT A SUPER HERO WITH SOME SERIOUS POWER, THERE'S JUST NO WAY. I'M SURPRISED HE HASN'T BENCHED *ME*.
FIRST OF ALL, I'M A BLACK WOMAN SURFING CHAMPION WHO ALSO RUNS HER OWN SUCCESSFUL SMALL BUSINESS IN AMERICA. THOSE FACTS ALONE MAKE ME A FREAKING SUPER HERO.
BUT IF YOU NEED SOMETHING MORE TRADITIONAL IN ORDER TO SAY I HAVE POWERS AND LET ME HELP RESCUE MY BROTHER AND MY GIRLFRIEND, THEN... WELL, YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE IT.
OKAY... OHMIGOD THIS JUST GOT VERY EXCITING. I'M READY TO--
GWEN. STOP. I'M GOING TO TELL YOU A STORY... AND AFTER THAT...WHEN I DO THIS...IF...IF IT GOES WRONG...I NEED YOU TO KILL ME, OKAY?
WHAT?!
PROMISE ME, GWEN.
I... OKAY.

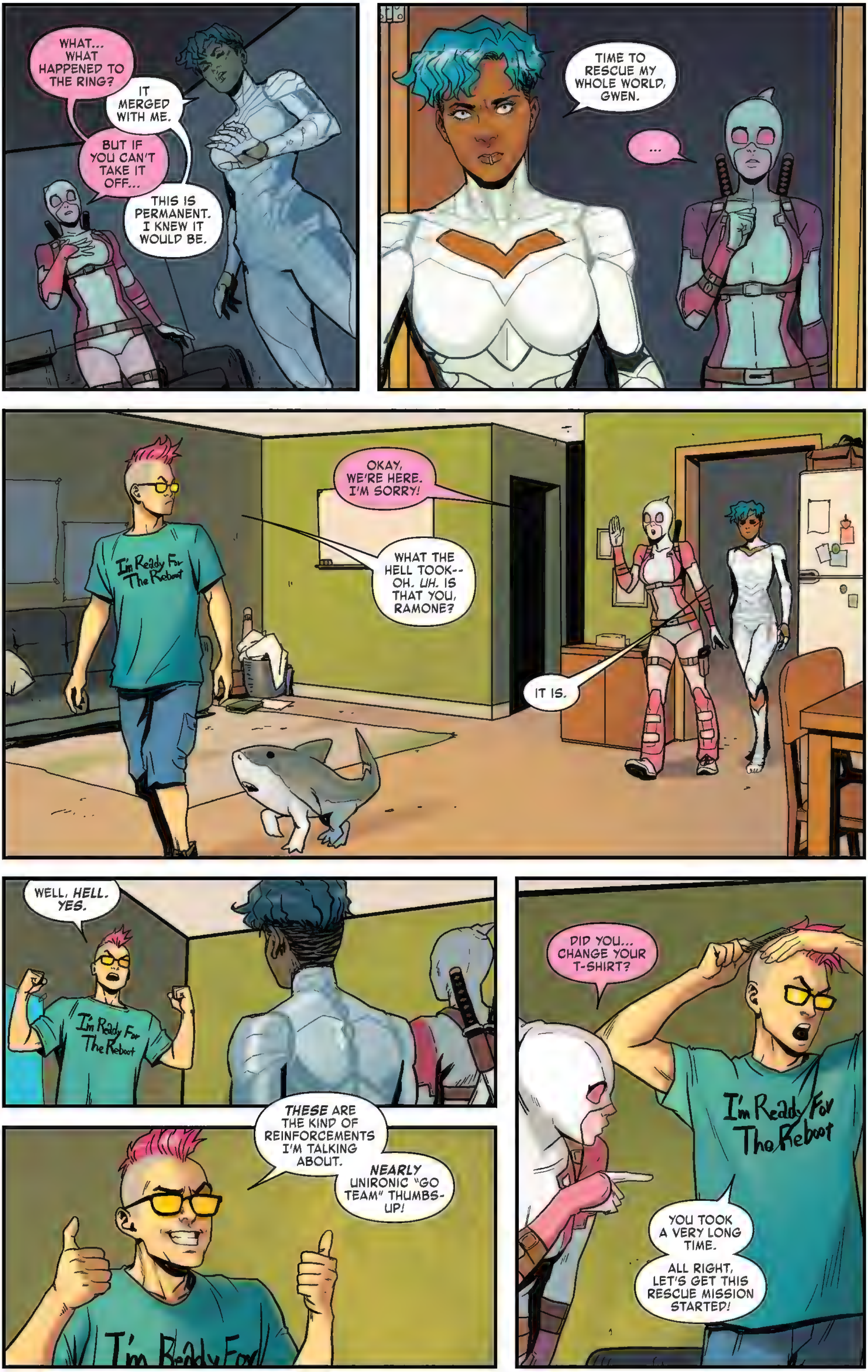

"MY MOTHER...ZOBAE, SHE WAS CALLED... WAS *DORA MILAJE.*
"WAKANDAN SPECIAL FORCES. THE ELITE ALL-FEMALE GUARDS OF WAKANDA WHO PROTECT THE KING, EVEN WHEN THAT KING IS THE BLACK PANTHER.
"SHE WAS EXILED. OR SHE RAN AWAY. SHE WAS ALWAYS VAGUE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
"MAYBE SHE WAS VAGUE TO HIDE SOMETHING SHE WAS EMBARRASSED ABOUT... OR MAYBE TO PROTECT US. WHO KNOWS?
"SHE ENDED UP HERE... CALIFORNIA.
"SHE WAS ALSO ALWAYS VAGUE ABOUT OUR FATHER... SOMETHING ABOUT WATER.
"HARD TO TELL IF SHE WAS BEING LITERAL OR JUST ROMANTIC.
"SHE DIED WHEN I WAS ABOUT FIFTEEN. IT WAS A TRICK STAYING TOGETHER AFTER THAT, BUT JOHNNY AND I MANAGED.
"SHE LEFT SOMETHING BEHIND FOR US...AND WE HELD ON TO THAT TOO. AGAIN, IT WASN'T EASY.

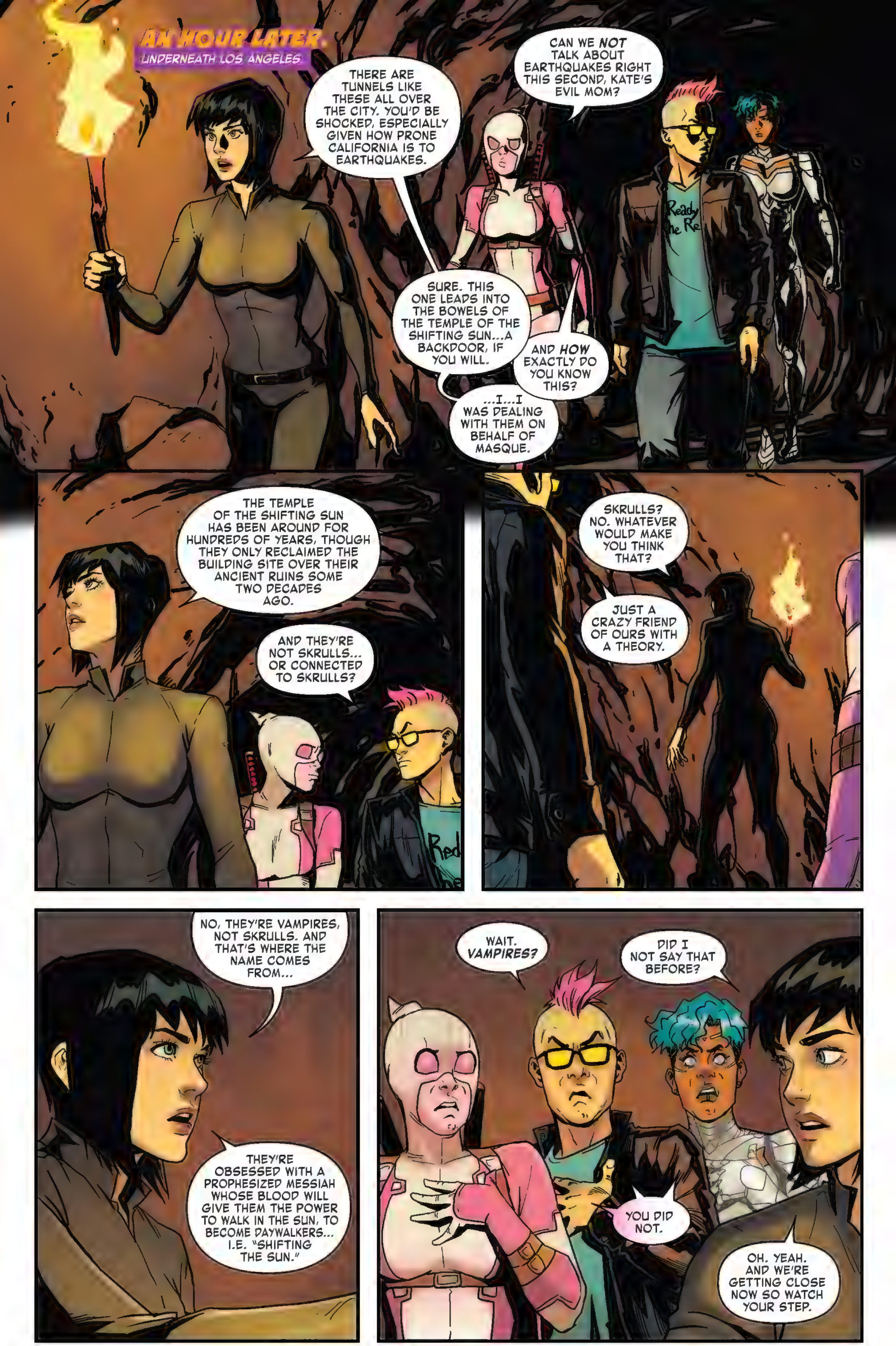

"SHE'D MADE THIS BUREAU HERSELF... YEARS AFTER SHE LEFT WAKANDA. BUT THE REAL TREASURES WERE INSIDE...HER SPEAR, HER CLOTHES, HER CLOAK AND SOME VIBRANIUM...ARTIFACTS.
"WHEN JOHNNY WAS ABOUT FIFTEEN, HIS POWERS KICKED IN. AND WE FINALLY KNEW WHAT TO DO WITH THE VIBRANIUM JEWELRY SHE HAD LEFT US.
"WE GOT IT OUT AFTER YEARS OF LEAVING IT IN ITS BOX.
"SUDDENLY IT FELT ALMOST LIKE SHE KNEW HE WOULD NEED IT. FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, HE'S WORN MOST OF THE JEWELRY.
"BUT THE DAY WE GOT IT OUT...THE DAY THAT WE REALIZED HE SHOULD WEAR IT...WHEN *I* TOUCHED THE VIBRANIUM... SOMETHING DIFFERENT HAPPENED.
"I...I *BONDED* WITH IT...NOT LIKE WHAT HAPPENED TO JOHNNY.
"THERE WAS REAL POWER COURSING THROUGH ME. BUT IT WAS EXCRUCIATING AND I WASN'T IN CONTROL.
"I...I LET IT GO, AND THINGS... *I* WENT BACK TO NORMAL."

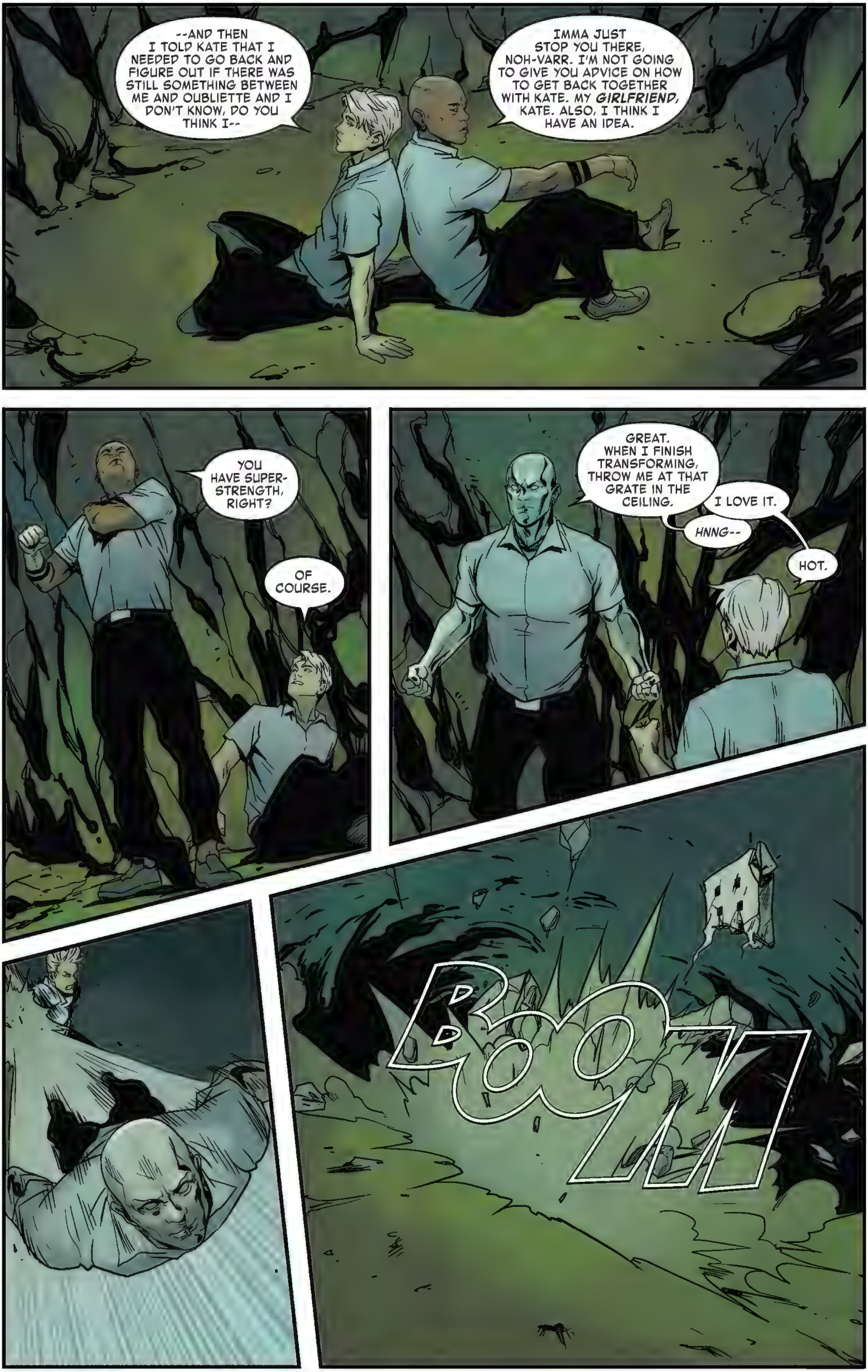

WELL... MOST OF ME.
I NEVER TOUCHED THE RING AGAIN.
RAMONE...YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS.
DON'T I? MY WHOLE WORLD IS TRAPPED IN THAT STUPID CULT, GWEN.
I KNOW. BUT WE...WE CAN HANDLE IT. QUENTIN AND I WILL BRING THEM BACK, I PROMISE.
NO OFFENSE, GWEN, BUT JOHNNY IS INDESTRUCTIBLE, AMERICA IS NEARLY INDESTRUCTIBLE, SUPER STRONG AND CAN FREAKING TELEPORT, CLINT AND KATE ARE TWO OF THE MOST TALENTED AND RESOURCEFUL LITERAL SUPER HEROES IN THE WORLD... AND NOH-VARR...WELL, HE SEEMS PRETTY POWERFUL.
AND THEY'VE DISAPPEARED AS IF SWALLOWED UP BY THE EARTH.
SO FORGIVE ME IF I THINK YOU NEED REINFORCEMENTS.
ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY SURE ABOUT THIS?
I USED TO THINK I WAS PUTTING THIS OFF BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID...TURNS OUT I JUST NEEDED TO BE... *INSPIRED.*

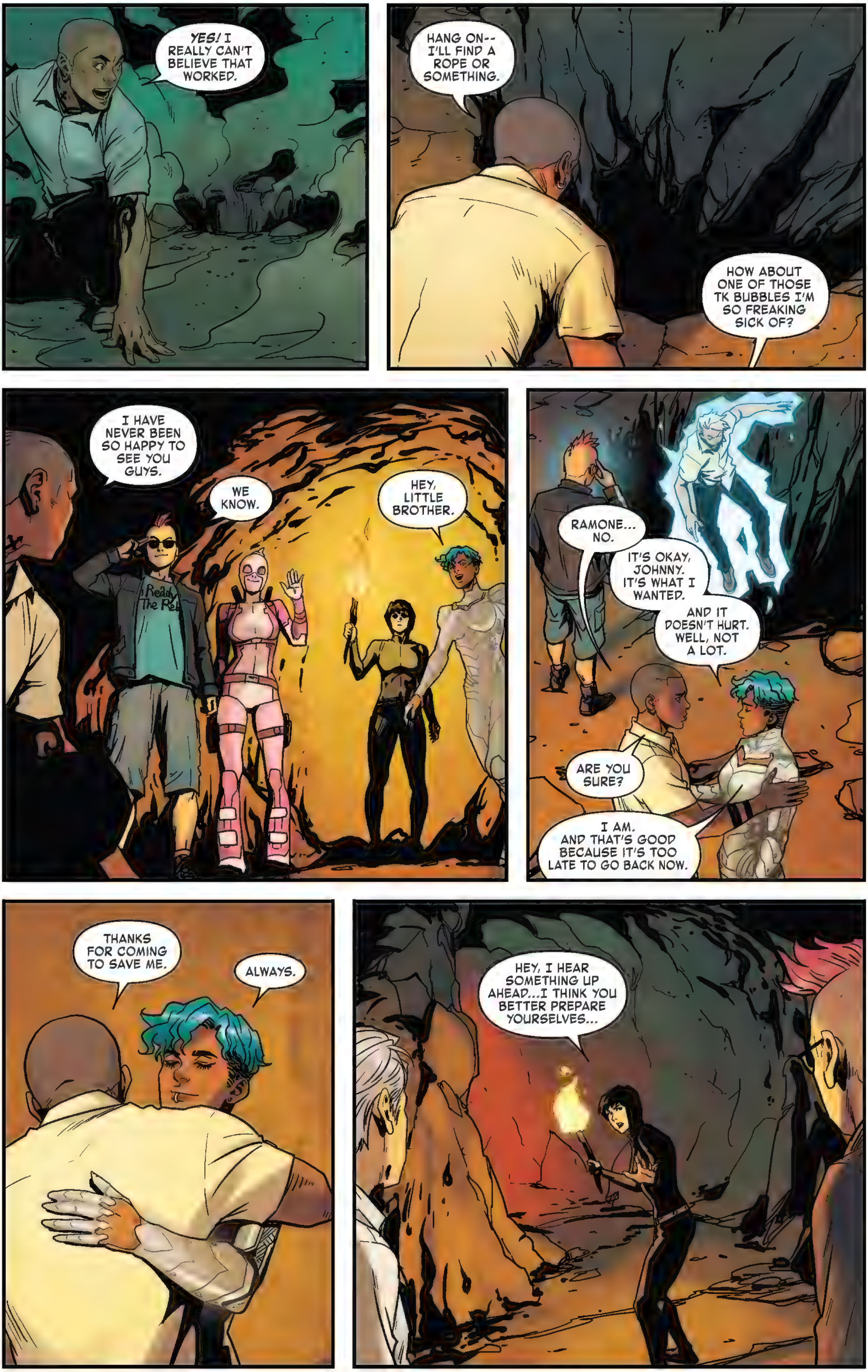

REMEMBER WHAT I SAID...IF IT GOES WRONG...IF I'M NOT ME WHEN IT'S OVER...
HNNNNNGGG!
AIIIIEEEEEEEE!

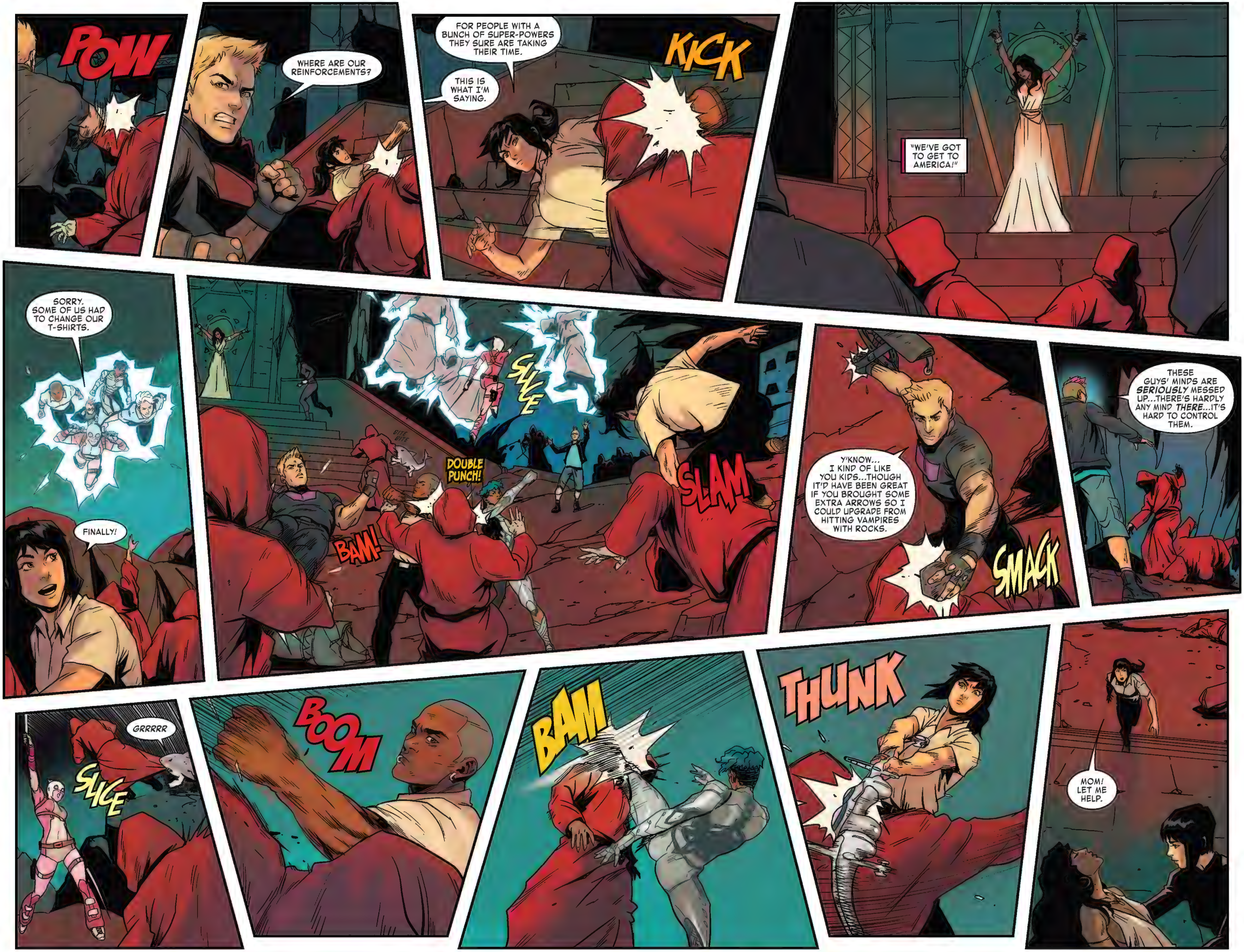

...RAMONE?
YOU CAN TAKE YOUR HAND OFF THE SWORD, GWEN.
IT'S STILL ME.
LET'S GO SAVE THE WORLD.

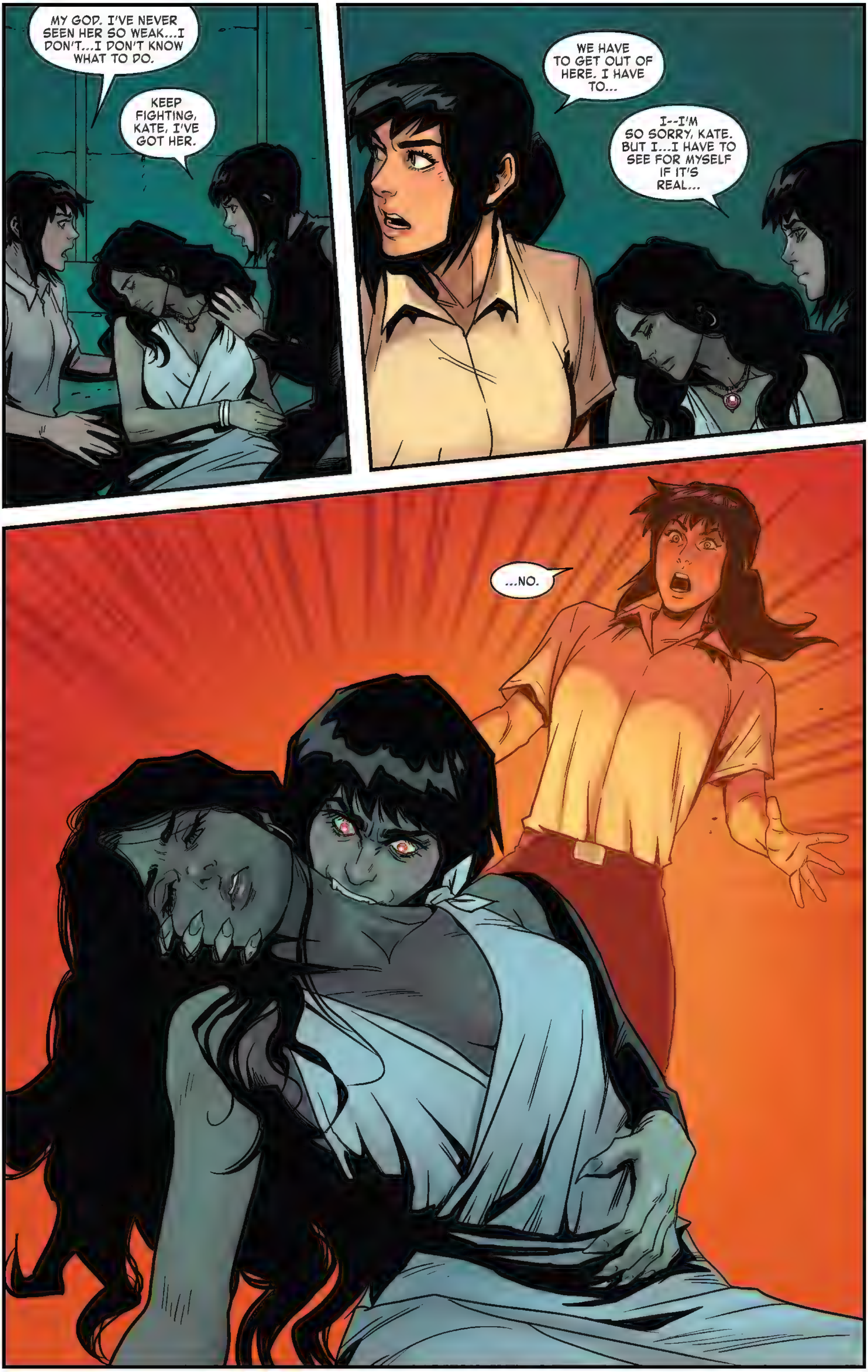

WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RING?
IT MERGED WITH ME.
BUT IF YOU CAN'T TAKE IT OFF...
THIS IS PERMANENT. I KNEW IT WOULD BE.
TIME TO RESCUE MY WHOLE WORLD, GWEN.
...
OKAY, WE'RE HERE. I'M SORRY!
WHAT THE HELL TOOK-- OH. *UH.* IS THAT YOU, RAMONE?
IT IS.
I'm Ready For The Reboot
WELL, *HELL. YES.*
THESE ARE THE KIND OF REINFORCEMENTS I'M TALKING ABOUT.
NEARLY UNIRONIC "GO TEAM" THUMBS-UP!
DID YOU... CHANGE YOUR T-SHIRT?
YOU TOOK A VERY LONG TIME.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET THIS RESCUE MISSION STARTED!


AN HOUR LATER.
UNDERNEATH LOS ANGELES
THERE ARE TUNNELS LIKE THESE ALL OVER THE CITY. YOU'D BE SHOCKED, ESPECIALLY GIVEN HOW PRONE CALIFORNIA IS TO EARTHQUAKES.
CAN WE *NOT* TALK ABOUT EARTHQUAKES RIGHT THIS SECOND, KATE'S EVIL MOM?
SURE. THIS ONE LEADS INTO THE BOWELS OF THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN...A BACKDOOR, IF YOU WILL.
AND *HOW* EXACTLY DO YOU KNOW THIS?
...I...I WAS DEALING WITH THEM ON BEHALF OF MASQUE.
Ready the Re
THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN HAS BEEN AROUND FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, THOUGH THEY ONLY RECLAIMED THE BUILDING SITE OVER THEIR ANCIENT RUINS SOME TWO DECADES AGO.
AND THEY'RE NOT SKRULLS... OR CONNECTED TO SKRULLS?
SKRULLS? NO. WHATEVER WOULD MAKE YOU THINK THAT?
JUST A CRAZY FRIEND OF OURS WITH A THEORY.
NO, THEY'RE VAMPIRES, NOT SKRULLS. AND THAT'S WHERE THE NAME COMES FROM...
THEY'RE OBSESSED WITH A PROPHESIZED MESSIAH WHOSE BLOOD WILL GIVE THEM THE POWER TO WALK IN THE SUN, TO BECOME DAYWALKERS... I.E. "SHIFTING THE SUN."
WAIT. *VAMPIRES?*
DID I NOT SAY THAT BEFORE?
YOU DID NOT.
OH. YEAH. AND WE'RE GETTING CLOSE NOW SO WATCH YOUR STEP.

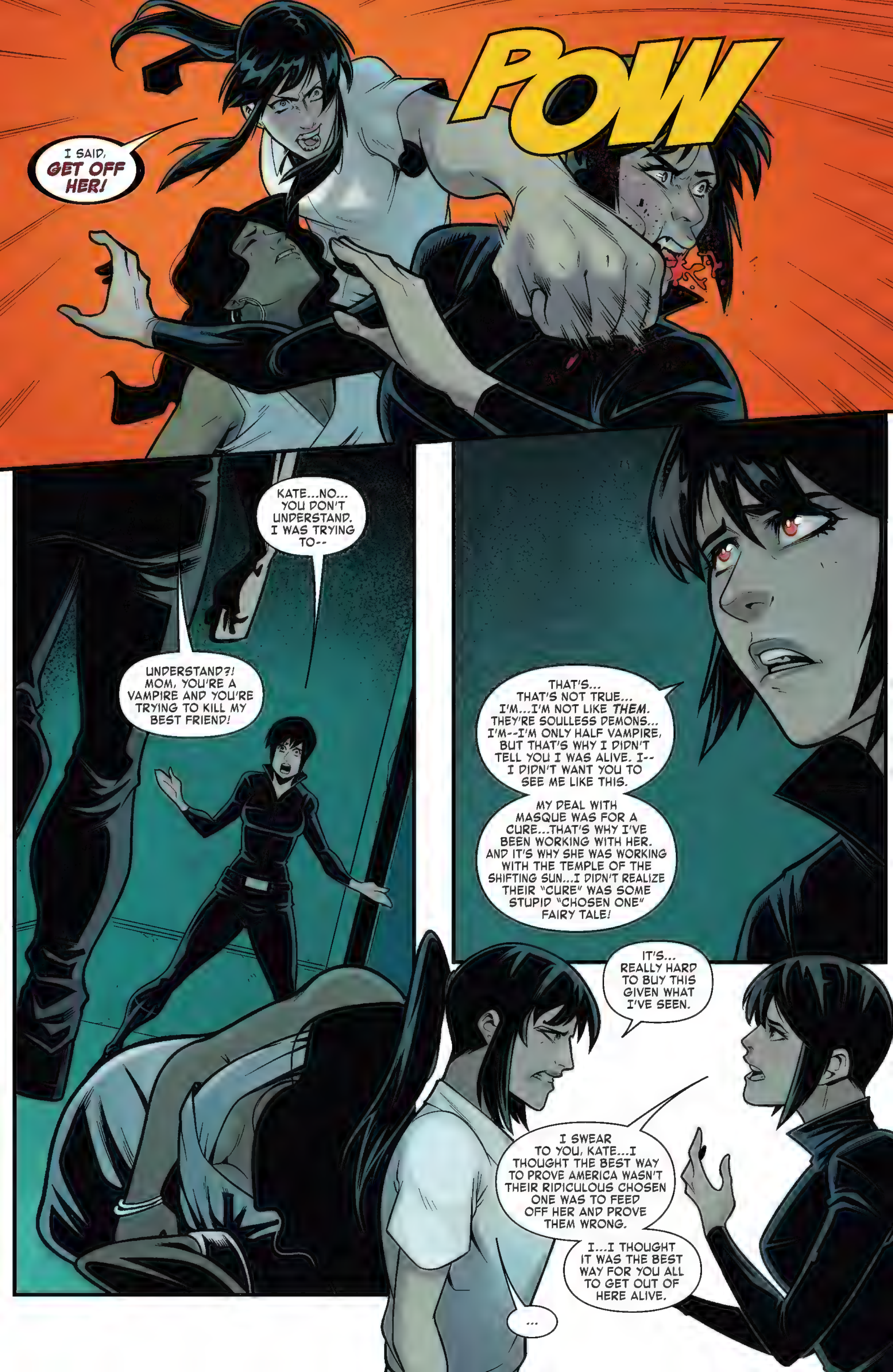

--AND THEN I TOLD KATE THAT I NEEDED TO GO BACK AND FIGURE OUT IF THERE WAS STILL SOMETHING BETWEEN ME AND OUBLIETTE AND I DON'T KNOW, DO YOU THINK I--
IMMA JUST STOP YOU THERE, NOH-VARR. I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU ADVICE ON HOW TO GET BACK TOGETHER WITH KATE. MY *GIRLFRIEND*, KATE. ALSO, I THINK I HAVE AN IDEA.
YOU HAVE SUPER-STRENGTH, RIGHT?
OF COURSE.
GREAT. WHEN I FINISH TRANSFORMING, THROW ME AT THAT GRATE IN THE CEILING.
HNNG--
I LOVE IT.
HOT.
BOOM

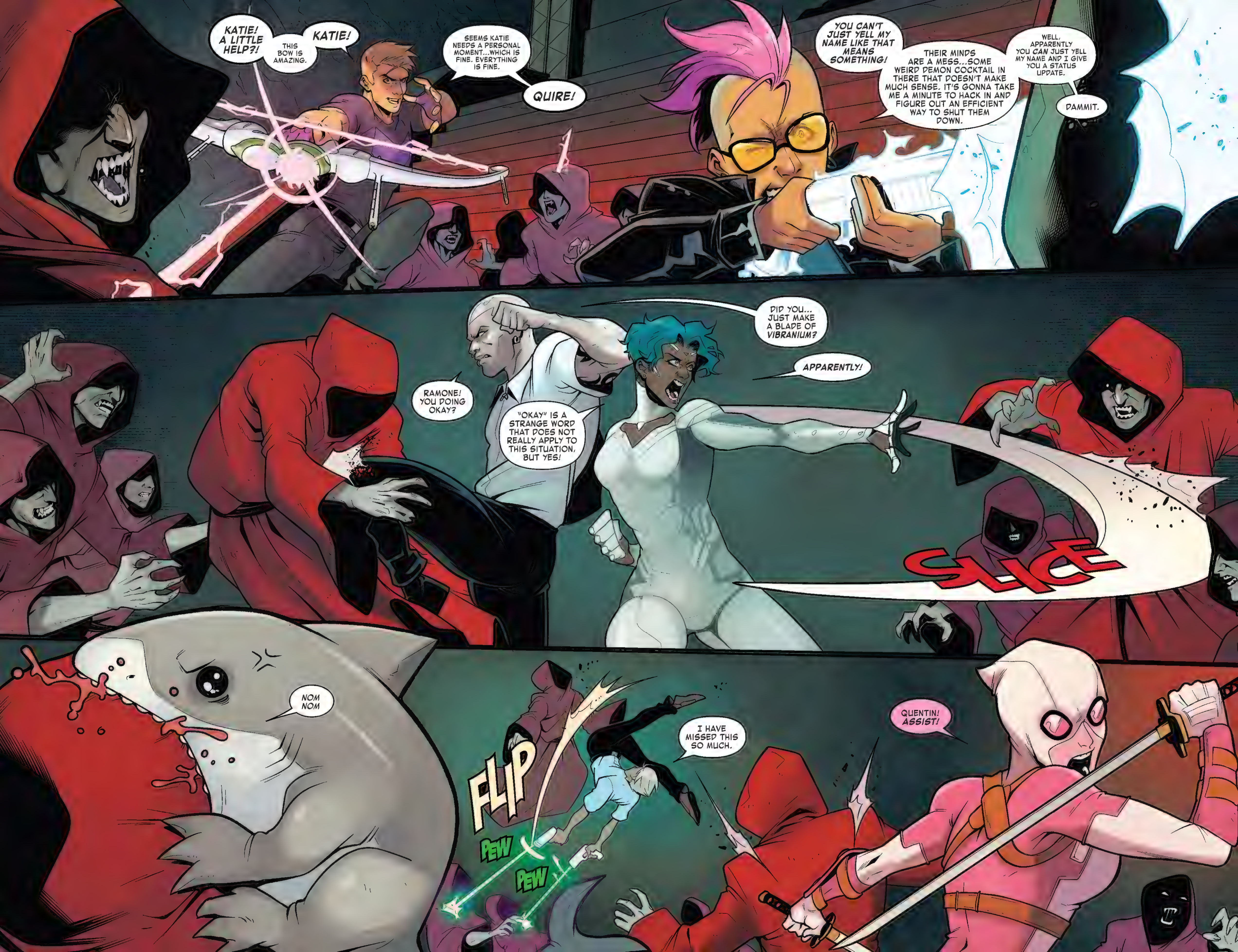

YES! I REALLY CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WORKED.
HANG ON-- I'LL FIND A ROPE OR SOMETHING.
HOW ABOUT ONE OF THOSE TK BUBBLES I'M SO FREAKING SICK OF?
I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU GUYS.
WE KNOW.
HEY, LITTLE BROTHER.
Ready The Re
RAMONE... NO.
IT'S OKAY, JOHNNY. IT'S WHAT I WANTED.
AND IT DOESN'T HURT. WELL, NOT A LOT.
ARE YOU SURE?
I AM. AND THAT'S GOOD BECAUSE IT'S TOO LATE TO GO BACK NOW.
THANKS FOR COMING TO SAVE ME.
ALWAYS.
HEY, I HEAR SOMETHING UP AHEAD...I THINK YOU BETTER PREPARE YOURSELVES...

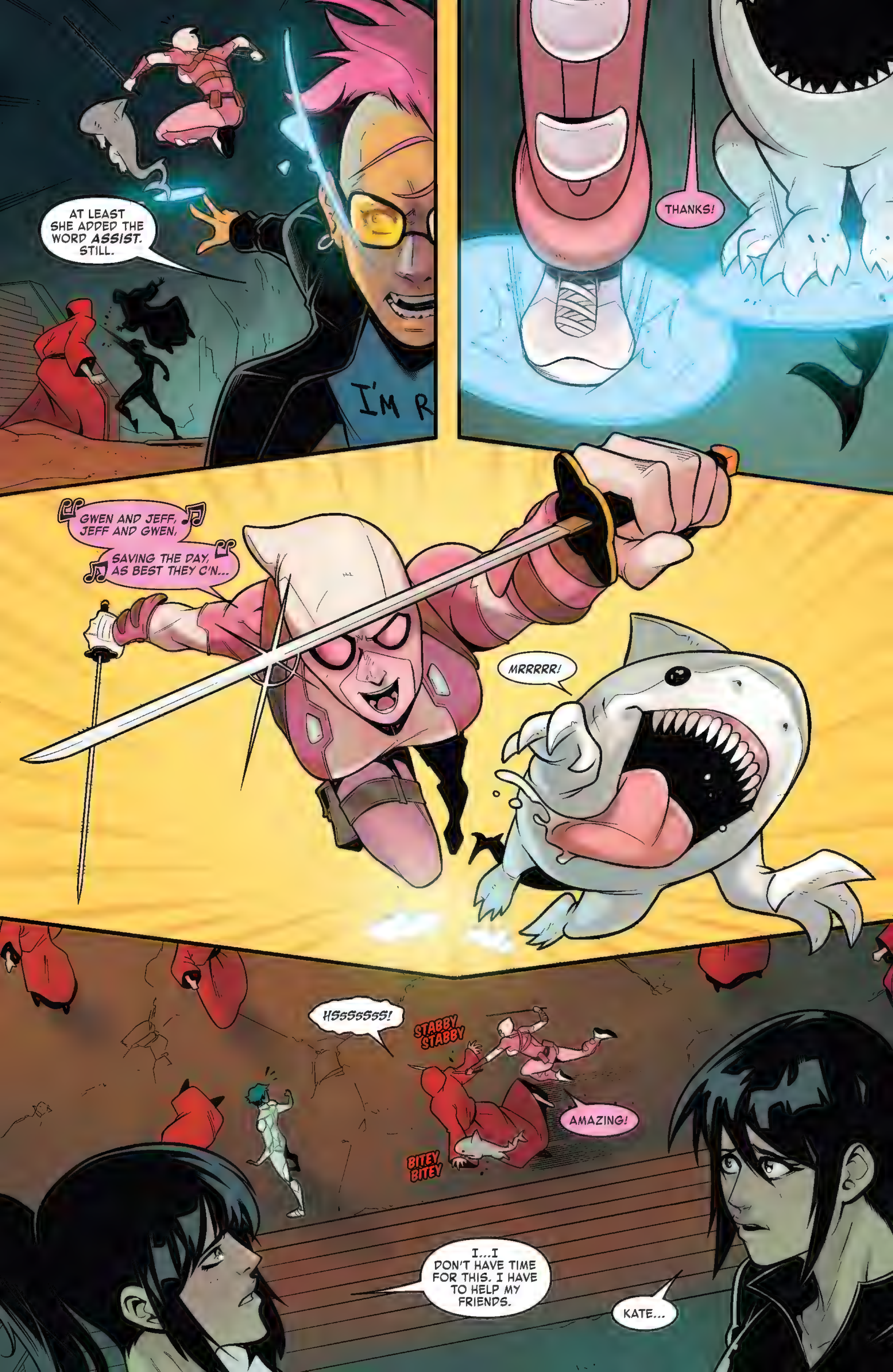

POW
WHERE ARE OUR REINFORCEMENTS?
FOR PEOPLE WITH A BUNCH OF SUPER-POWERS THEY SURE ARE TAKING THEIR TIME.
THIS IS WHAT I'M SAYING.
KICK
"WE'VE GOT TO GET TO AMERICA!"
SORRY. SOME OF US HAD TO CHANGE OUR T-SHIRTS.
FINALLY!
SLICE
BITE BITE
DOUBLE PUNCH!
BAM!
SLAM
Y'KNOW... I KIND OF LIKE YOU KIDS...THOUGH IT'D HAVE BEEN GREAT IF YOU BROUGHT SOME EXTRA ARROWS SO I COULD UPGRADE FROM HITTING VAMPIRES WITH ROCKS.
SMACK
THESE GUYS' MINDS ARE *SERIOUSLY* MESSED UP...THERE'S HARDLY ANY MIND *THERE*...IT'S HARD TO CONTROL THEM.
GRRRRR
SLICE
BOOM
BAM
THUNK
MOM! LET ME HELP.

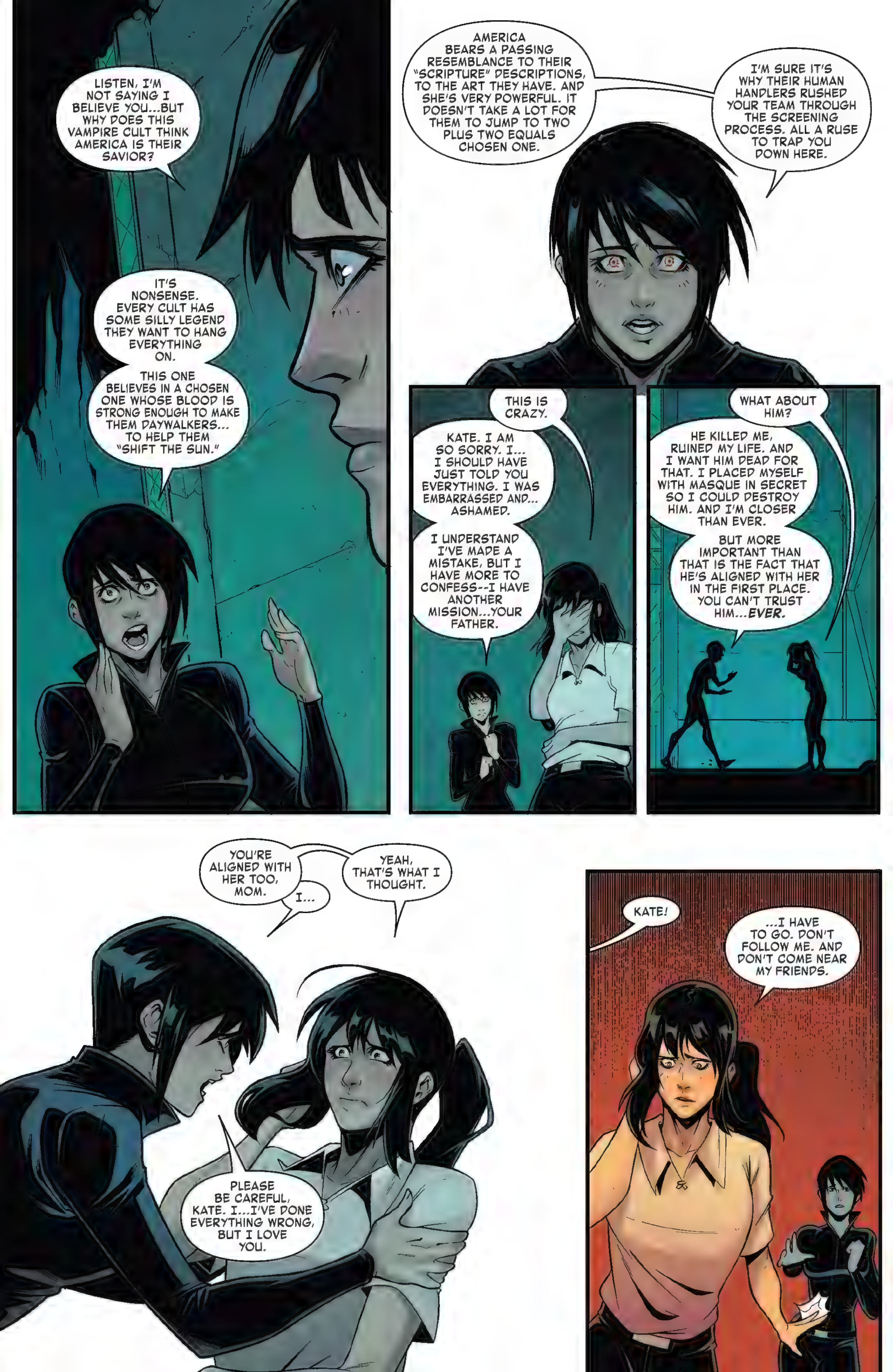

MY GOD. I'VE NEVER SEEN HER SO WEAK...I DON'T...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
KEEP FIGHTING, KATE, I'VE GOT HER.
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE. I HAVE TO...
I--I'M SO SORRY, KATE. BUT I...I HAVE TO SEE FOR MYSELF IF IT'S REAL...
...NO.

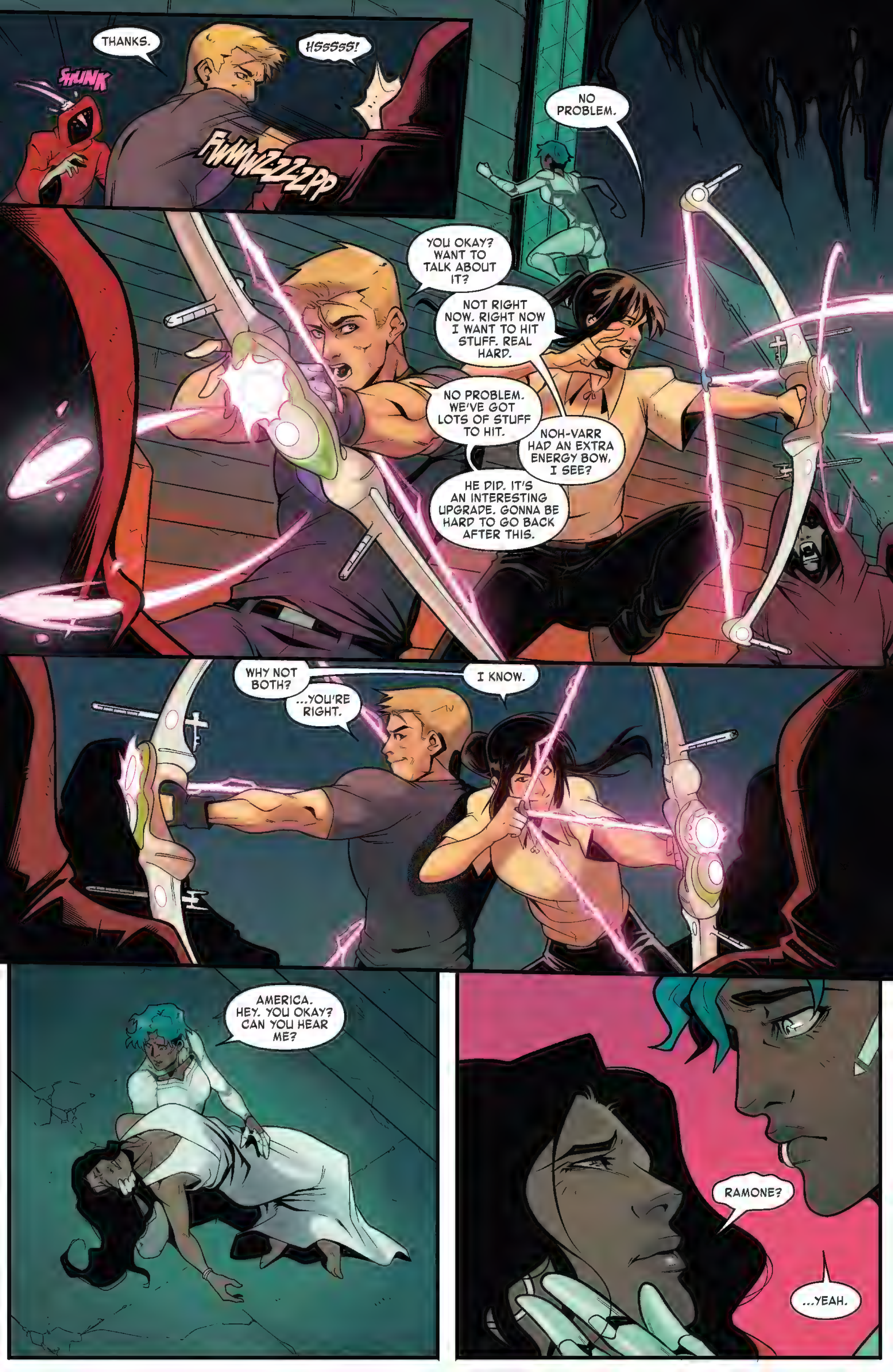
WEST COAST AVENGERS #10

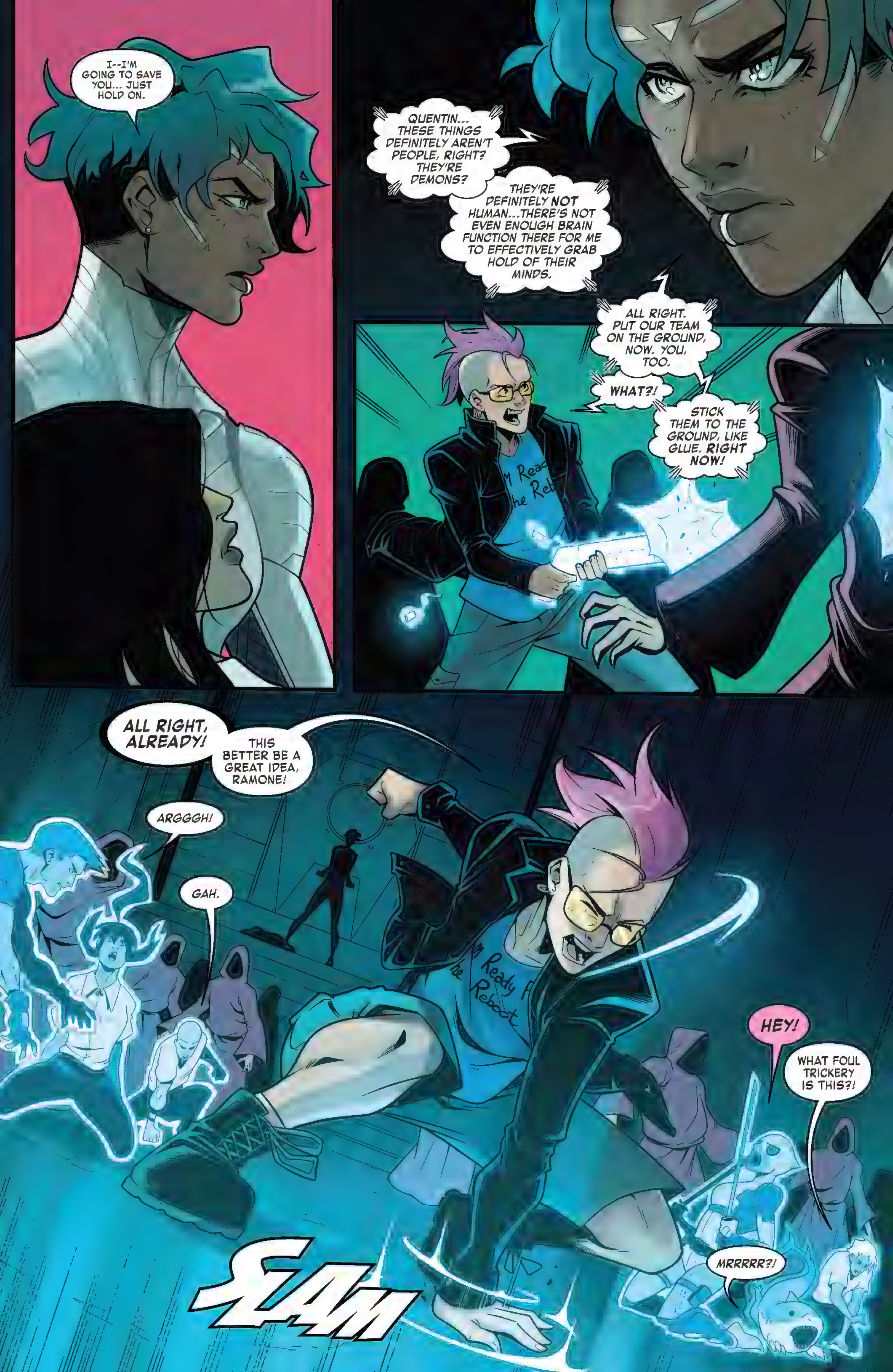

POW
I SAID, **GET OFF HER!**
KATE...NO... YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I WAS TRYING TO--
UNDERSTAND?! MOM, YOU'RE A VAMPIRE AND YOU'RE TRYING TO KILL MY BEST FRIEND!
THAT'S... THAT'S NOT TRUE... I'M...I'M NOT LIKE *THEM*. THEY'RE SOULLESS DEMONS... I'M--I'M ONLY HALF VAMPIRE, BUT THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T TELL YOU I WAS ALIVE. I-- I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO SEE ME LIKE THIS.
MY DEAL WITH MASQUE WAS FOR A CURE...THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH HER. AND IT'S WHY SHE WAS WORKING WITH THE TEMPLE OF THE SHIFTING SUN...I DIDN'T REALIZE THEIR "CURE" WAS SOME STUPID "CHOSEN ONE" FAIRY TALE!
IT'S... REALLY HARD TO BUY THIS GIVEN WHAT I'VE SEEN.
I SWEAR TO YOU, KATE...I THOUGHT THE BEST WAY TO PROVE AMERICA WASN'T THEIR RIDICULOUS CHOSEN ONE WAS TO FEED OFF HER AND PROVE THEM WRONG.
I...I THOUGHT IT WAS THE BEST WAY FOR YOU ALL TO GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE.
...

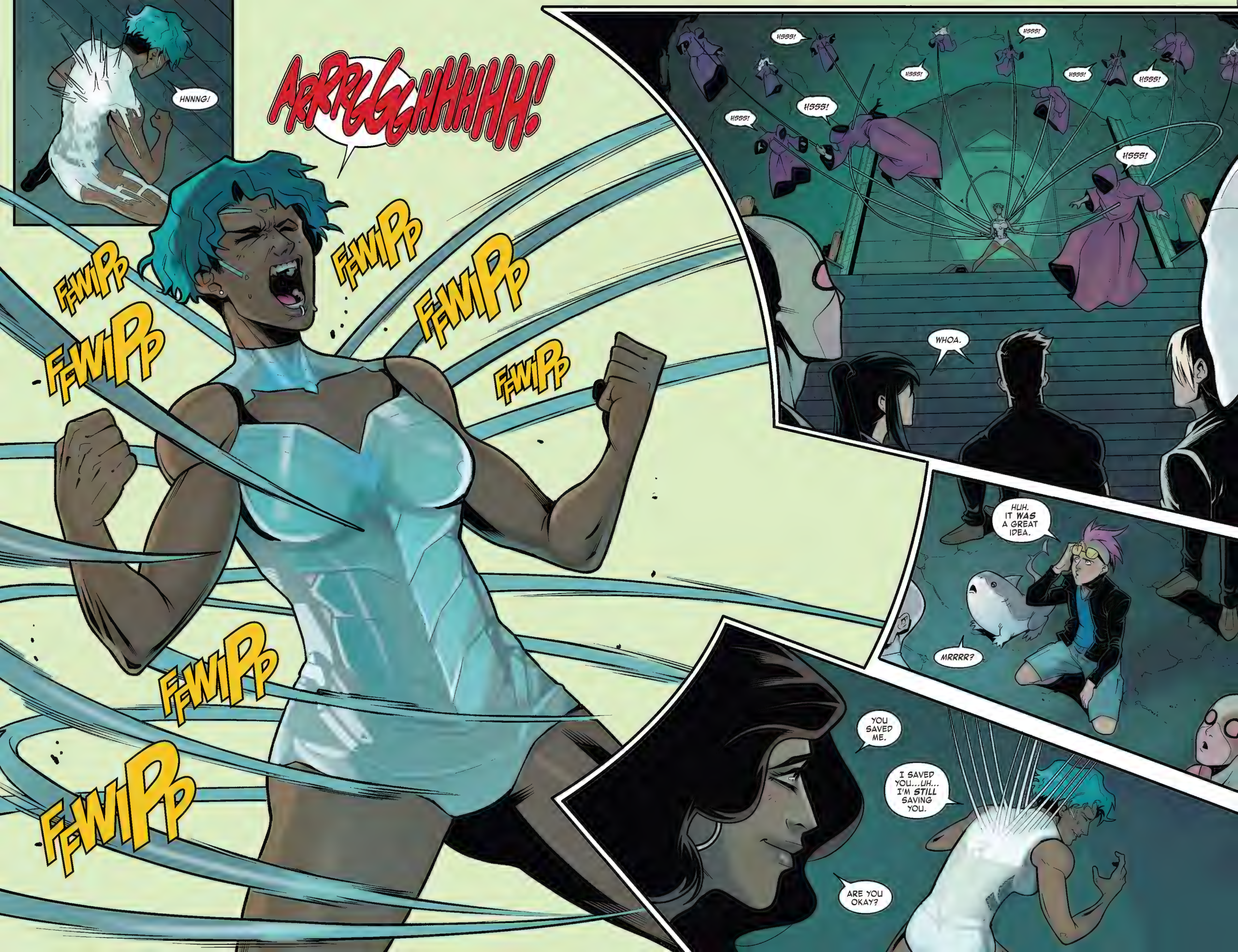

KATIE! A LITTLE HELP?!
KATIE!
THIS BOW IS AMAZING.
SEEMS KATIE NEEDS A PERSONAL MOMENT...WHICH IS FINE. EVERYTHING IS FINE.
QUIRE!
YOU CAN'T JUST YELL MY NAME LIKE THAT MEANS SOMETHING!
THEIR MINDS ARE A MESS...SOME WEIRD DEMON COCKTAIL IN THERE THAT DOESN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE. IT'S GONNA TAKE ME A MINUTE TO HACK IN AND FIGURE OUT AN EFFICIENT WAY TO SHUT THEM DOWN.
WELL, APPARENTLY YOU CAN JUST YELL MY NAME AND I GIVE YOU A STATUS UPDATE.
DAMMIT.
DID YOU... JUST MAKE A BLADE OF VIBRANIUM?
APPARENTLY!
RAMONE! YOU DOING OKAY?
"OKAY" IS A STRANGE WORD THAT DOES NOT REALLY APPLY TO THIS SITUATION, BUT YES!
SLICE
NOM NOM
FLIP
PEW
PEW
I HAVE MISSED THIS SO MUCH.
QUENTIN! ASSIST!

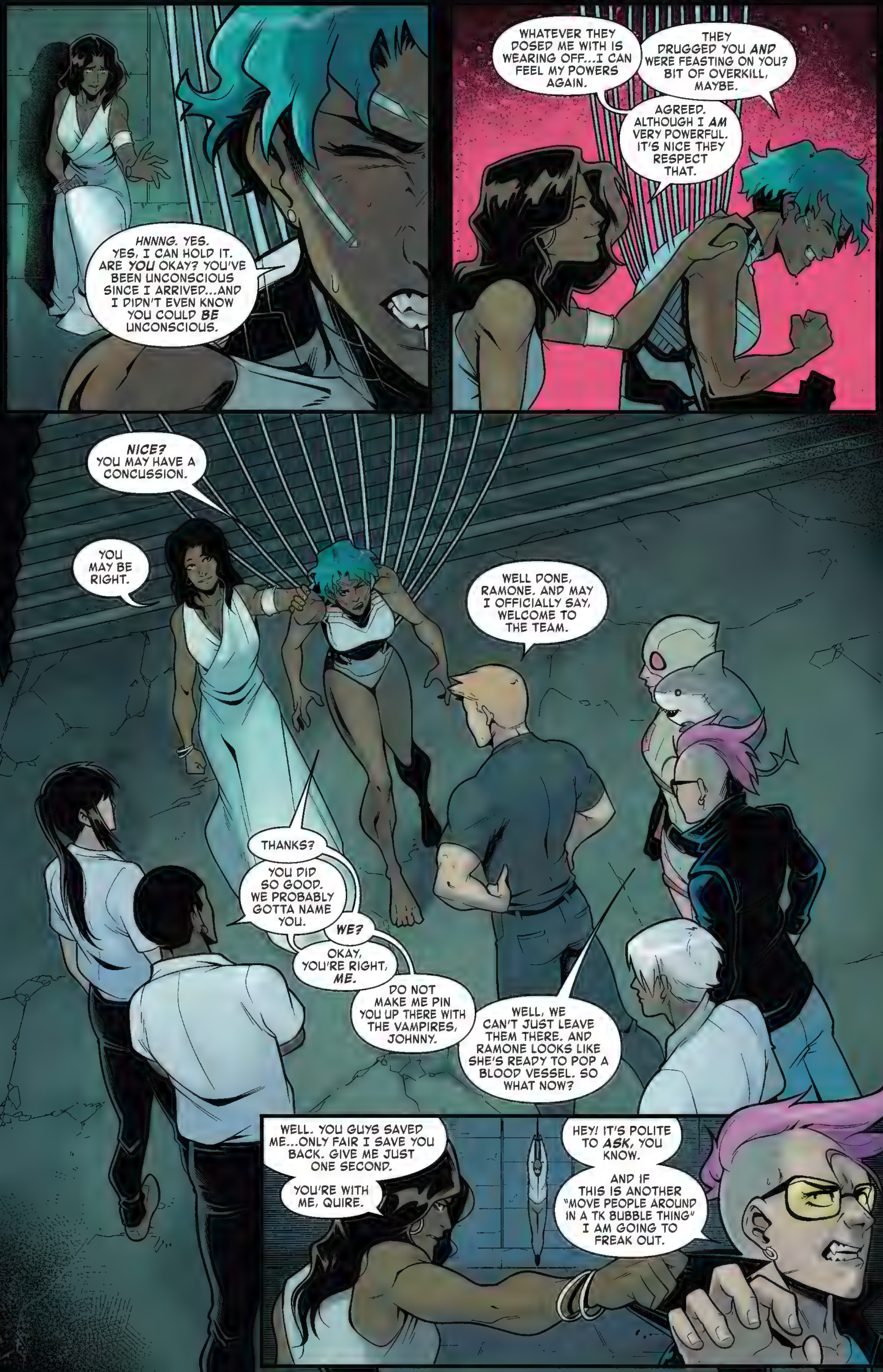

AT LEAST SHE ADDED THE WORD ASSIST. STILL.
I'M R
THANKS!
GWEN AND JEFF, JEFF AND GWEN,
SAVING THE DAY, AS BEST THEY C'N...
MRRRRR!
HSSSSSSS!
STABBY STABBY
AMAZING!
BITEY BITEY
I...I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS. I HAVE TO HELP MY FRIENDS.
KATE...

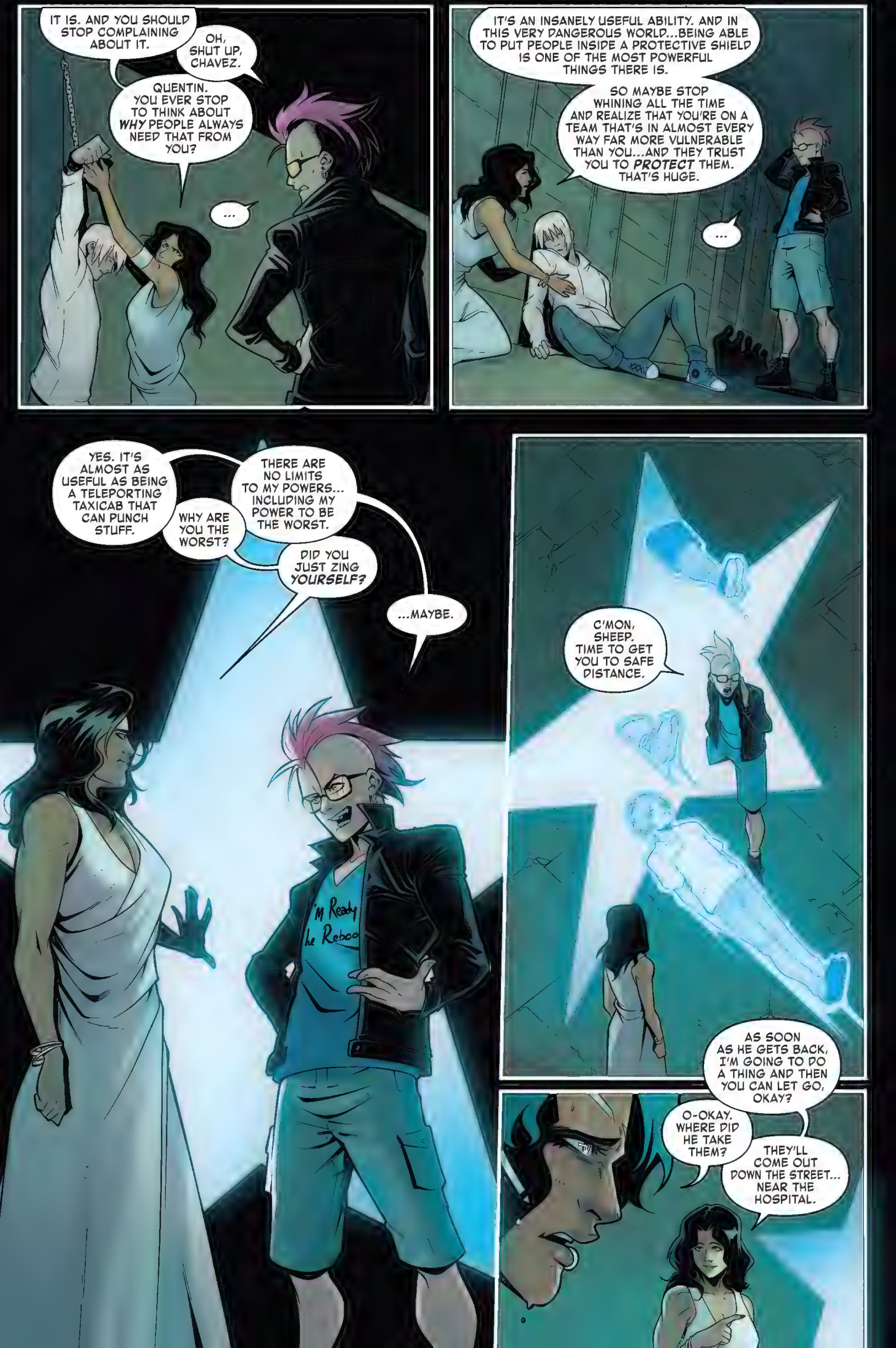

LISTEN, I'M NOT SAYING I BELIEVE YOU...BUT WHY DOES THIS VAMPIRE CULT THINK AMERICA IS THEIR SAVIOR?
IT'S NONSENSE. EVERY CULT HAS SOME SILLY LEGEND THEY WANT TO HANG EVERYTHING ON.
THIS ONE BELIEVES IN A CHOSEN ONE WHOSE BLOOD IS STRONG ENOUGH TO MAKE THEM DAYWALKERS... TO HELP THEM "SHIFT THE SUN."
AMERICA BEARS A PASSING RESEMBLANCE TO THEIR "SCRIPTURE" DESCRIPTIONS, TO THE ART THEY HAVE. AND SHE'S VERY POWERFUL. IT DOESN'T TAKE A LOT FOR THEM TO JUMP TO TWO PLUS TWO EQUALS CHOSEN ONE.
I'M SURE IT'S WHY THEIR HUMAN HANDLERS RUSHED YOUR TEAM THROUGH THE SCREENING PROCESS. ALL A RUSE TO TRAP YOU DOWN HERE.
THIS IS CRAZY.
KATE. I AM SO SORRY. I... I SHOULD HAVE JUST TOLD YOU EVERYTHING. I WAS EMBARRASSED AND... ASHAMED.
I UNDERSTAND I'VE MADE A MISTAKE, BUT I HAVE MORE TO CONFESS--I HAVE ANOTHER MISSION...YOUR FATHER.
WHAT ABOUT HIM?
HE KILLED ME, RUINED MY LIFE. AND I WANT HIM DEAD FOR THAT. I PLACED MYSELF WITH MASQUE IN SECRET SO I COULD DESTROY HIM. AND I'M CLOSER THAN EVER.
BUT MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT IS THE FACT THAT HE'S ALIGNED WITH HER IN THE FIRST PLACE. YOU CAN'T TRUST HIM...*EVER*.
YOU'RE ALIGNED WITH HER TOO, MOM.
I...
YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
PLEASE BE CAREFUL, KATE. I...I'VE DONE EVERYTHING WRONG, BUT I LOVE YOU.
KATE!
...I HAVE TO GO. DON'T FOLLOW ME. AND DON'T COME NEAR MY FRIENDS.

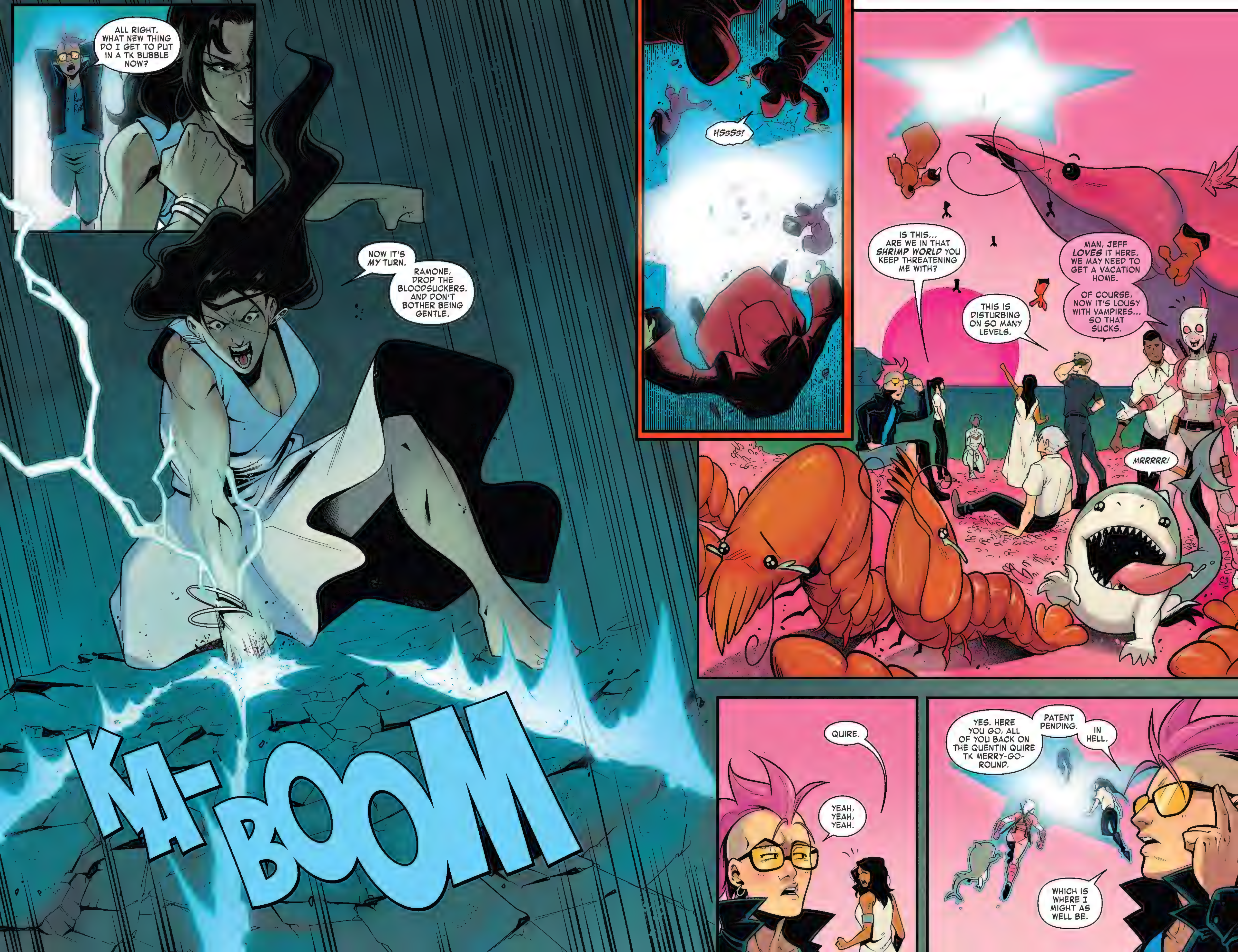

THANKS.
SHUNK
HSSSSS!
FWWWZZZZZPP
NO PROBLEM.
YOU OKAY? WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?
NOT RIGHT NOW. RIGHT NOW I WANT TO HIT STUFF. REAL HARD.
NO PROBLEM. WE'VE GOT LOTS OF STUFF TO HIT.
NOH-VARR HAD AN EXTRA ENERGY BOW, I SEE?
HE DID. IT'S AN INTERESTING UPGRADE. GONNA BE HARD TO GO BACK AFTER THIS.
WHY NOT BOTH?
...YOU'RE RIGHT.
I KNOW.
AMERICA. HEY. YOU OKAY? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
RAMONE?
...YEAH.

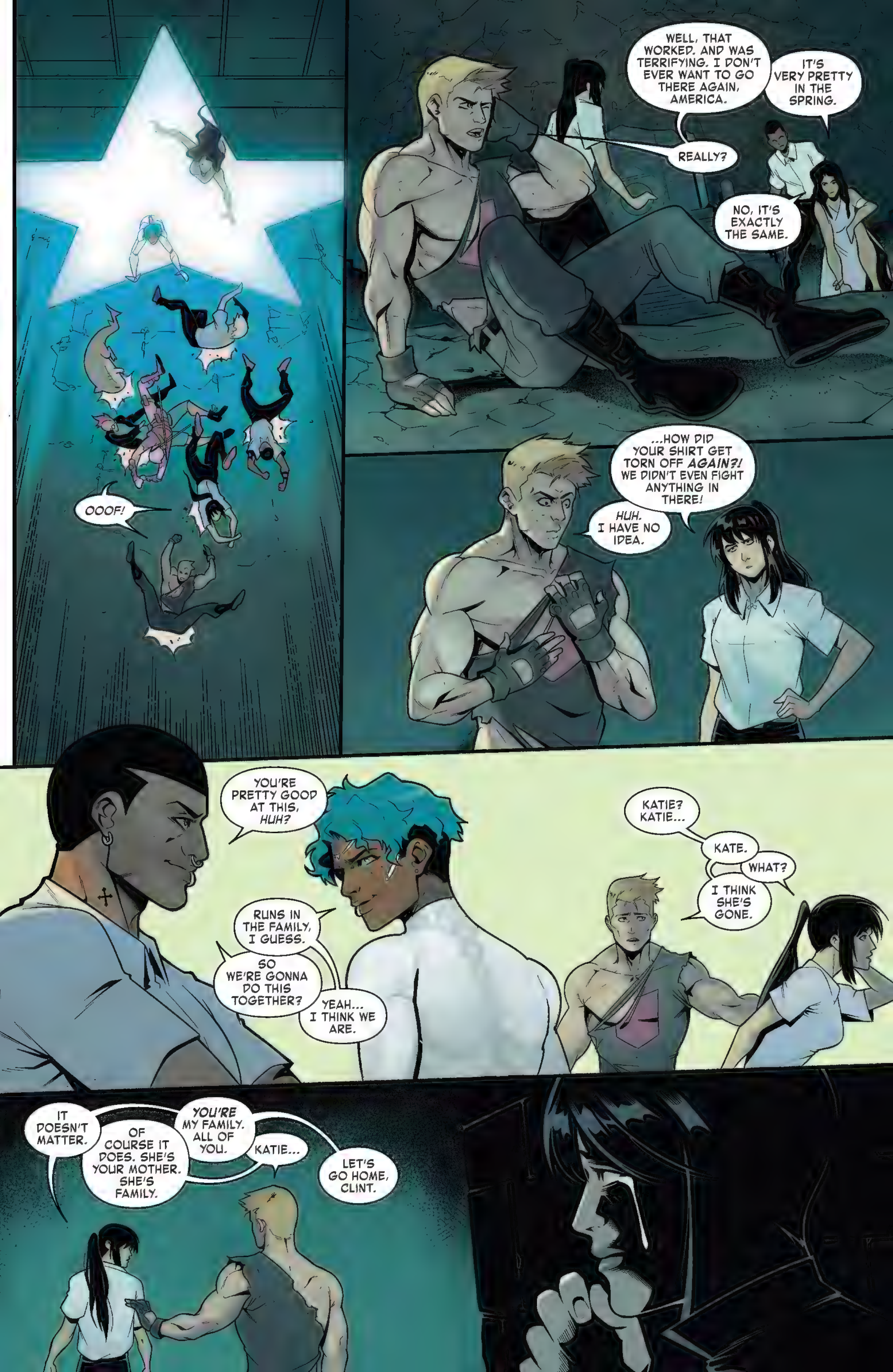

I--I'M GOING TO SAVE YOU... JUST HOLD ON.
QUENTIN... THESE THINGS DEFINITELY AREN'T PEOPLE, RIGHT? THEY'RE DEMONS?
THEY'RE DEFINITELY **NOT** HUMAN...THERE'S NOT EVEN ENOUGH BRAIN FUNCTION THERE FOR ME TO EFFECTIVELY GRAB HOLD OF THEIR MINDS.
ALL RIGHT. PUT OUR TEAM ON THE GROUND, NOW. YOU, TOO.
WHAT?!
STICK THEM TO THE GROUND, LIKE GLUE. **RIGHT NOW!**
ALL RIGHT, ALREADY!
THIS BETTER BE A GREAT IDEA, RAMONE!
ARGGGH!
GAH.
HEY!
WHAT FOUL TRICKERY IS THIS?!
MRRRRR?!
SLAM

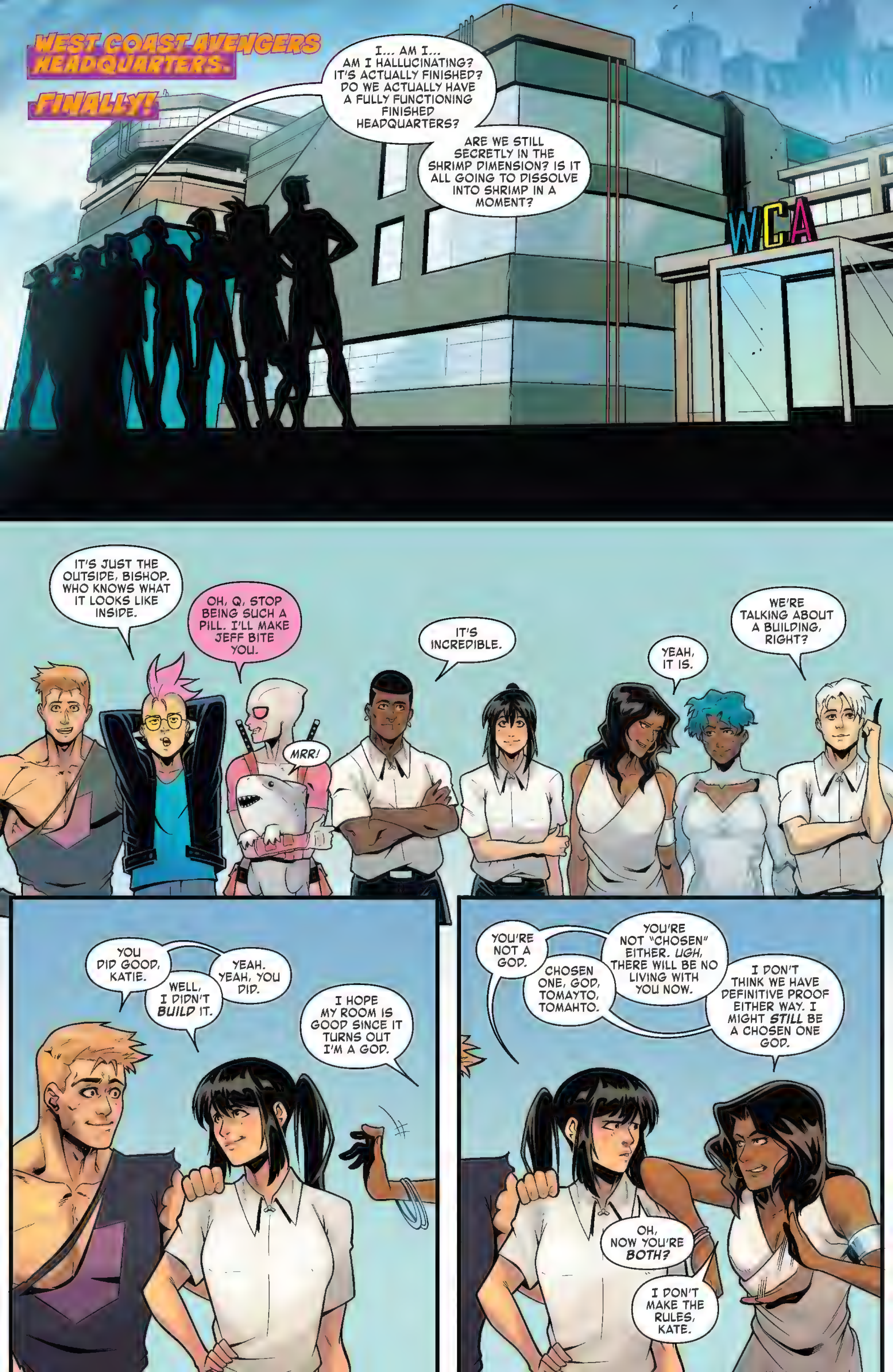

HNNNG!
ARRRGGHHHHH!
FFWIPP
FFWIPP
FFWIPP
FFWIPP
FFWIPP
FFWIPP
FFWIPP
HSSS!
HSSS!
HSSS!
HSSS!
HSSS!
HSSS!
HSSS!
HSSS!
WHOA.
HUH. IT WAS A GREAT IDEA.
MRRRR?
YOU SAVED ME.
I SAVED YOU...UH... I'M STILL SAVING YOU.
ARE YOU OKAY?

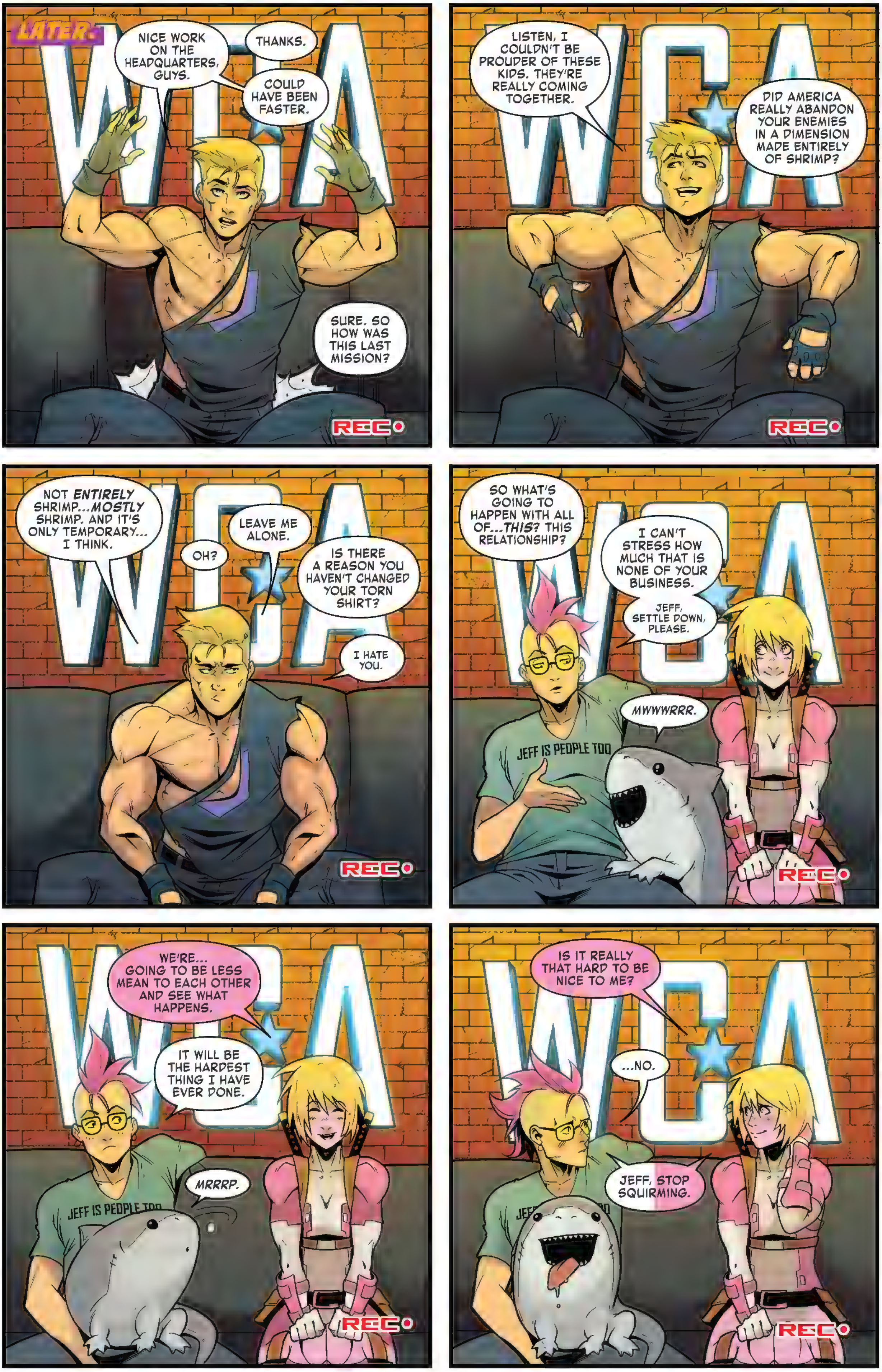

HNNNG. YES. YES, I CAN HOLD IT. ARE *YOU* OKAY? YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS SINCE I ARRIVED...AND I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU COULD *BE* UNCONSCIOUS.
WHATEVER THEY DOSED ME WITH IS WEARING OFF...I CAN FEEL MY POWERS AGAIN.
THEY DRUGGED YOU *AND* WERE FEASTING ON YOU? BIT OF OVERKILL, MAYBE.
AGREED. ALTHOUGH I *AM* VERY POWERFUL. IT'S NICE THEY RESPECT THAT.
NICE? YOU MAY HAVE A CONCUSSION.
YOU MAY BE RIGHT.
WELL DONE, RAMONE. AND MAY I OFFICIALLY SAY, WELCOME TO THE TEAM.
THANKS?
YOU DID SO GOOD. WE PROBABLY GOTTA NAME YOU.
WE?
OKAY, YOU'RE RIGHT, *ME.*
DO NOT MAKE ME PIN YOU UP THERE WITH THE VAMPIRES, JOHNNY.
WELL, WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE THEM THERE. AND RAMONE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S READY TO POP A BLOOD VESSEL. SO WHAT NOW?
WELL. YOU GUYS SAVED ME...ONLY FAIR I SAVE YOU BACK. GIVE ME JUST ONE SECOND.
YOU'RE WITH ME, QUIRE.
HEY! IT'S POLITE TO *ASK*, YOU KNOW.
AND IF THIS IS ANOTHER "MOVE PEOPLE AROUND IN A TK BUBBLE THING" I AM GOING TO FREAK OUT.

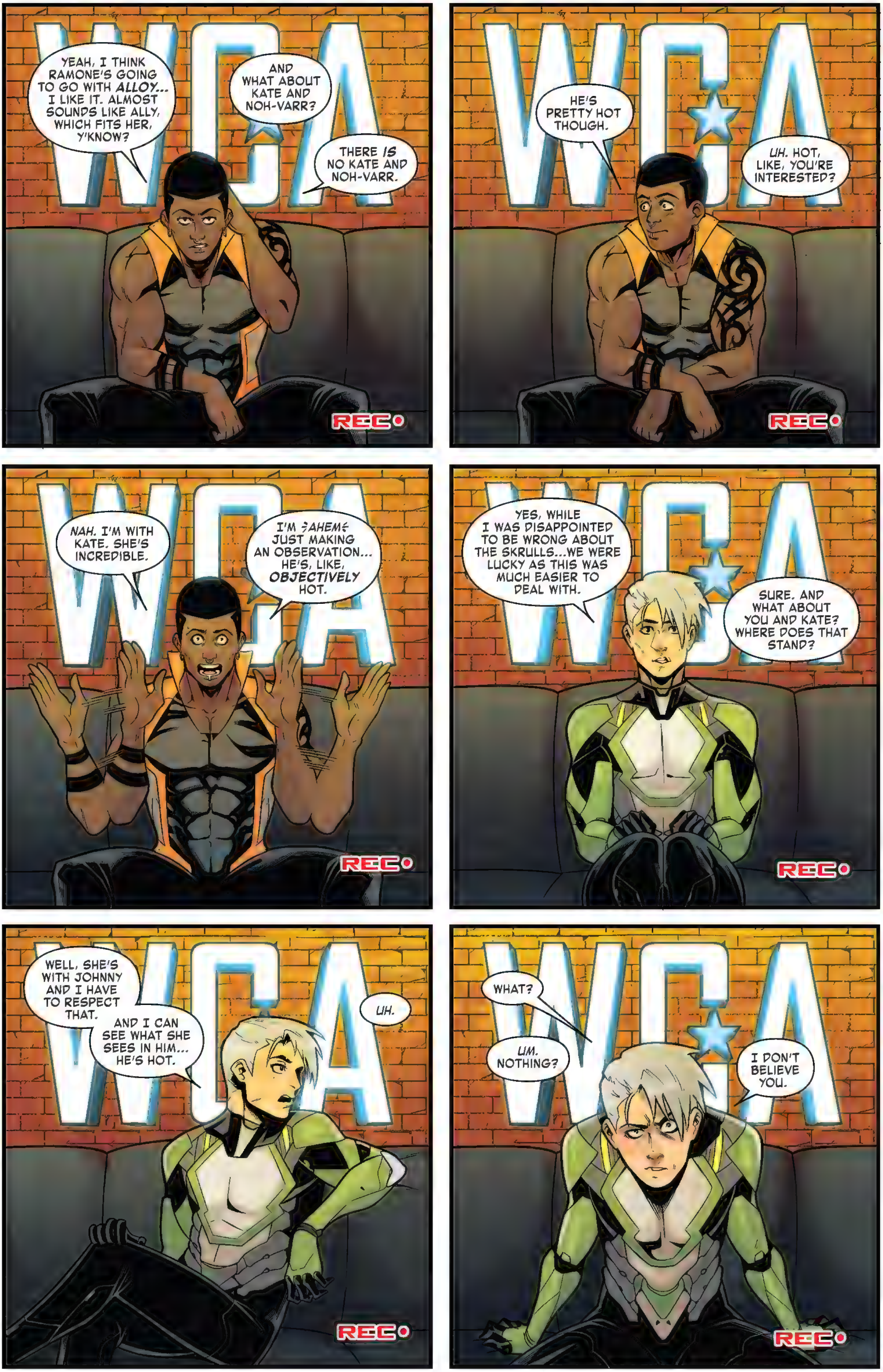

IT IS. AND YOU SHOULD STOP COMPLAINING ABOUT IT.
OH, SHUT UP, CHAVEZ.
QUENTIN. YOU EVER STOP TO THINK ABOUT *WHY* PEOPLE ALWAYS NEED THAT FROM YOU?
...
IT'S AN INSANELY USEFUL ABILITY. AND IN THIS VERY DANGEROUS WORLD...BEING ABLE TO PUT PEOPLE INSIDE A PROTECTIVE SHIELD IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL THINGS THERE IS.
SO MAYBE STOP WHINING ALL THE TIME AND REALIZE THAT YOU'RE ON A TEAM THAT'S IN ALMOST EVERY WAY FAR MORE VULNERABLE THAN YOU...AND THEY TRUST YOU TO *PROTECT* THEM. THAT'S HUGE.
...
YES. IT'S ALMOST AS USEFUL AS BEING A TELEPORTING TAXICAB THAT CAN PUNCH STUFF.
THERE ARE NO LIMITS TO MY POWERS... INCLUDING MY POWER TO BE THE WORST.
WHY ARE YOU THE WORST?
DID YOU JUST ZING *YOURSELF?*
...MAYBE.
'M Ready
he Reboo
C'MON, SHEEP. TIME TO GET YOU TO SAFE DISTANCE.
AS SOON AS HE GETS BACK, I'M GOING TO DO A THING AND THEN YOU CAN LET GO, OKAY?
O-OKAY. WHERE DID HE TAKE THEM?
THEY'LL COME OUT DOWN THE STREET... NEAR THE HOSPITAL.

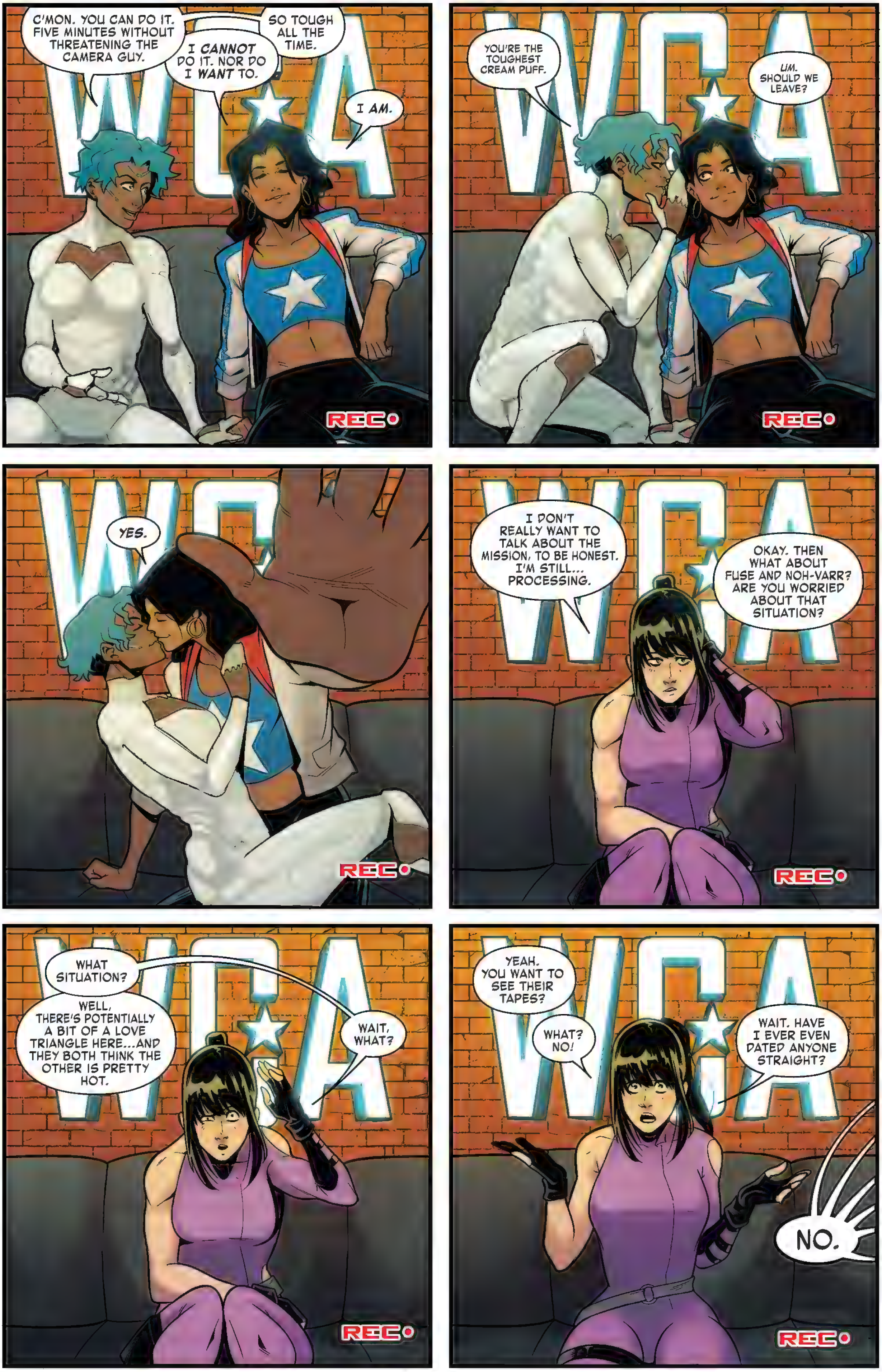

ALL RIGHT. WHAT NEW THING DO I GET TO PUT IN A TK BUBBLE NOW?
NOW IT'S *MY* TURN.
RAMONE, DROP THE BLOODSUCKERS. AND DON'T BOTHER BEING GENTLE.
KA-BOOM
HSSSS!
IS THIS... ARE WE IN THAT *SHRIMP WORLD* YOU KEEP THREATENING ME WITH?
THIS IS DISTURBING ON SO MANY LEVELS.
MAN, JEFF *LOVES* IT HERE. WE MAY NEED TO GET A VACATION HOME.
OF COURSE, NOW IT'S LOUSY WITH VAMPIRES... SO THAT SUCKS.
MRRRRR!
QUIRE.
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH.
YES. HERE YOU GO, ALL OF YOU BACK ON THE QUENTIN QUIRE TK MERRY-GO-ROUND.
PATENT PENDING.
IN HELL.
WHICH IS WHERE I MIGHT AS WELL BE.

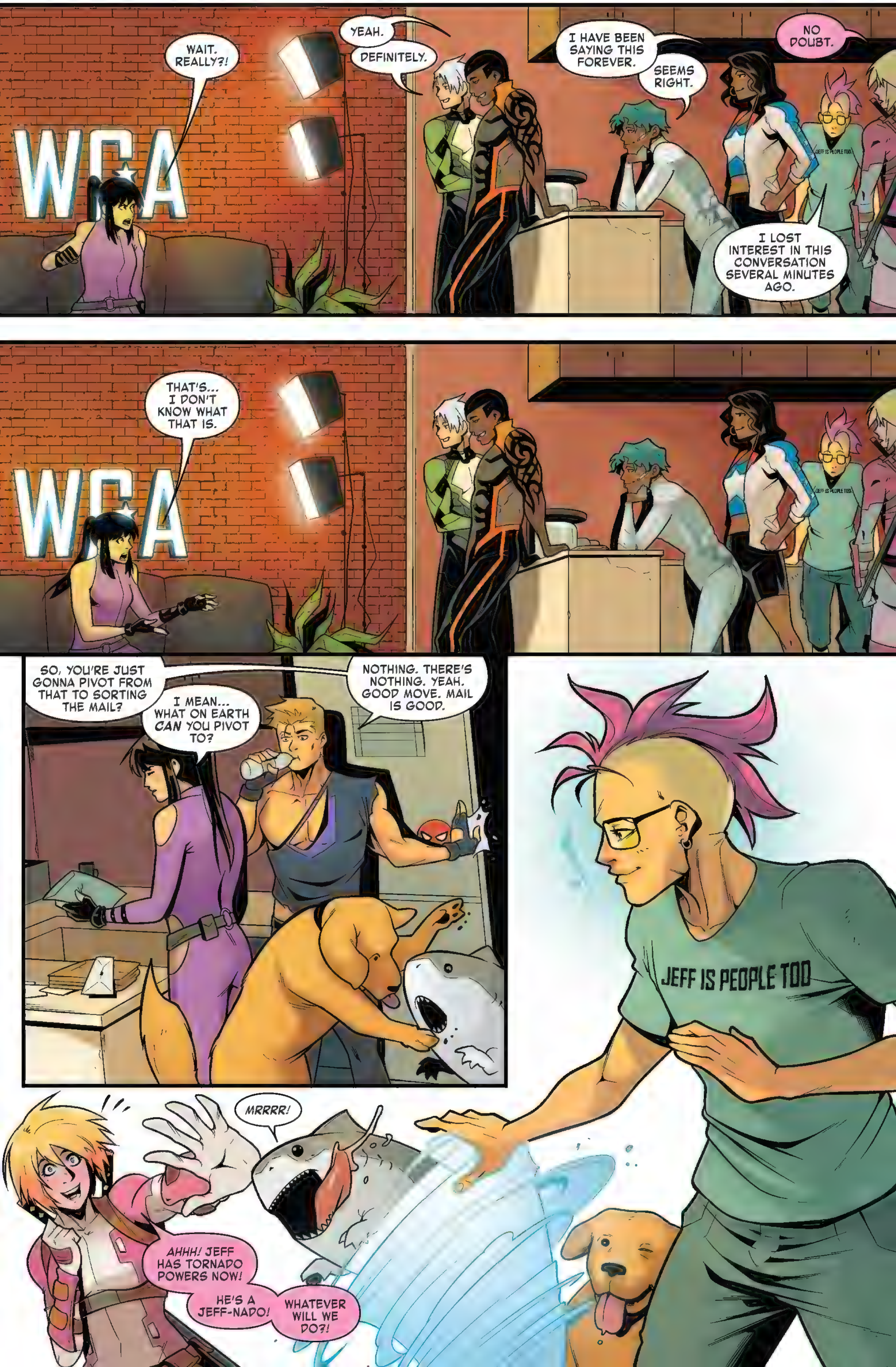

OOOF!
WELL, THAT WORKED. AND WAS TERRIFYING. I DON'T EVER WANT TO GO THERE AGAIN, AMERICA.
IT'S VERY PRETTY IN THE SPRING.
REALLY?
NO, IT'S EXACTLY THE SAME.
...HOW DID YOUR SHIRT GET TORN OFF *AGAIN?!* WE DIDN'T EVEN FIGHT ANYTHING IN THERE!
HUH. I HAVE NO IDEA.
YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD AT THIS, *HUH?*
RUNS IN THE FAMILY, I GUESS.
SO WE'RE GONNA DO THIS TOGETHER?
YEAH... I THINK WE ARE.
KATIE? KATIE...
KATE.
WHAT?
I THINK SHE'S GONE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
OF COURSE IT DOES. SHE'S YOUR MOTHER. SHE'S FAMILY.
YOU'RE MY FAMILY. ALL OF YOU.
KATIE...
LET'S GO HOME, CLINT.

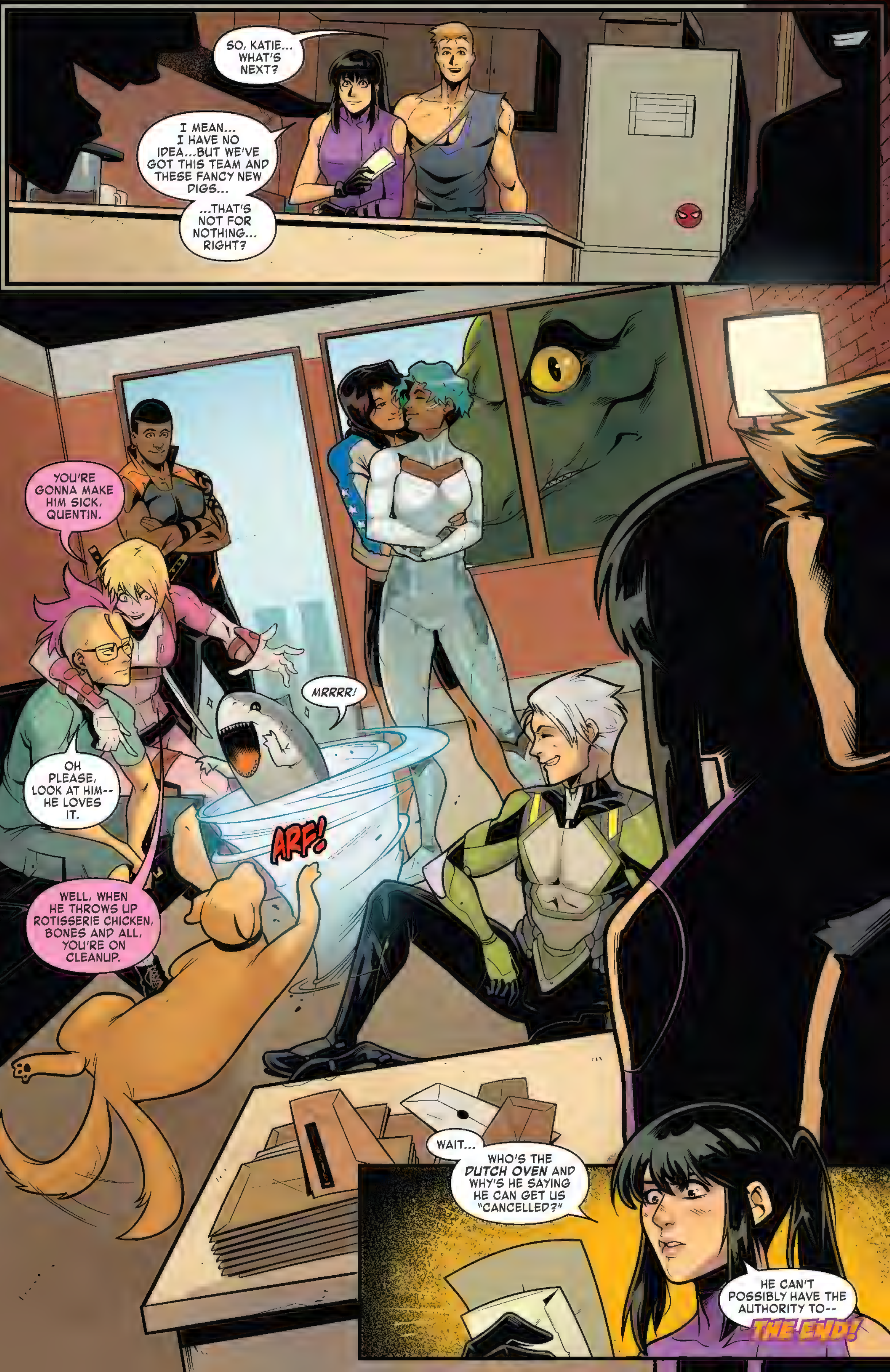

WEST COAST AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS.
FINALLY!
I... AM I... AM I HALLUCINATING? IT'S ACTUALLY FINISHED? DO WE ACTUALLY HAVE A FULLY FUNCTIONING FINISHED HEADQUARTERS?
ARE WE STILL SECRETLY IN THE SHRIMP DIMENSION? IS IT ALL GOING TO DISSOLVE INTO SHRIMP IN A MOMENT?
WCA
IT'S JUST THE OUTSIDE, BISHOP. WHO KNOWS WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE INSIDE.
OH, Q, STOP BEING SUCH A PILL. I'LL MAKE JEFF BITE YOU.
MRR!
IT'S INCREDIBLE.
YEAH, IT IS.
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A BUILDING, RIGHT?
YOU DID GOOD, KATIE.
YEAH. YEAH, YOU DID.
WELL, I DIDN'T *BUILD* IT.
I HOPE MY ROOM IS GOOD SINCE IT TURNS OUT I'M A GOD.
YOU'RE NOT A GOD.
YOU'RE NOT "CHOSEN" EITHER. *UGH*, THERE WILL BE NO LIVING WITH YOU NOW.
CHOSEN ONE, GOD, TOMAYTO, TOMAHTO.
I DON'T THINK WE HAVE DEFINITIVE PROOF EITHER WAY. I MIGHT *STILL* BE A CHOSEN ONE GOD.
OH, NOW YOU'RE *BOTH*?
I DON'T MAKE THE RULES, KATE.


LATER.
WCA
NICE WORK ON THE HEADQUARTERS, GUYS.
THANKS.
COULD HAVE BEEN FASTER.
SURE. SO HOW WAS THIS LAST MISSION?
REC
LISTEN, I COULDN'T BE PROUDER OF THESE KIDS. THEY'RE REALLY COMING TOGETHER.
DID AMERICA REALLY ABANDON YOUR ENEMIES IN A DIMENSION MADE ENTIRELY OF SHRIMP?
REC
NOT *ENTIRELY* SHRIMP...*MOSTLY* SHRIMP. AND IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY... I THINK.
OH?
LEAVE ME ALONE.
IS THERE A REASON YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED YOUR TORN SHIRT?
I HATE YOU.
REC
SO WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WITH ALL OF...*THIS*? THIS RELATIONSHIP?
I CAN'T STRESS HOW MUCH THAT IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
JEFF, SETTLE DOWN, PLEASE.
MWWWRRR.
JEFF IS PEOPLE TOO
REC
WE'RE... GOING TO BE LESS MEAN TO EACH OTHER AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.
IT WILL BE THE HARDEST THING I HAVE EVER DONE.
MRRRP.
JEFF IS PEOPLE TOO
REC
IS IT REALLY THAT HARD TO BE NICE TO ME?
...NO.
JEFF, STOP SQUIRMING.
REC


YEAH, I THINK RAMONE'S GOING TO GO WITH *ALLOY*... I LIKE IT. ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE ALLY, WHICH FITS HER, Y'KNOW?
AND WHAT ABOUT KATE AND NOH-VARR?
THERE *IS* NO KATE AND NOH-VARR.
REC
HE'S PRETTY HOT THOUGH.
UH. HOT, LIKE, YOU'RE INTERESTED?
REC
NAH. I'M WITH KATE. SHE'S INCREDIBLE.
I'M *AHEM* JUST MAKING AN OBSERVATION... HE'S, LIKE, *OBJECTIVELY* HOT.
REC
YES, WHILE I WAS DISAPPOINTED TO BE WRONG ABOUT THE SKRULLS...WE WERE LUCKY AS THIS WAS MUCH EASIER TO DEAL WITH.
SURE. AND WHAT ABOUT YOU AND KATE? WHERE DOES THAT STAND?
REC
WELL, SHE'S WITH JOHNNY AND I HAVE TO RESPECT THAT.
AND I CAN SEE WHAT SHE SEES IN HIM... HE'S HOT.
UH.
REC
WHAT?
UM. NOTHING?
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.
REC

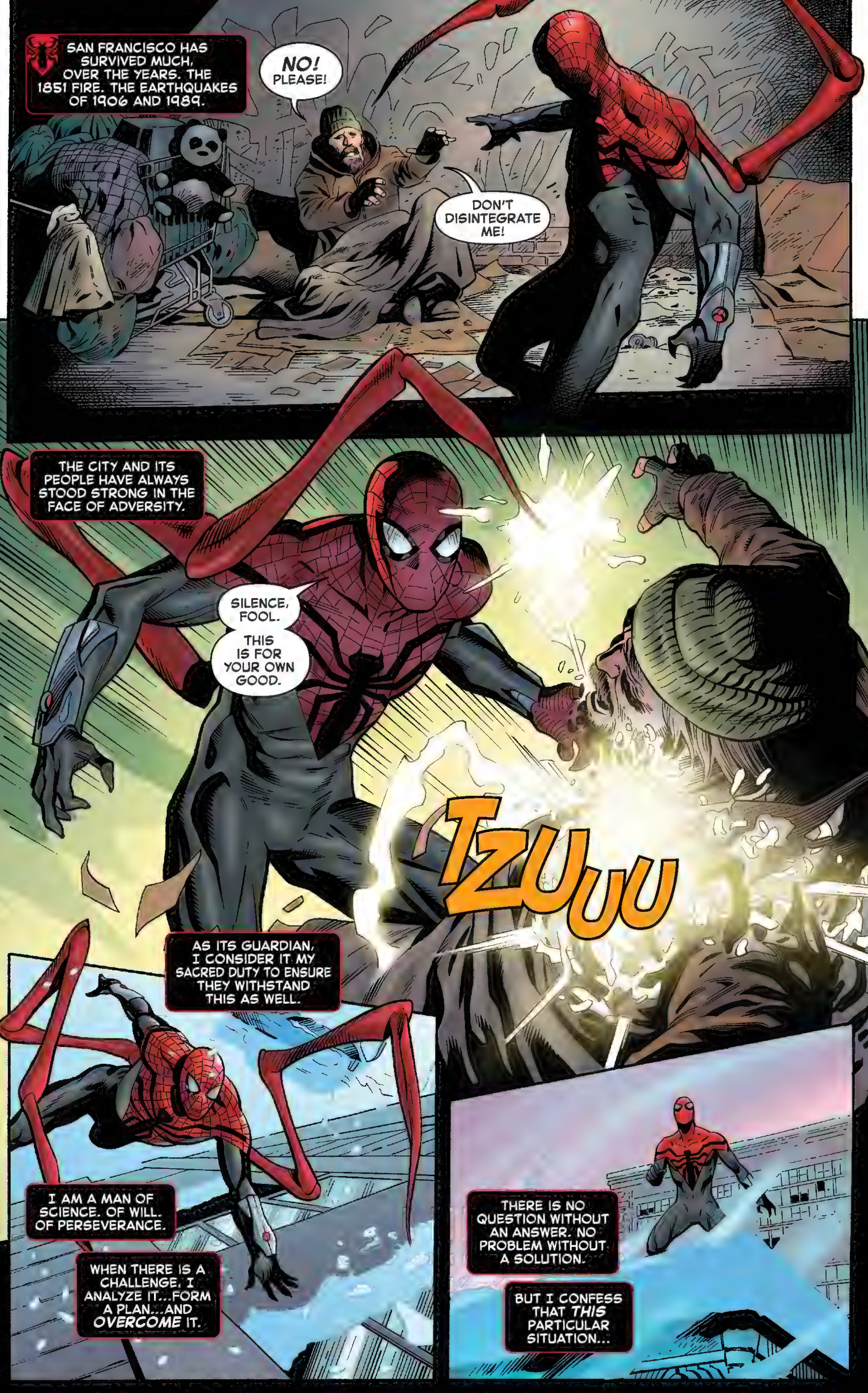

C'MON. YOU CAN DO IT. FIVE MINUTES WITHOUT THREATENING THE CAMERA GUY.
I *CANNOT* DO IT. NOR DO I *WANT* TO.
SO TOUGH ALL THE TIME.
I *AM*.
REC●
YOU'RE THE TOUGHEST CREAM PUFF.
UM. SHOULD WE LEAVE?
REC●
YES.
REC●
I DON'T REALLY WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE MISSION, TO BE HONEST. I'M STILL... PROCESSING.
OKAY. THEN WHAT ABOUT FUSE AND NOH-VARR? ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT THAT SITUATION?
REC●
WHAT SITUATION?
WELL, THERE'S POTENTIALLY A BIT OF A LOVE TRIANGLE HERE...AND THEY BOTH THINK THE OTHER IS PRETTY HOT.
WAIT, WHAT?
REC●
YEAH. YOU WANT TO SEE THEIR TAPES?
WHAT? NO!
WAIT. HAVE I EVER EVEN DATED ANYONE STRAIGHT?
NO.
REC●

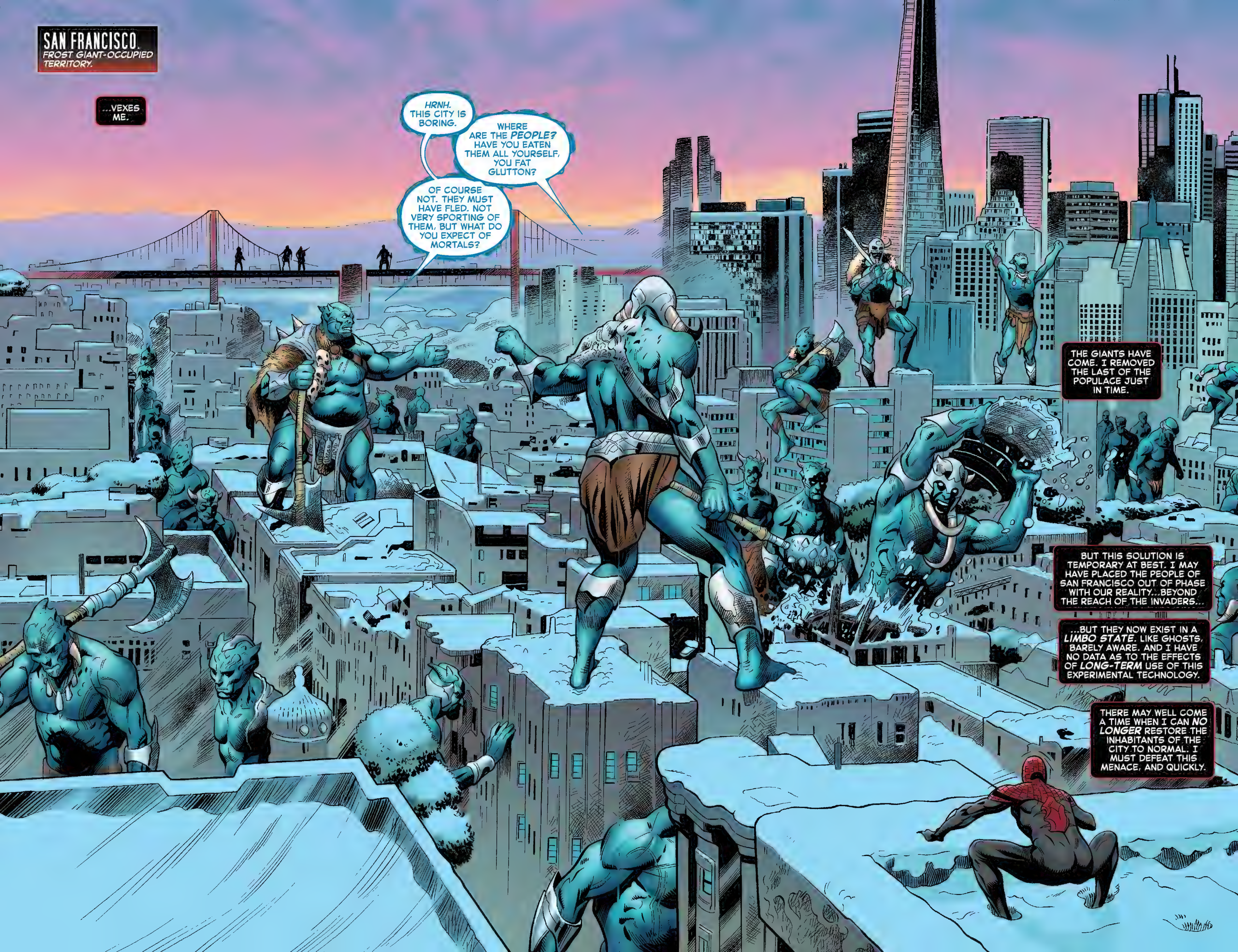

WCA
WAIT. REALLY?!
YEAH.
DEFINITELY.
I HAVE BEEN SAYING THIS FOREVER.
SEEMS RIGHT.
NO DOUBT.
JEFF IS PEOPLE TOO
I LOST INTEREST IN THIS CONVERSATION SEVERAL MINUTES AGO.
WCA
THAT'S... I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS.
JEFF IS PEOPLE TOO
SO, YOU'RE JUST GONNA PIVOT FROM THAT TO SORTING THE MAIL?
I MEAN... WHAT ON EARTH *CAN* YOU PIVOT TO?
NOTHING. THERE'S NOTHING. YEAH. GOOD MOVE. MAIL IS GOOD.
JEFF IS PEOPLE TOO
MRRRR!
AHHH! JEFF HAS TORNADO POWERS NOW!
HE'S A JEFF-NADO!
WHATEVER WILL WE DO?!

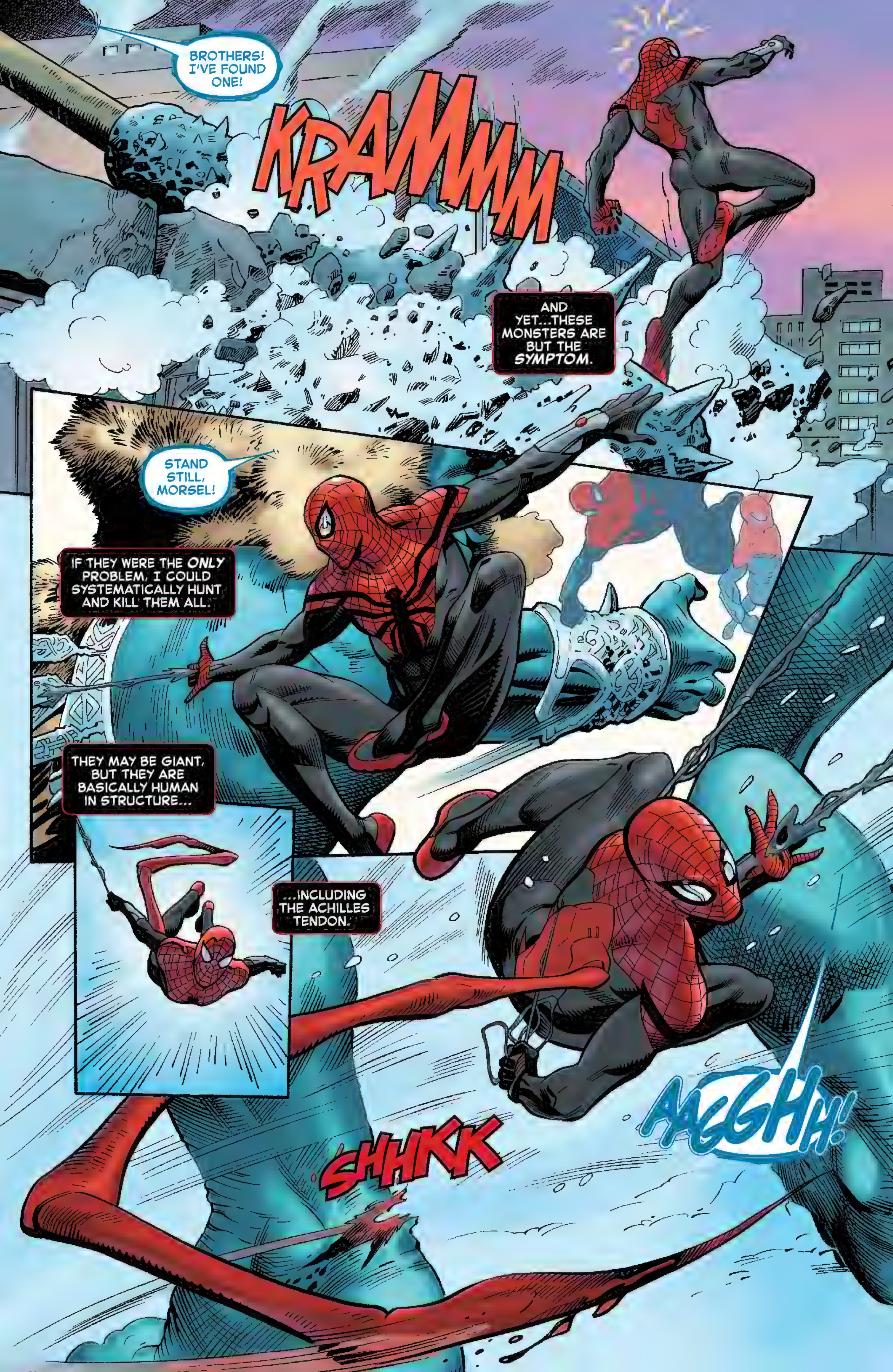

SO, KATIE... WHAT'S NEXT?
I MEAN... I HAVE NO IDEA...BUT WE'VE GOT THIS TEAM AND THESE FANCY NEW DIGS...
...THAT'S NOT FOR NOTHING... RIGHT?
YOU'RE GONNA MAKE HIM SICK, QUENTIN.
OH PLEASE, LOOK AT HIM-- HE LOVES IT.
MRRRR!
ARF!
WELL, WHEN HE THROWS UP ROTISSERIE CHICKEN, BONES AND ALL, YOU'RE ON CLEANUP.
WAIT...
WHO'S THE *DUTCH OVEN* AND WHY'S HE SAYING HE CAN GET US "CANCELLED?"
HE CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO--
THE END!

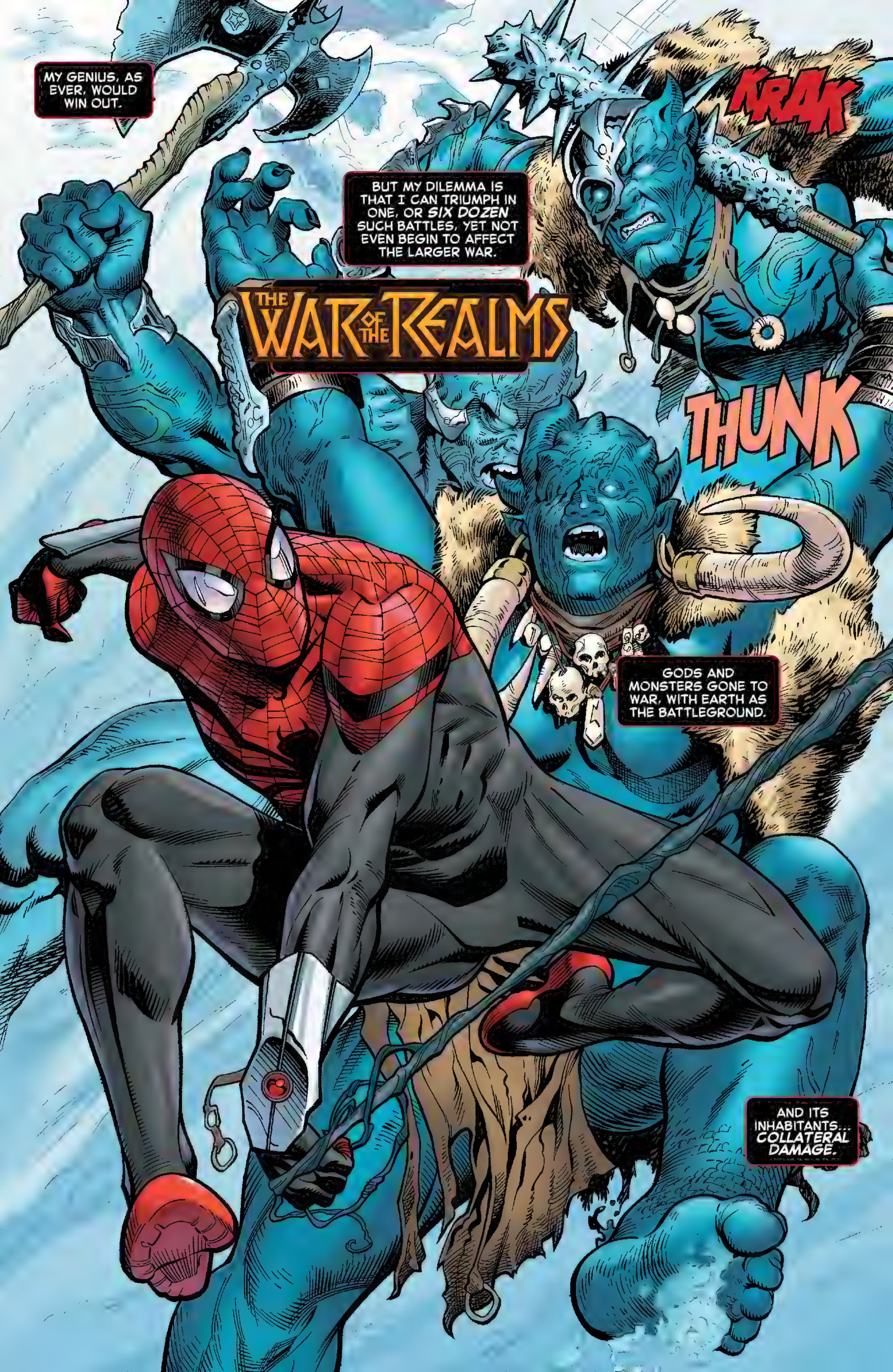
IN HAWTHORN WE TRUST

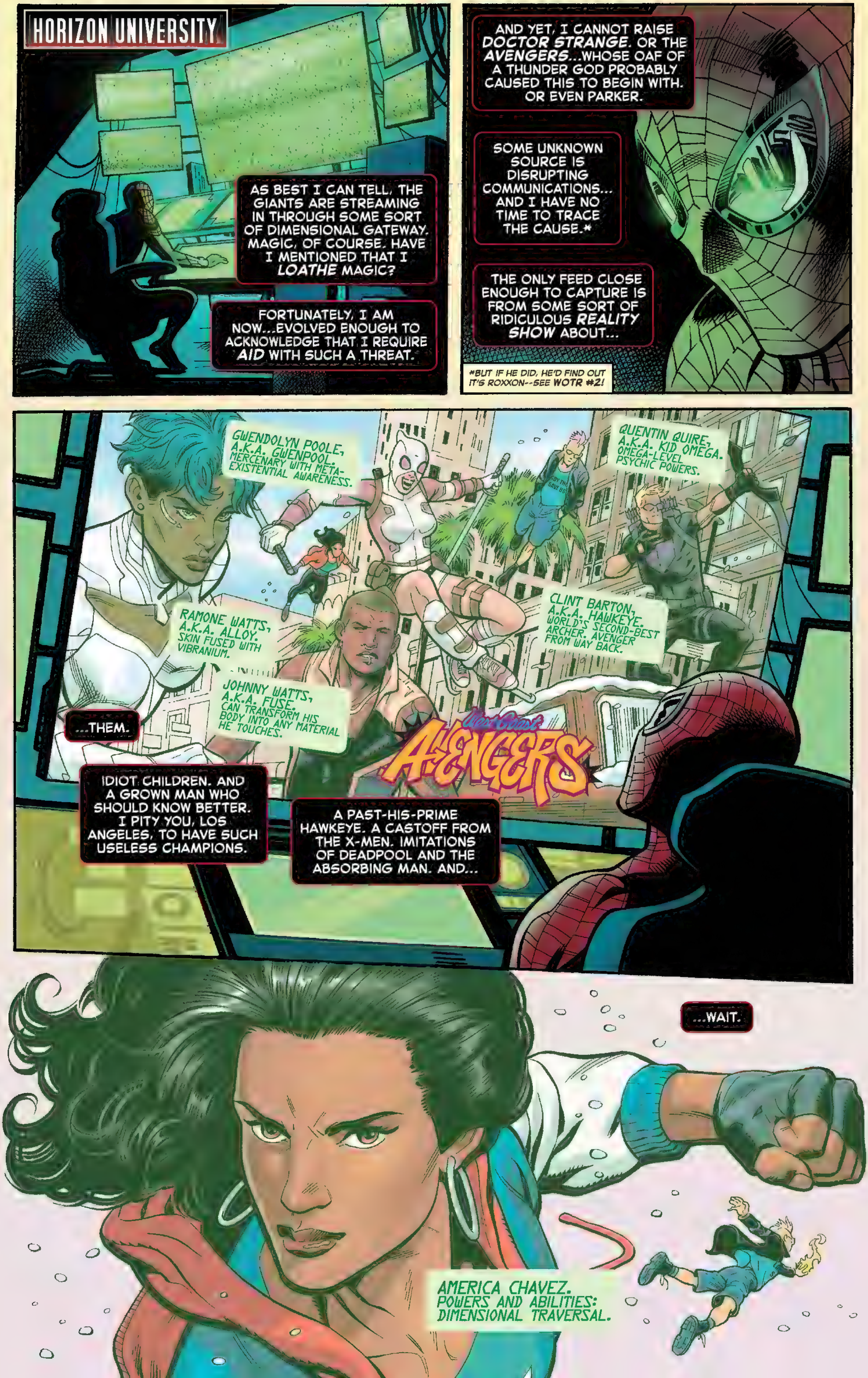
SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN #7

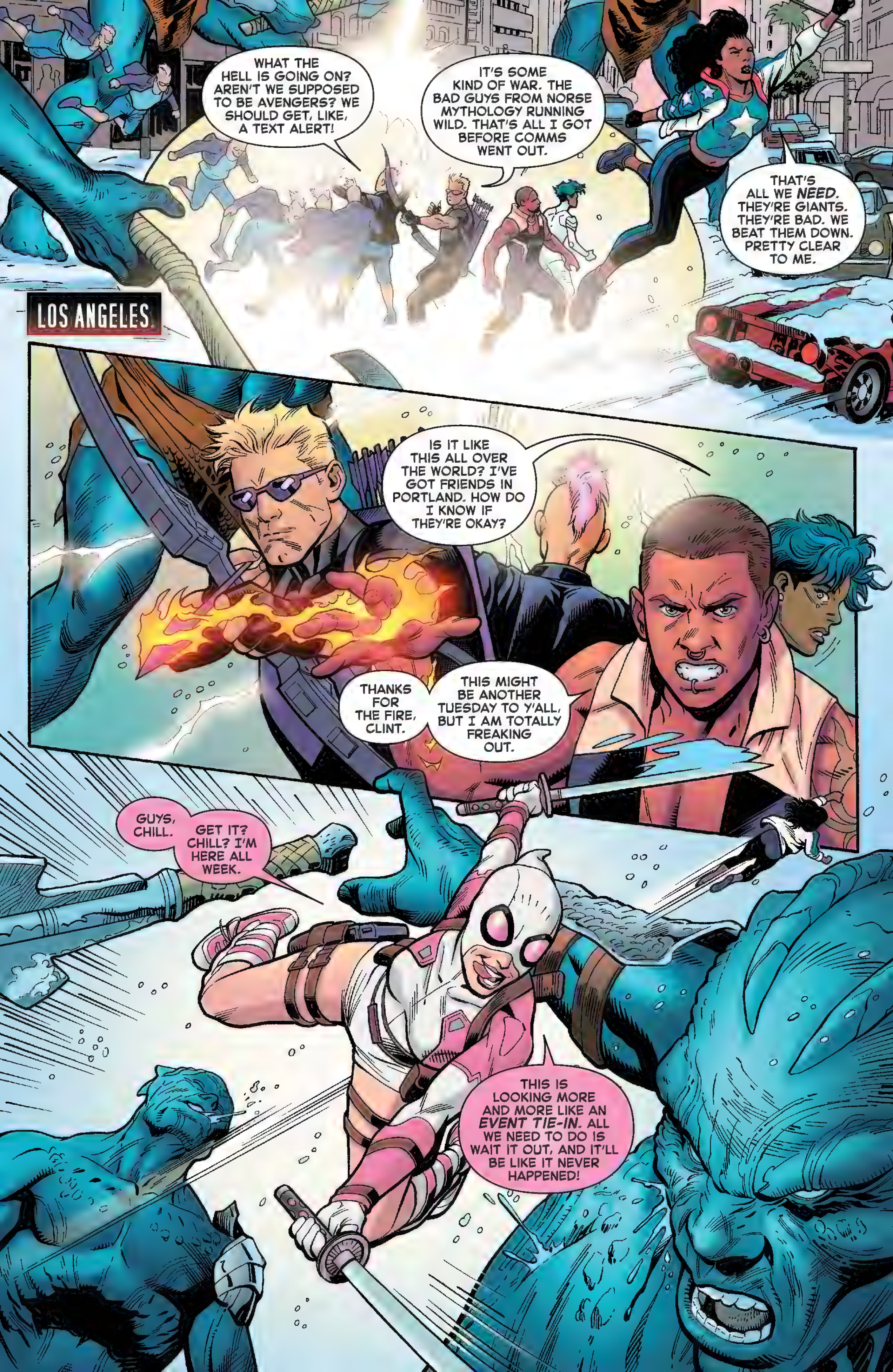

SAN FRANCISCO HAS SURVIVED MUCH, OVER THE YEARS. THE 1851 FIRE. THE EARTHQUAKES OF 1906 AND 1989.
NO! PLEASE!
DON'T DISINTEGRATE ME!
THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS STOOD STRONG IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.
SILENCE, FOOL.
THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
TZUUU
AS ITS GUARDIAN, I CONSIDER IT MY SACRED DUTY TO ENSURE THEY WITHSTAND THIS AS WELL.
I AM A MAN OF SCIENCE. OF WILL. OF PERSEVERANCE.
WHEN THERE IS A CHALLENGE, I ANALYZE IT...FORM A PLAN...AND *OVERCOME* IT.
THERE IS NO QUESTION WITHOUT AN ANSWER. NO PROBLEM WITHOUT A SOLUTION.
BUT I CONFESS THAT *THIS* PARTICULAR SITUATION...

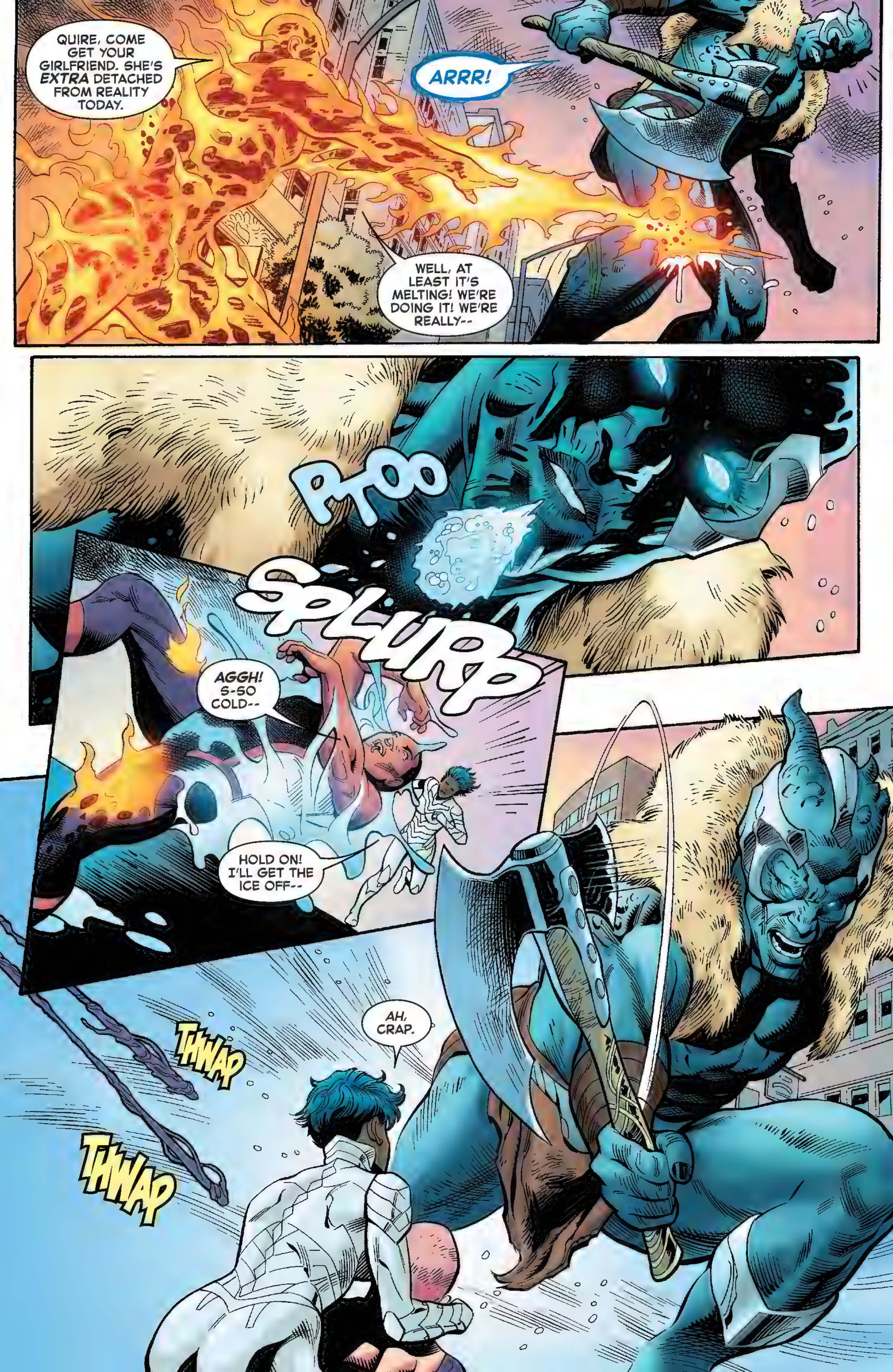

SAN FRANCISCO. FROST GIANT-OCCUPIED TERRITORY.
...VEXES ME.
HRNH. THIS CITY IS BORING.
WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE? HAVE YOU EATEN THEM ALL YOURSELF, YOU FAT GLUTTON?
OF COURSE NOT. THEY MUST HAVE FLED. NOT VERY SPORTING OF THEM, BUT WHAT DO YOU EXPECT OF MORTALS?
THE GIANTS HAVE COME. I REMOVED THE LAST OF THE POPULACE JUST IN TIME.
BUT THIS SOLUTION IS TEMPORARY AT BEST. I MAY HAVE PLACED THE PEOPLE OF SAN FRANCISCO OUT OF PHASE WITH OUR REALITY...BEYOND THE REACH OF THE INVADERS...
...BUT THEY NOW EXIST IN A LIMBO STATE. LIKE GHOSTS, BARELY AWARE. AND I HAVE NO DATA AS TO THE EFFECTS OF LONG-TERM USE OF THIS EXPERIMENTAL TECHNOLOGY.
THERE MAY WELL COME A TIME WHEN I CAN NO LONGER RESTORE THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITY TO NORMAL. I MUST DEFEAT THIS MENACE, AND QUICKLY.

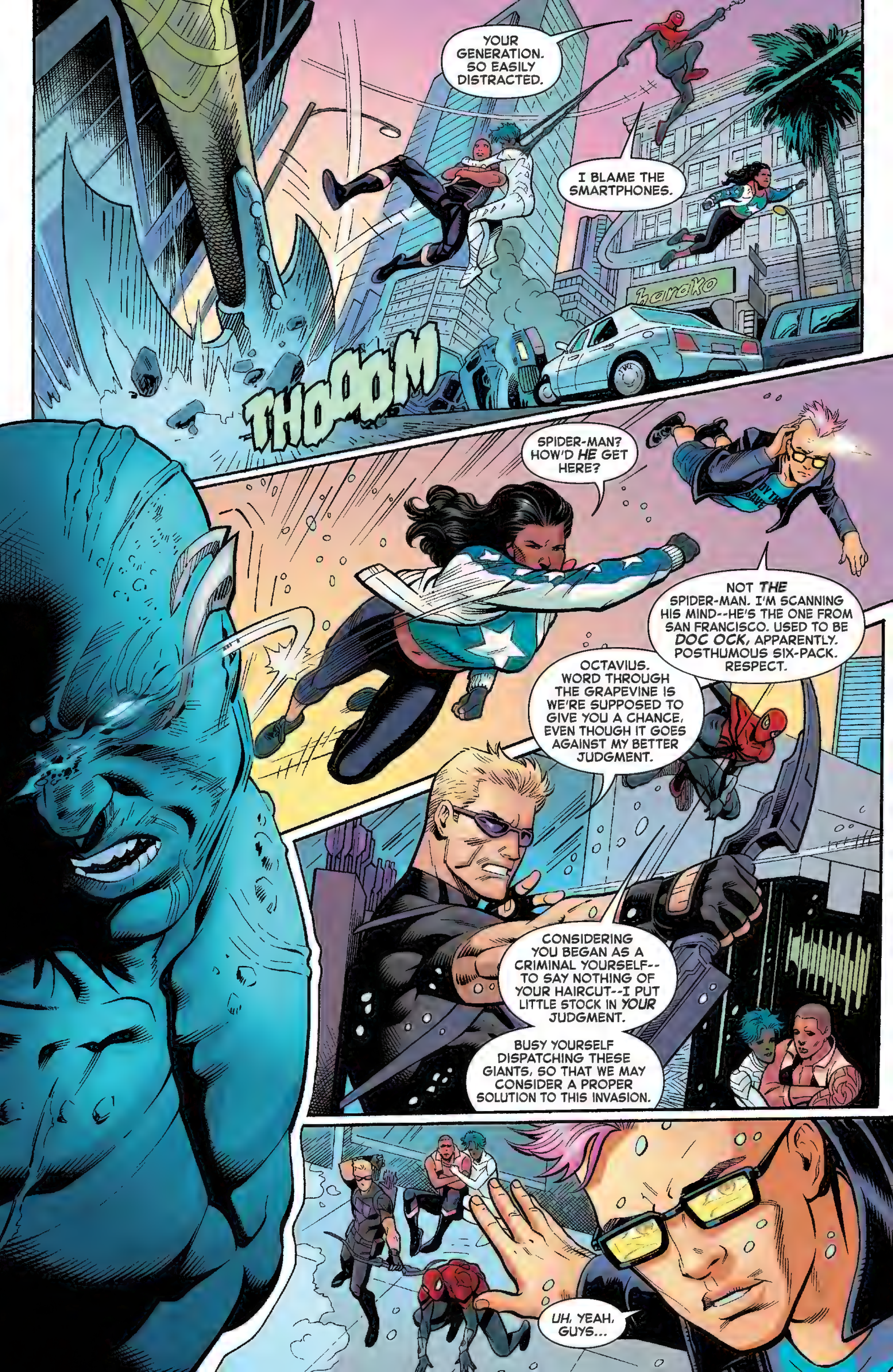

BROTHERS! I'VE FOUND ONE!
KRAMMMM
AND YET...THESE MONSTERS ARE BUT THE *SYMPTOM*.
STAND STILL, MORSEL!
IF THEY WERE THE *ONLY* PROBLEM, I COULD SYSTEMATICALLY HUNT AND KILL THEM ALL.
THEY MAY BE GIANT, BUT THEY ARE BASICALLY HUMAN IN STRUCTURE...
...INCLUDING THE ACHILLES TENDON.
SHHKK
AAGGHH!

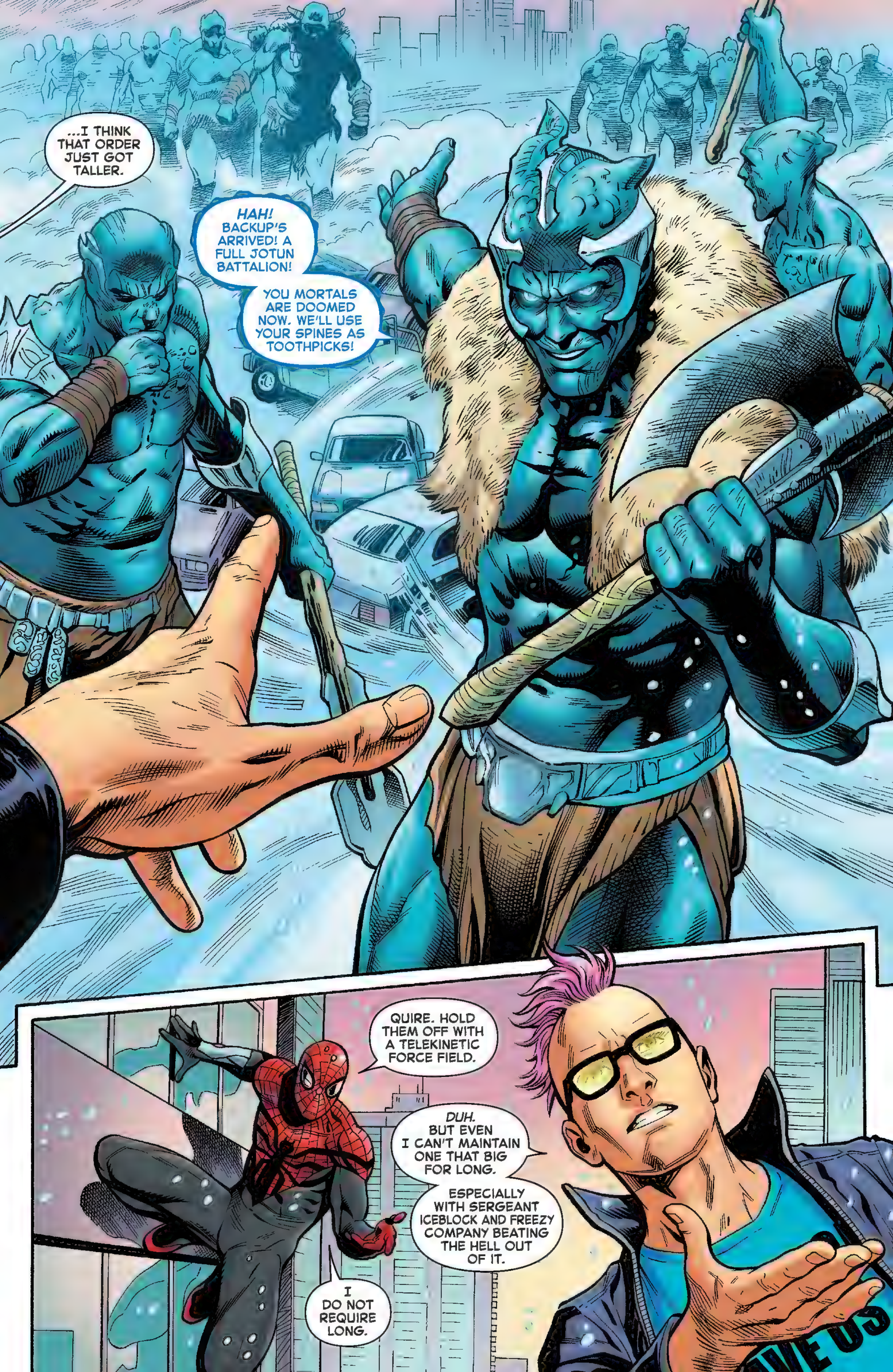

MY GENIUS, AS EVER, WOULD WIN OUT.
BUT MY DILEMMA IS THAT I CAN TRIUMPH IN ONE, OR *SIX DOZEN* SUCH BATTLES, YET NOT EVEN BEGIN TO AFFECT THE LARGER WAR.
THE WAR OF THE REALMS
KRAK
THUNK
GODS AND MONSTERS GONE TO WAR, WITH EARTH AS THE BATTLEGROUND.
AND ITS INHABITANTS... *COLLATERAL DAMAGE.*

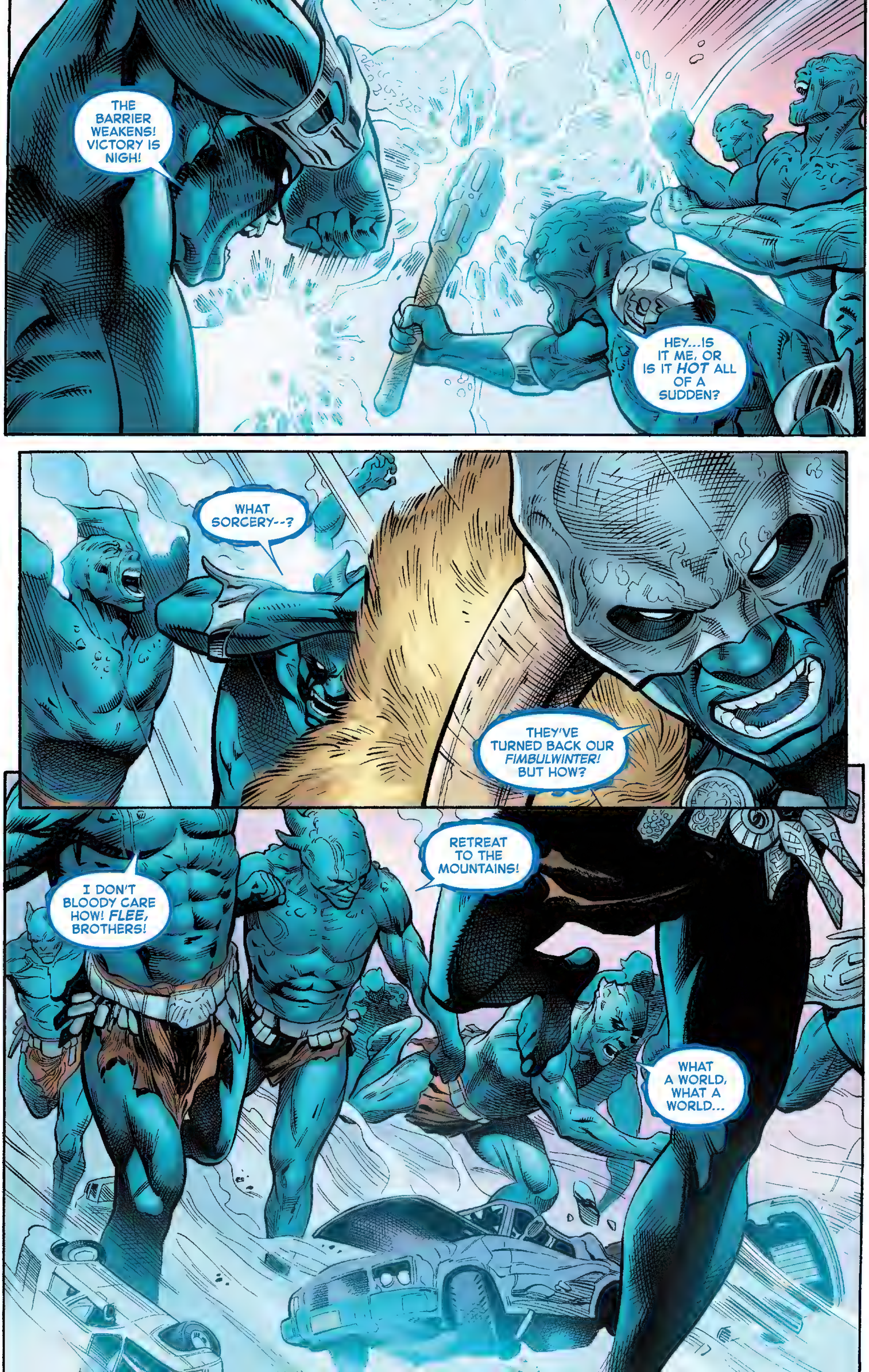

HORIZON UNIVERSITY
AS BEST I CAN TELL, THE GIANTS ARE STREAMING IN THROUGH SOME SORT OF DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY. MAGIC, OF COURSE. HAVE I MENTIONED THAT I *LOATHE* MAGIC?
FORTUNATELY, I AM NOW...EVOLVED ENOUGH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I REQUIRE *AID* WITH SUCH A THREAT.
AND YET, I CANNOT RAISE *DOCTOR STRANGE*, OR THE *AVENGERS*...WHOSE OAF OF A THUNDER GOD PROBABLY CAUSED THIS TO BEGIN WITH. OR EVEN PARKER.
SOME UNKNOWN SOURCE IS DISRUPTING COMMUNICATIONS... AND I HAVE NO TIME TO TRACE THE CAUSE.*
THE ONLY FEED CLOSE ENOUGH TO CAPTURE IS FROM SOME SORT OF RIDICULOUS *REALITY SHOW* ABOUT...
*BUT IF HE DID, HE'D FIND OUT IT'S ROXXON--SEE WOTR #2!
GWENDOLYN POOLE, A.K.A. GWENPOOL. MERCENARY WITH META-EXISTENTIAL AWARENESS.
QUENTIN QUIRE, A.K.A. KID OMEGA. OMEGA-LEVEL PSYCHIC POWERS.
RAMONE WATTS, A.K.A. ALLOY. SKIN FUSED WITH VIBRANIUM.
CLINT BARTON, A.K.A. HAWKEYE. WORLD'S SECOND-BEST ARCHER. AVENGER FROM WAY BACK.
JOHNNY WATTS, A.K.A. FUSE. CAN TRANSFORM HIS BODY INTO ANY MATERIAL HE TOUCHES.
West Coast AVENGERS
...THEM.
IDIOT CHILDREN. AND A GROWN MAN WHO SHOULD KNOW BETTER. I PITY YOU, LOS ANGELES, TO HAVE SUCH USELESS CHAMPIONS.
A PAST-HIS-PRIME HAWKEYE. A CASTOFF FROM THE X-MEN. IMITATIONS OF DEADPOOL AND THE ABSORBING MAN. AND...
...WAIT.
AMERICA CHAVEZ. POWERS AND ABILITIES: DIMENSIONAL TRAVERSAL.

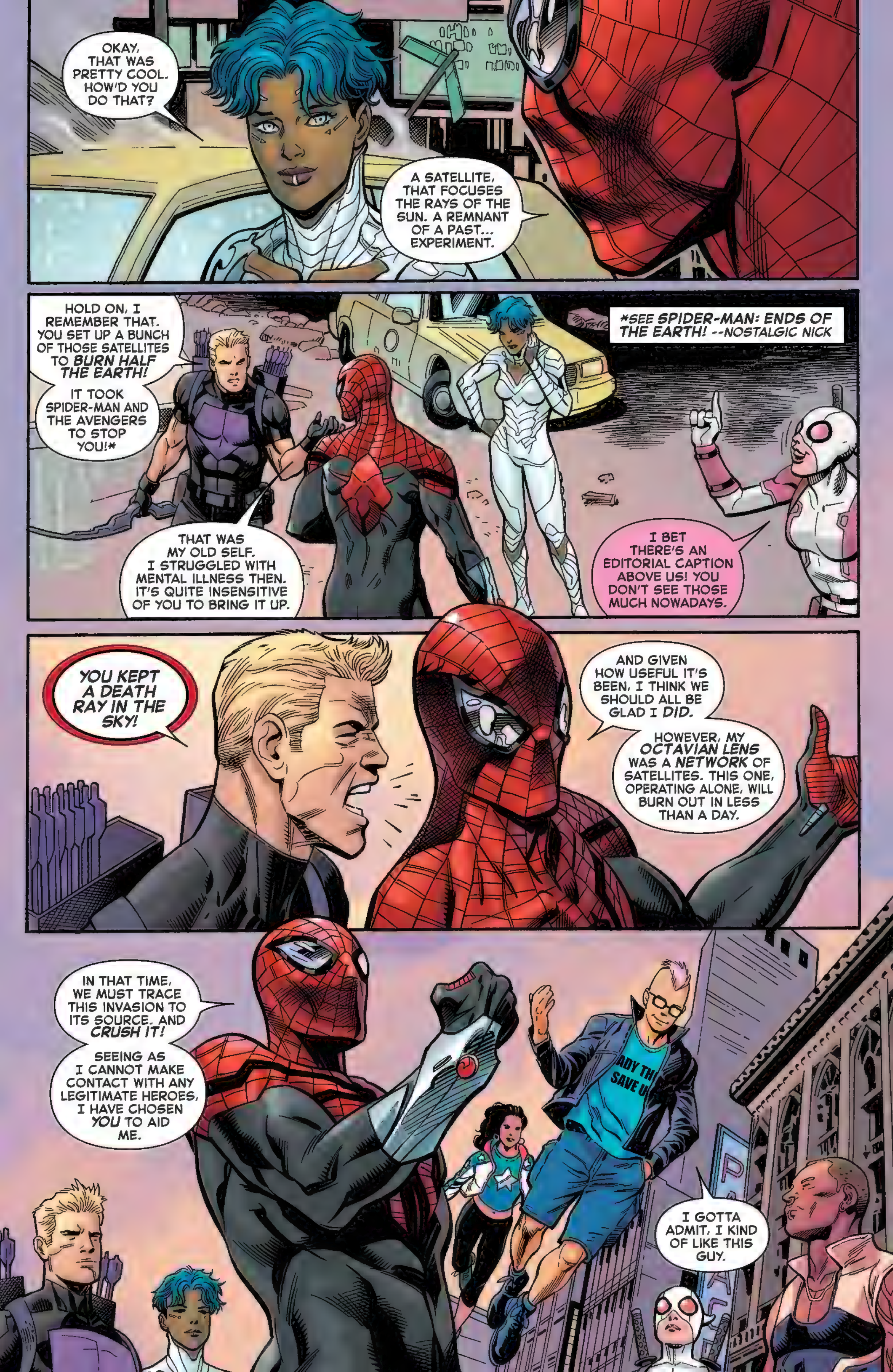

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON? AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO BE AVENGERS? WE SHOULD GET, LIKE, A TEXT ALERT!
IT'S SOME KIND OF WAR. THE BAD GUYS FROM NORSE MYTHOLOGY RUNNING WILD. THAT'S ALL I GOT BEFORE COMMS WENT OUT.
THAT'S ALL WE *NEED*. THEY'RE GIANTS. THEY'RE BAD. WE BEAT THEM DOWN. PRETTY CLEAR TO ME.
LOS ANGELES
IS IT LIKE THIS ALL OVER THE WORLD? I'VE GOT FRIENDS IN PORTLAND. HOW DO I KNOW IF THEY'RE OKAY?
THANKS FOR THE FIRE, CLINT.
THIS MIGHT BE ANOTHER TUESDAY TO Y'ALL, BUT I AM TOTALLY FREAKING OUT.
GUYS, CHILL.
GET IT? CHILL? I'M HERE ALL WEEK.
THIS IS LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE AN *EVENT TIE-IN*. ALL WE NEED TO DO IS WAIT IT OUT, AND IT'LL BE LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED!

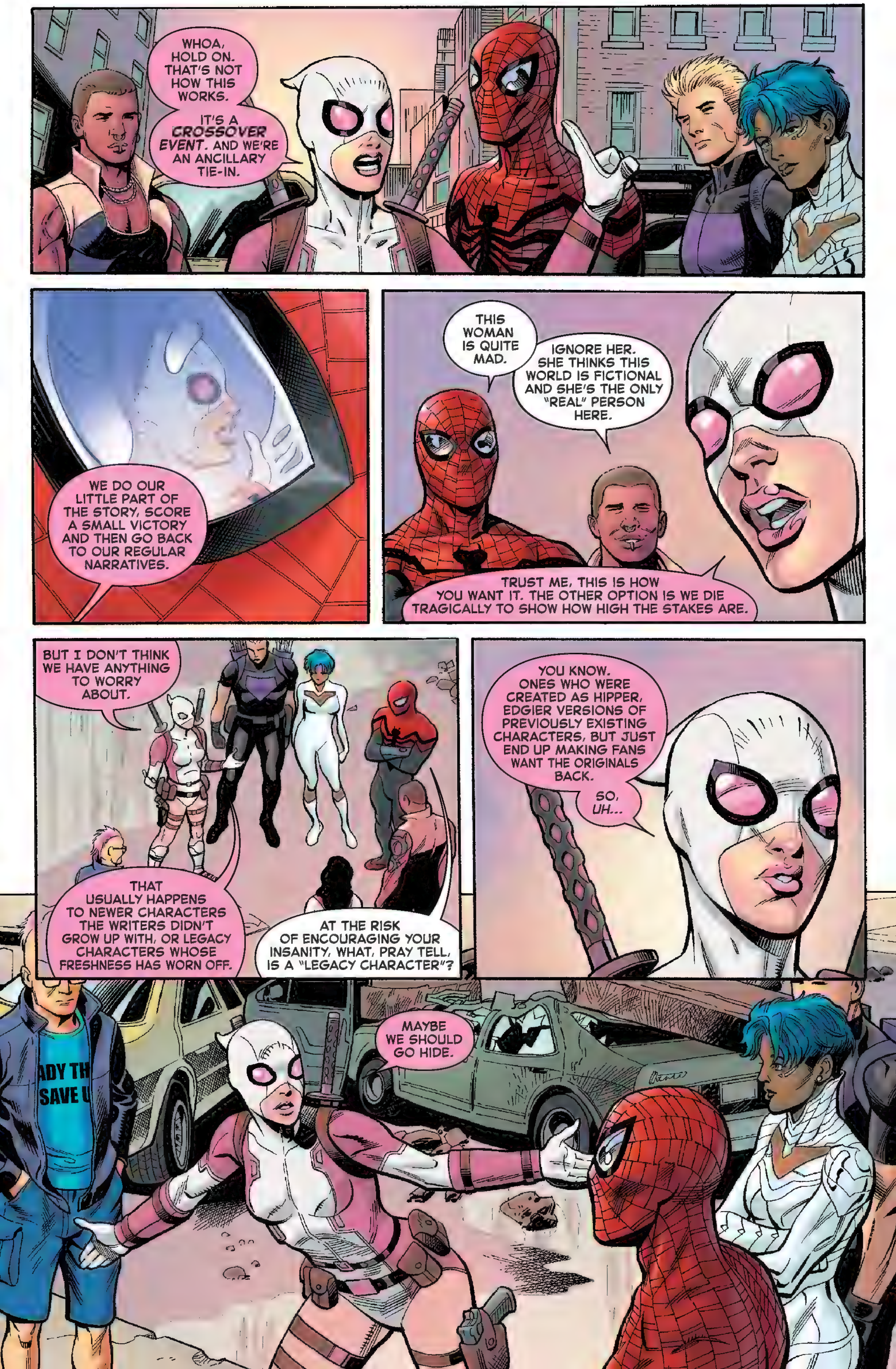

QUIRE, COME GET YOUR GIRLFRIEND. SHE'S *EXTRA* DETACHED FROM REALITY TODAY.
ARRR!
WELL, AT LEAST IT'S MELTING! WE'RE DOING IT! WE'RE REALLY--
PTOO
SPLURP
AGGH! S-SO COLD--
HOLD ON! I'LL GET THE ICE OFF--
AH, CRAP.
THWAP
THWAP

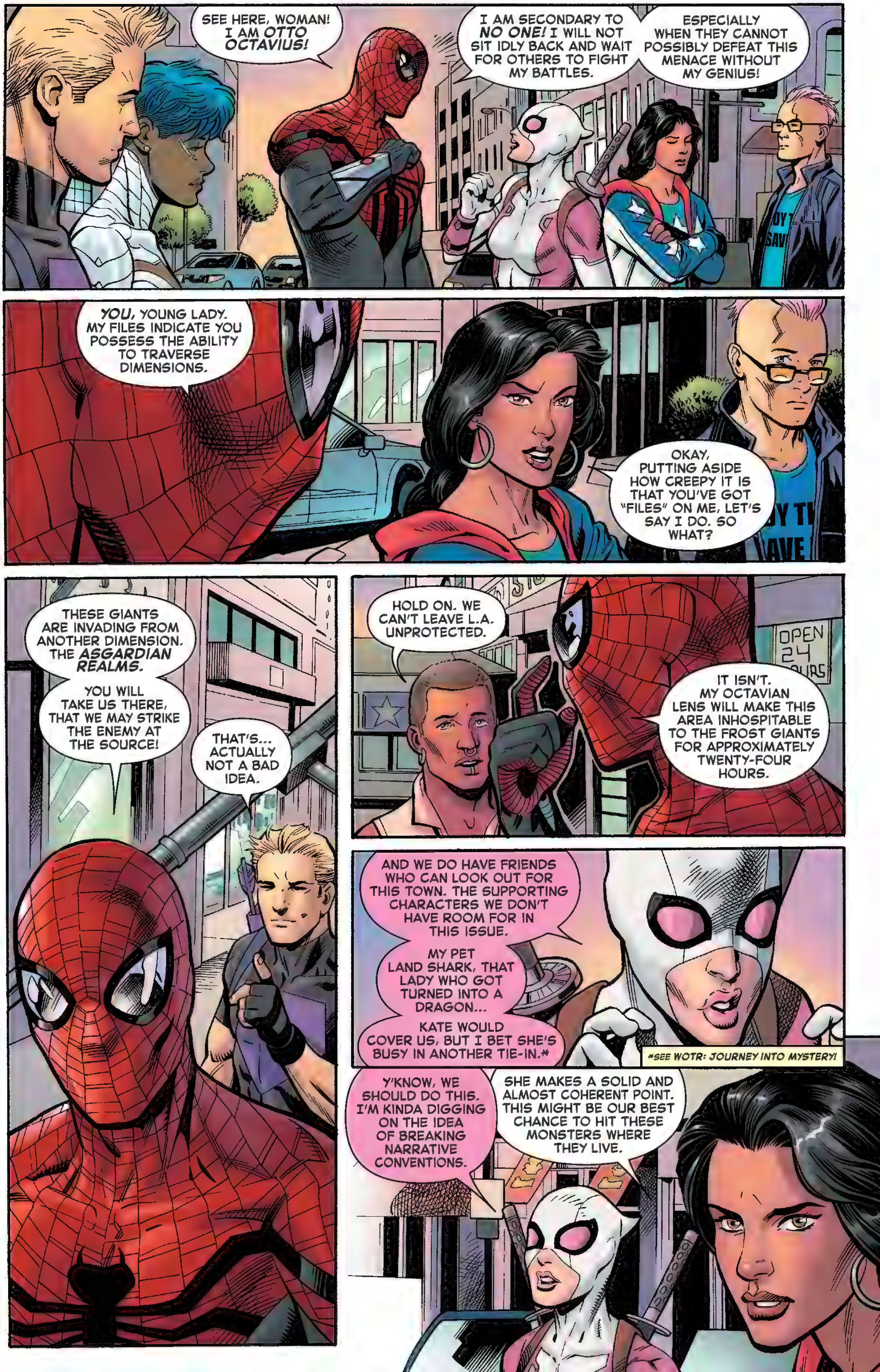

YOUR GENERATION. SO EASILY DISTRACTED.
I BLAME THE SMARTPHONES.
baraKo
THOOOM
SPIDER-MAN? HOW'D *HE* GET HERE?
NOT *THE* SPIDER-MAN. I'M SCANNING HIS MIND--HE'S THE ONE FROM SAN FRANCISCO. USED TO BE *DOC OCK,* APPARENTLY. POSTHUMOUS SIX-PACK. RESPECT.
OCTAVIUS. WORD THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE IS WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE, EVEN THOUGH IT GOES AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGMENT.
CONSIDERING YOU BEGAN AS A CRIMINAL YOURSELF--TO SAY NOTHING OF YOUR HAIRCUT--I PUT LITTLE STOCK IN *YOUR* JUDGMENT.
BUSY YOURSELF DISPATCHING THESE GIANTS, SO THAT WE MAY CONSIDER A PROPER SOLUTION TO THIS INVASION.
UH, YEAH, GUYS...

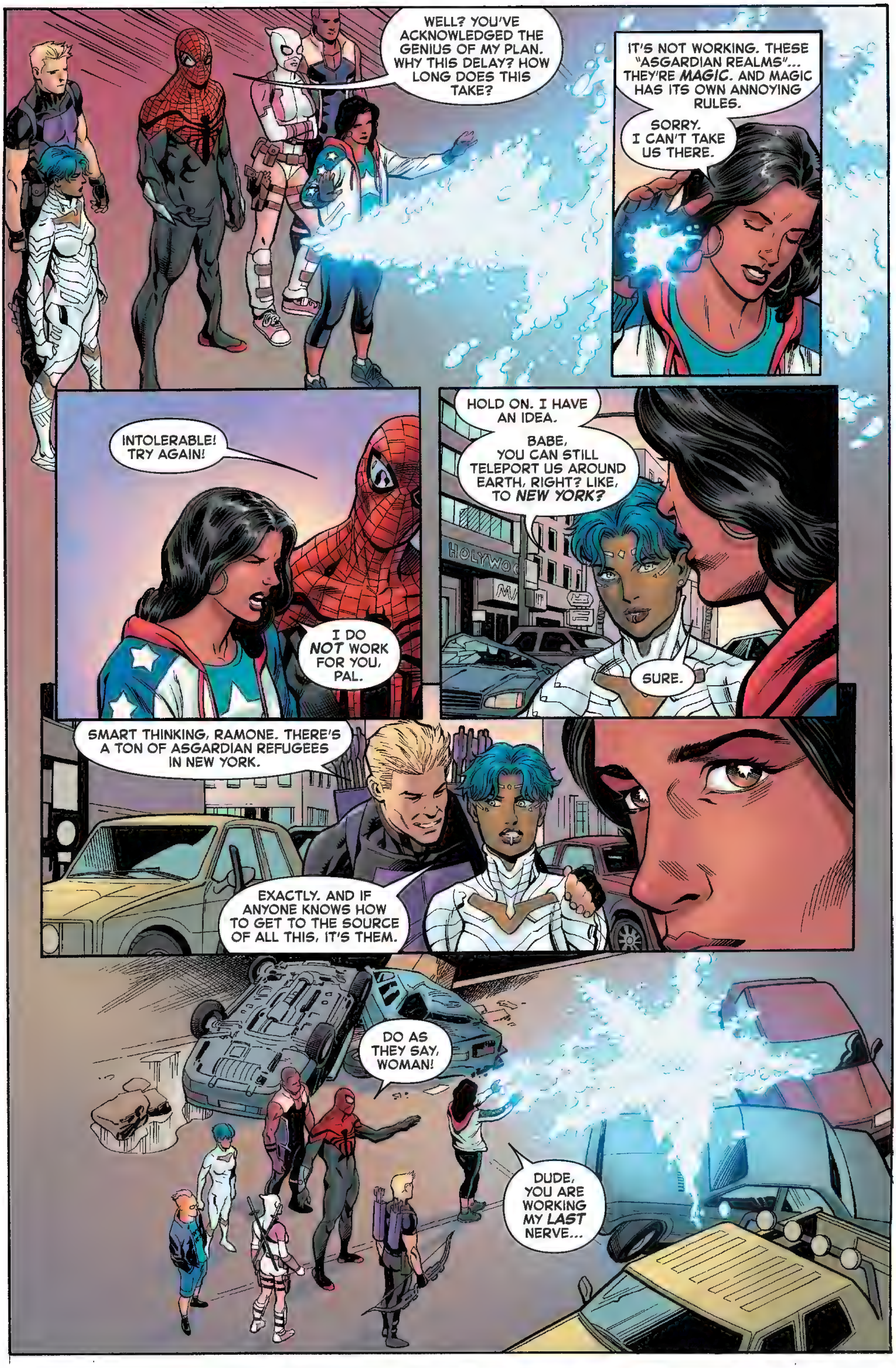

...I THINK THAT ORDER JUST GOT TALLER.
HAH! BACKUP'S ARRIVED! A FULL JOTUN BATTALION!
YOU MORTALS ARE DOOMED NOW. WE'LL USE YOUR SPINES AS TOOTHPICKS!
QUIRE. HOLD THEM OFF WITH A TELEKINETIC FORCE FIELD.
DUH. BUT EVEN I CAN'T MAINTAIN ONE THAT BIG FOR LONG.
ESPECIALLY WITH SERGEANT ICEBLOCK AND FREEZY COMPANY BEATING THE HELL OUT OF IT.
I DO NOT REQUIRE LONG.

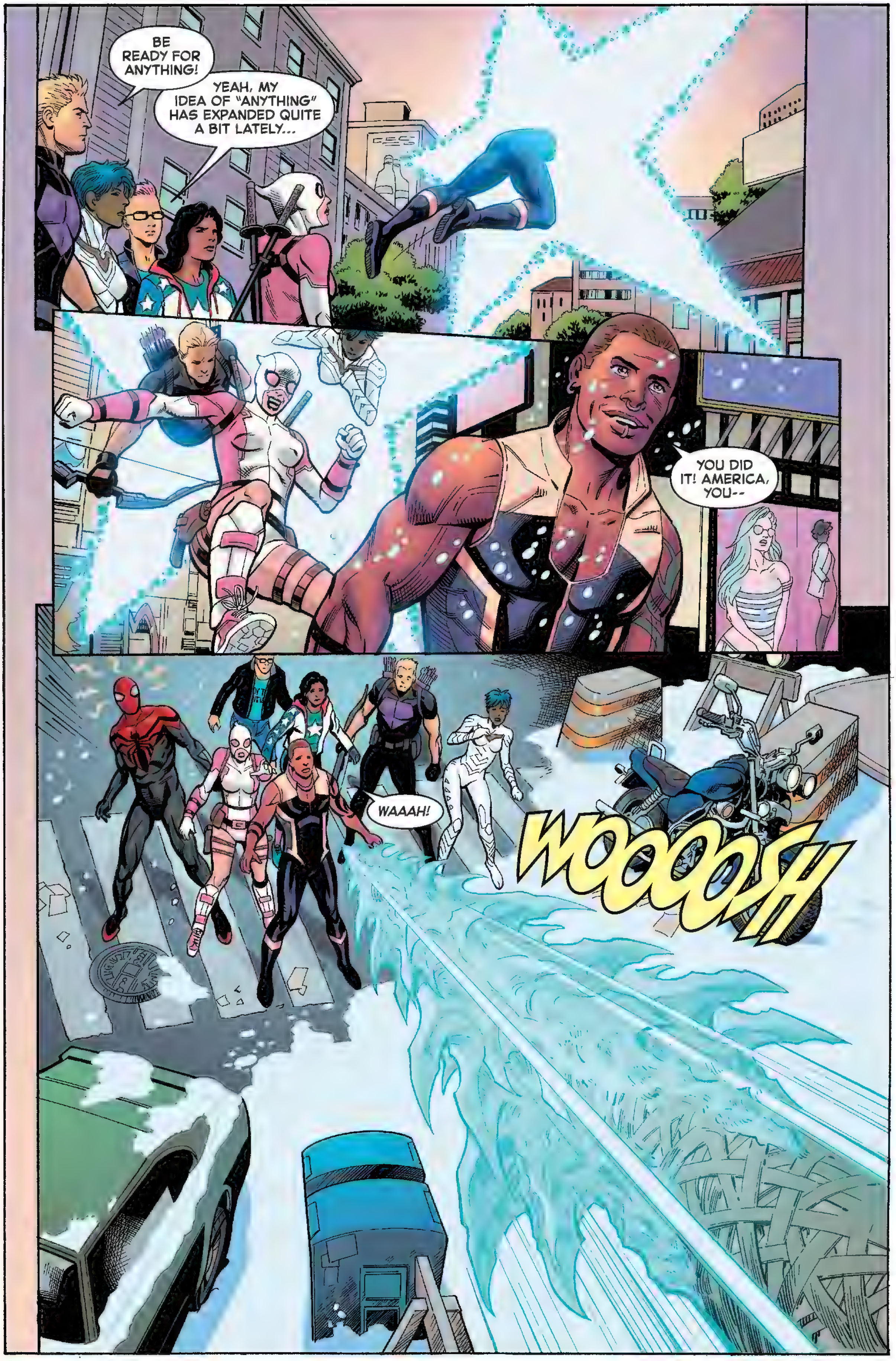

THE BARRIER WEAKENS! VICTORY IS NIGH!
HEY...IS IT ME, OR IS IT *HOT* ALL OF A SUDDEN?
WHAT SORCERY--?
THEY'VE TURNED BACK OUR *FIMBULWINTER!* BUT HOW?
I DON'T BLOODY CARE HOW! *FLEE,* BROTHERS!
RETREAT TO THE MOUNTAINS!
WHAT A WORLD, WHAT A WORLD...

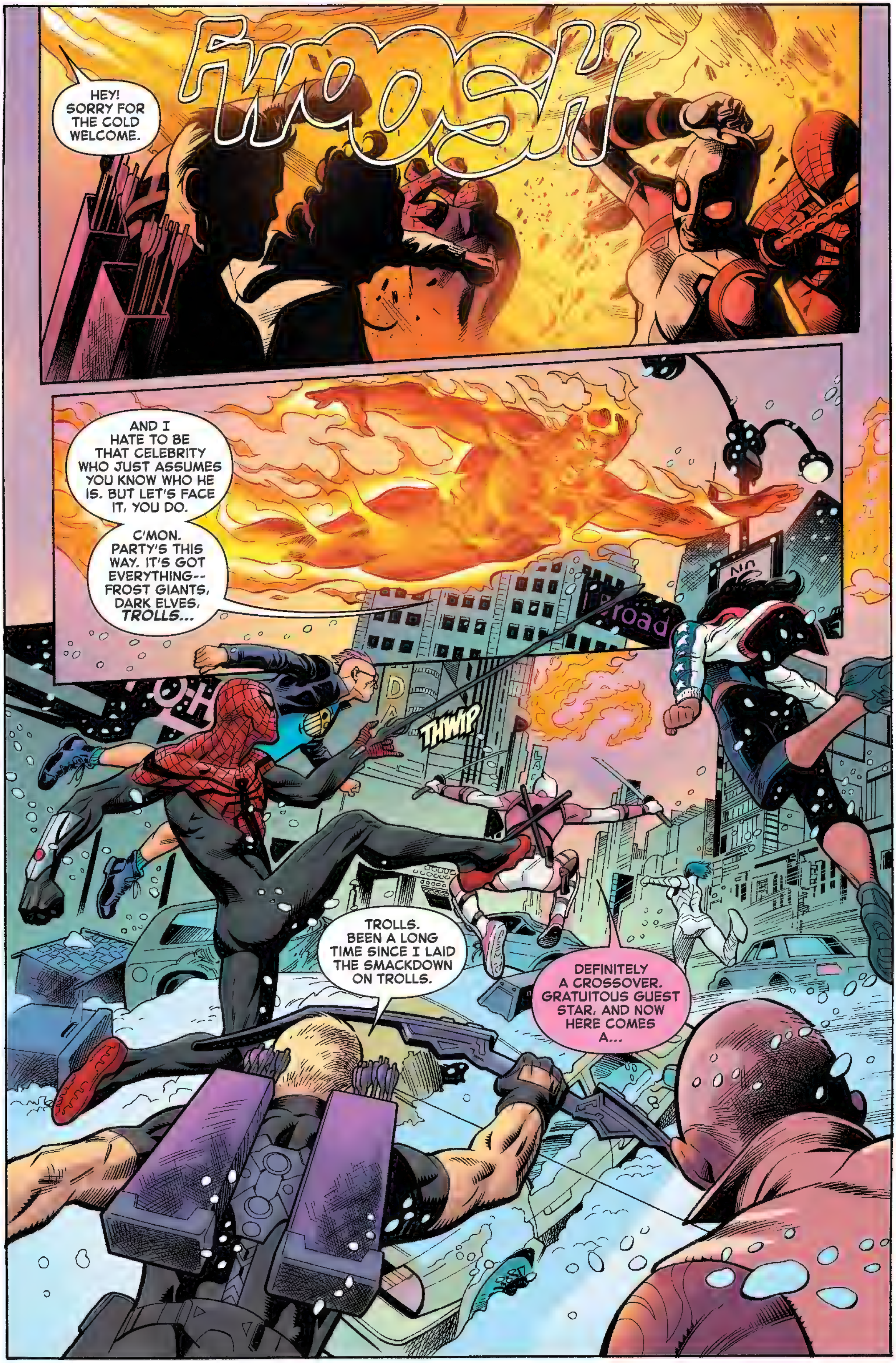

OKAY, THAT WAS PRETTY COOL. HOW'D YOU DO THAT?
A SATELLITE, THAT FOCUSES THE RAYS OF THE SUN. A REMNANT OF A PAST... EXPERIMENT.
HOLD ON, I REMEMBER THAT. YOU SET UP A BUNCH OF THOSE SATELLITES TO ***BURN HALF THE EARTH!***
IT TOOK SPIDER-MAN AND THE AVENGERS TO STOP YOU!*
*SEE ***SPIDER-MAN: ENDS OF THE EARTH!*** --NOSTALGIC NICK
THAT WAS MY OLD SELF. I STRUGGLED WITH MENTAL ILLNESS THEN. IT'S QUITE INSENSITIVE OF YOU TO BRING IT UP.
I BET THERE'S AN EDITORIAL CAPTION ABOVE US! YOU DON'T SEE THOSE MUCH NOWADAYS.
YOU KEPT A DEATH RAY IN THE SKY!
AND GIVEN HOW USEFUL IT'S BEEN, I THINK WE SHOULD ALL BE GLAD I ***DID.***
HOWEVER, MY ***OCTAVIAN LENS*** WAS A ***NETWORK*** OF SATELLITES. THIS ONE, OPERATING ALONE, WILL BURN OUT IN LESS THAN A DAY.
IN THAT TIME, WE MUST TRACE THIS INVASION TO ITS SOURCE. AND ***CRUSH IT!***
SEEING AS I CANNOT MAKE CONTACT WITH ANY LEGITIMATE HEROES, I HAVE CHOSEN ***YOU*** TO AID ME.
ADY TH SAVE U
I GOTTA ADMIT, I KIND OF LIKE THIS GUY.

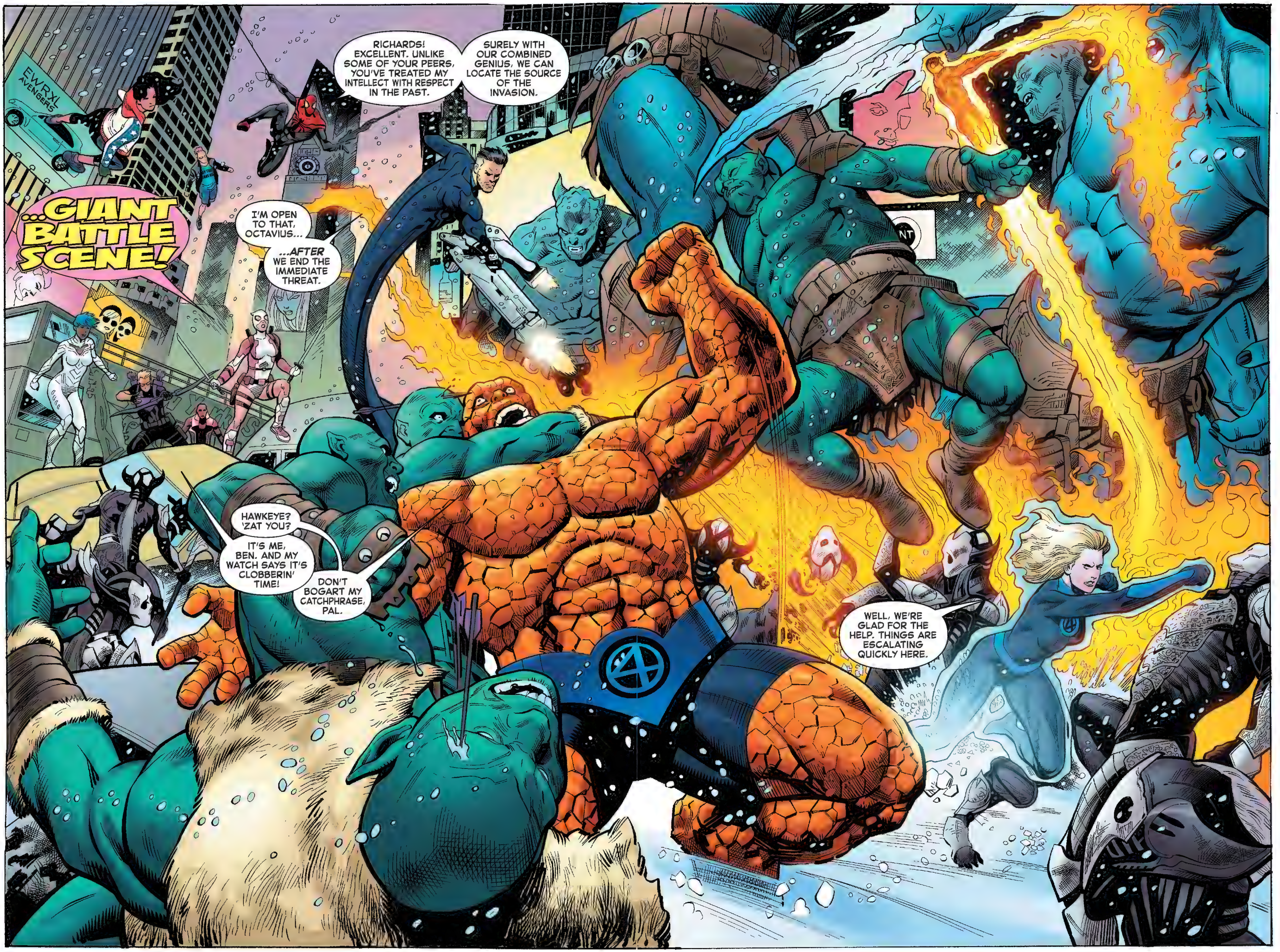

WHOA, HOLD ON. THAT'S NOT HOW THIS WORKS.
IT'S A **CROSSOVER** *EVENT*. AND WE'RE AN ANCILLARY TIE-IN.
WE DO OUR LITTLE PART OF THE STORY, SCORE A SMALL VICTORY AND THEN GO BACK TO OUR REGULAR NARRATIVES.
THIS WOMAN IS QUITE MAD.
IGNORE HER. SHE THINKS THIS WORLD IS FICTIONAL AND SHE'S THE ONLY "REAL" PERSON HERE.
TRUST ME, THIS IS HOW YOU WANT IT. THE OTHER OPTION IS WE DIE TRAGICALLY TO SHOW HOW HIGH THE STAKES ARE.
BUT I DON'T THINK WE HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
THAT USUALLY HAPPENS TO NEWER CHARACTERS THE WRITERS DIDN'T GROW UP WITH, OR LEGACY CHARACTERS WHOSE FRESHNESS HAS WORN OFF.
AT THE RISK OF ENCOURAGING YOUR INSANITY, WHAT, PRAY TELL, IS A "LEGACY CHARACTER"?
YOU KNOW. ONES WHO WERE CREATED AS HIPPER, EDGIER VERSIONS OF PREVIOUSLY EXISTING CHARACTERS, BUT JUST END UP MAKING FANS WANT THE ORIGINALS BACK.
SO, *UH...*
ADY TH
SAVE U
MAYBE WE SHOULD GO HIDE.

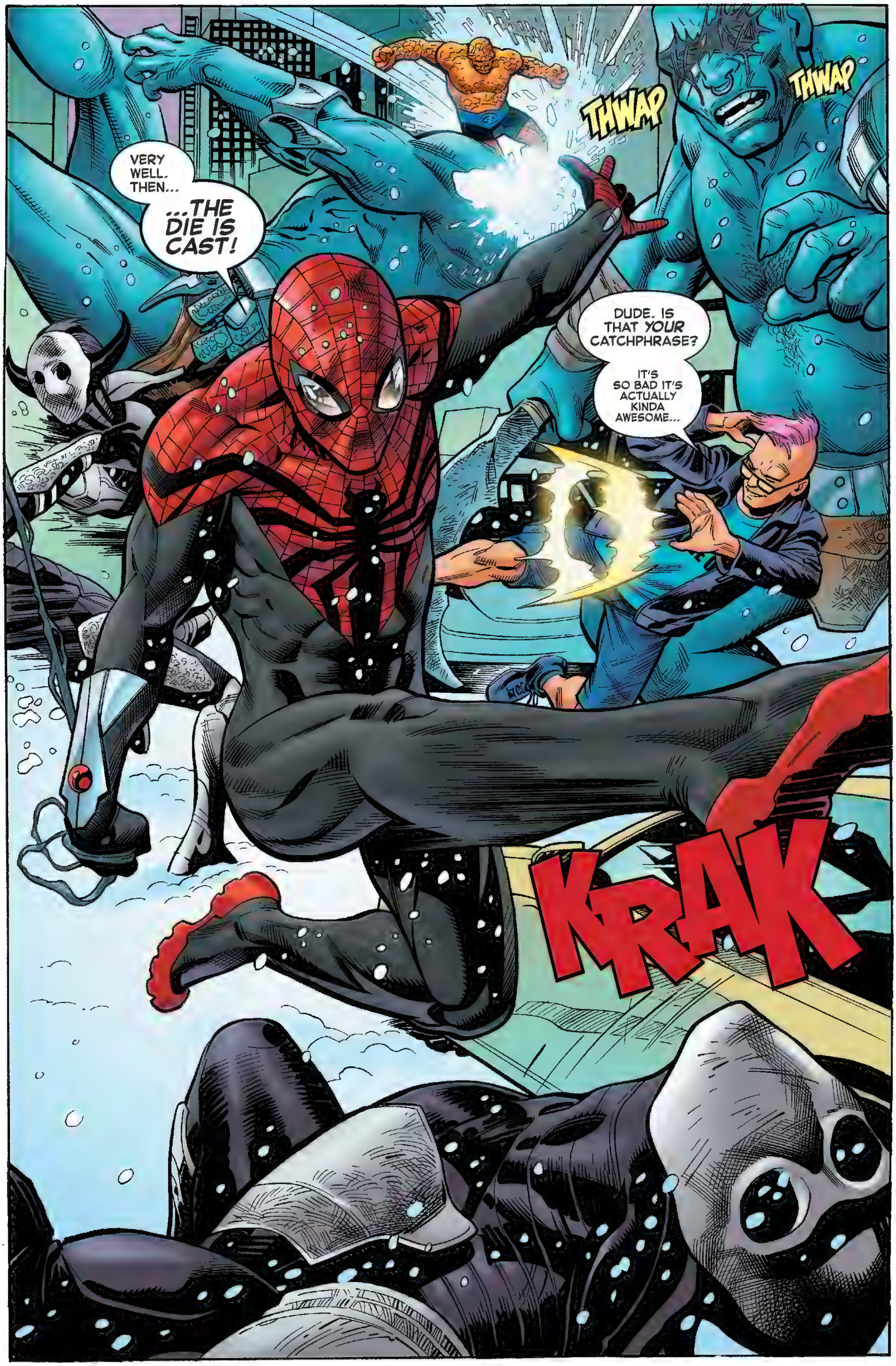

SEE HERE, WOMAN! I AM *OTTO OCTAVIUS!*
I AM SECONDARY TO *NO ONE!* I WILL NOT SIT IDLY BACK AND WAIT FOR OTHERS TO FIGHT MY BATTLES.
ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY CANNOT POSSIBLY DEFEAT THIS MENACE WITHOUT MY GENIUS!
YOU, YOUNG LADY. MY FILES INDICATE YOU POSSESS THE ABILITY TO TRAVERSE DIMENSIONS.
OKAY, PUTTING ASIDE HOW CREEPY IT IS THAT YOU'VE GOT "FILES" ON ME, LET'S SAY I DO. SO WHAT?
THESE GIANTS ARE INVADING FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION. THE ***ASGARDIAN REALMS.***
YOU WILL TAKE US THERE, THAT WE MAY STRIKE THE ENEMY AT THE SOURCE!
THAT'S... ACTUALLY NOT A BAD IDEA.
HOLD ON. WE CAN'T LEAVE L.A. UNPROTECTED.
OPEN 24 HOURS
IT ISN'T. MY OCTAVIAN LENS WILL MAKE THIS AREA INHOSPITABLE TO THE FROST GIANTS FOR APPROXIMATELY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
AND WE DO HAVE FRIENDS WHO CAN LOOK OUT FOR THIS TOWN. THE SUPPORTING CHARACTERS WE DON'T HAVE ROOM FOR IN THIS ISSUE.
MY PET LAND SHARK, THAT LADY WHO GOT TURNED INTO A DRAGON...
KATE WOULD COVER US, BUT I BET SHE'S BUSY IN ANOTHER TIE-IN.*
*SEE WOTR: JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY!
Y'KNOW, WE SHOULD DO THIS. I'M KINDA DIGGING ON THE IDEA OF BREAKING NARRATIVE CONVENTIONS.
SHE MAKES A SOLID AND ALMOST COHERENT POINT. THIS MIGHT BE OUR BEST CHANCE TO HIT THESE MONSTERS WHERE THEY LIVE.


WELL? YOU'VE ACKNOWLEDGED THE GENIUS OF MY PLAN. WHY THIS DELAY? HOW LONG DOES THIS TAKE?
IT'S NOT WORKING. THESE "ASGARDIAN REALMS"... THEY'RE *MAGIC*. AND MAGIC HAS ITS OWN ANNOYING RULES.
SORRY. I CAN'T TAKE US THERE.
INTOLERABLE! TRY AGAIN!
I DO *NOT* WORK FOR YOU, PAL.
HOLD ON. I HAVE AN IDEA.
BABE, YOU CAN STILL TELEPORT US AROUND EARTH, RIGHT? LIKE, TO *NEW YORK?*
HOLYWO
SURE.
SMART THINKING, RAMONE. THERE'S A TON OF ASGARDIAN REFUGEES IN NEW YORK.
EXACTLY. AND IF ANYONE KNOWS HOW TO GET TO THE SOURCE OF ALL THIS, IT'S THEM.
DO AS THEY SAY, WOMAN!
DUDE, YOU ARE WORKING MY *LAST* NERVE...

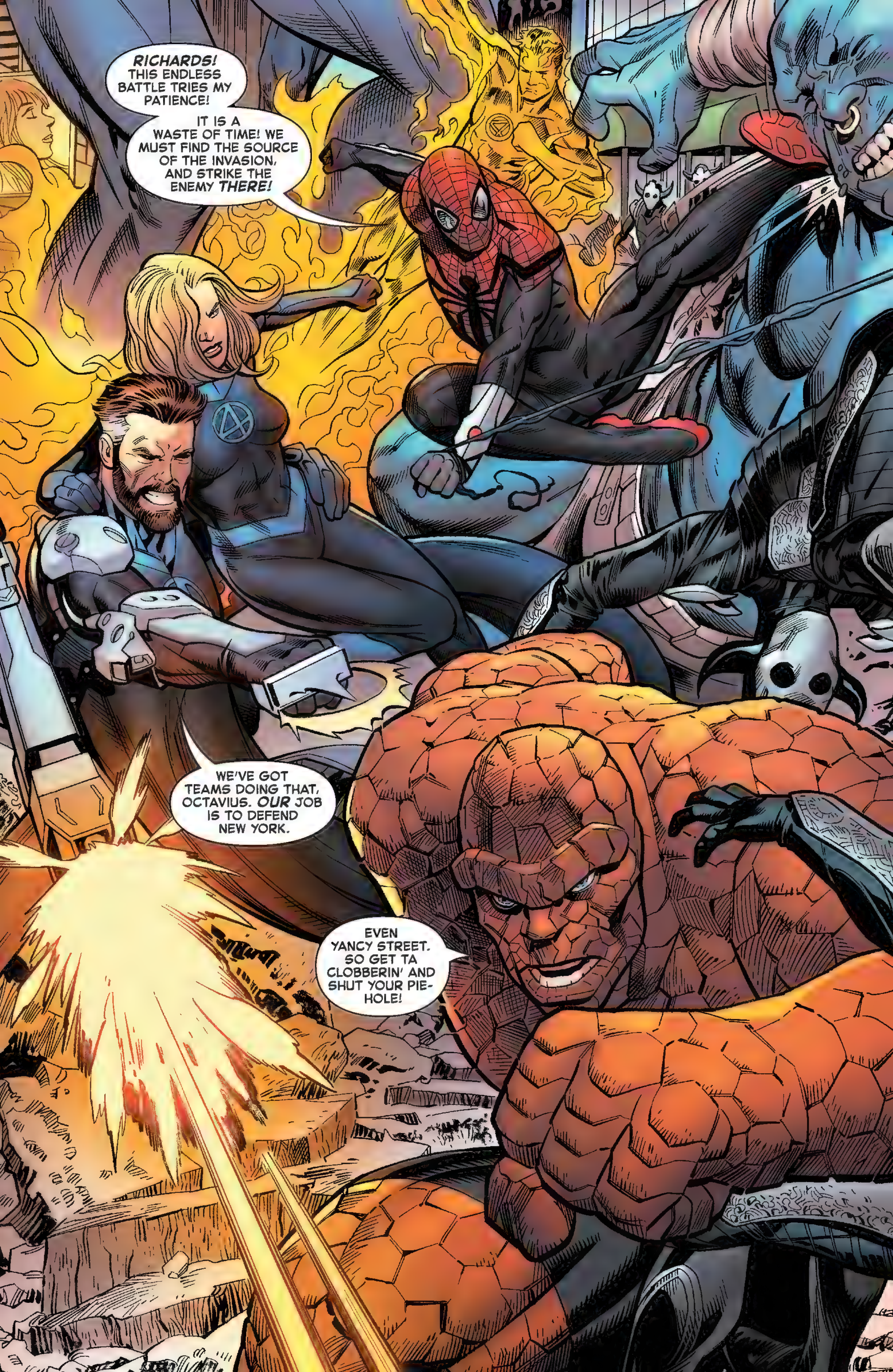

BE READY FOR ANYTHING!
YEAH, MY IDEA OF "ANYTHING" HAS EXPANDED QUITE A BIT LATELY...
YOU DID IT! AMERICA, YOU--
WAAAH!
WOOOOSH

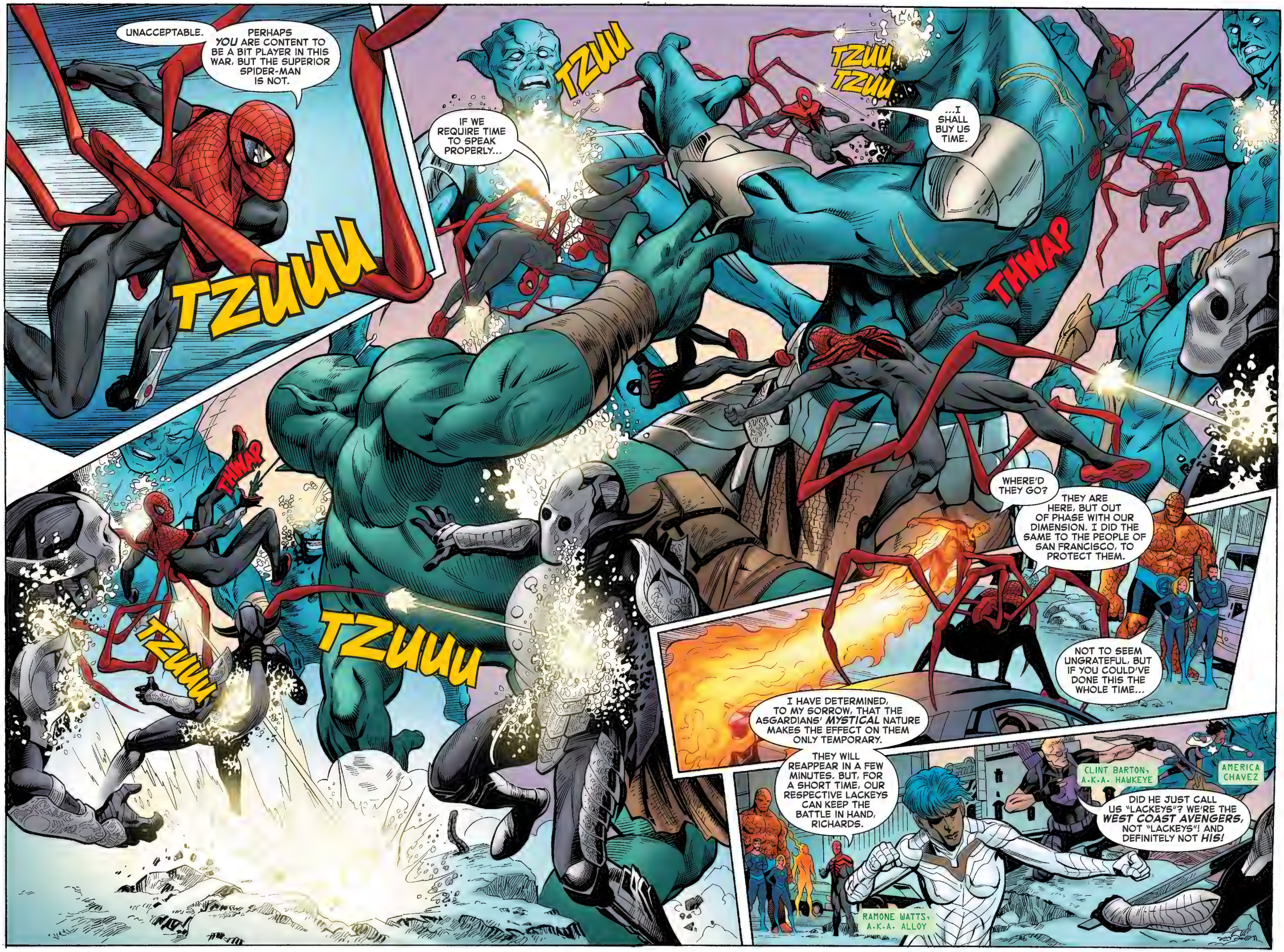

HEY! SORRY FOR THE COLD WELCOME.
FWOOSH
AND I HATE TO BE THAT CELEBRITY WHO JUST ASSUMES YOU KNOW WHO HE IS. BUT LET'S FACE IT, YOU DO.
C'MON. PARTY'S THIS WAY. IT'S GOT EVERYTHING-- FROST GIANTS, DARK ELVES, *TROLLS...*
road
THWIP
TROLLS. BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I LAID THE SMACKDOWN ON TROLLS.
DEFINITELY A CROSSOVER. GRATUITOUS GUEST STAR, AND NOW HERE COMES A...

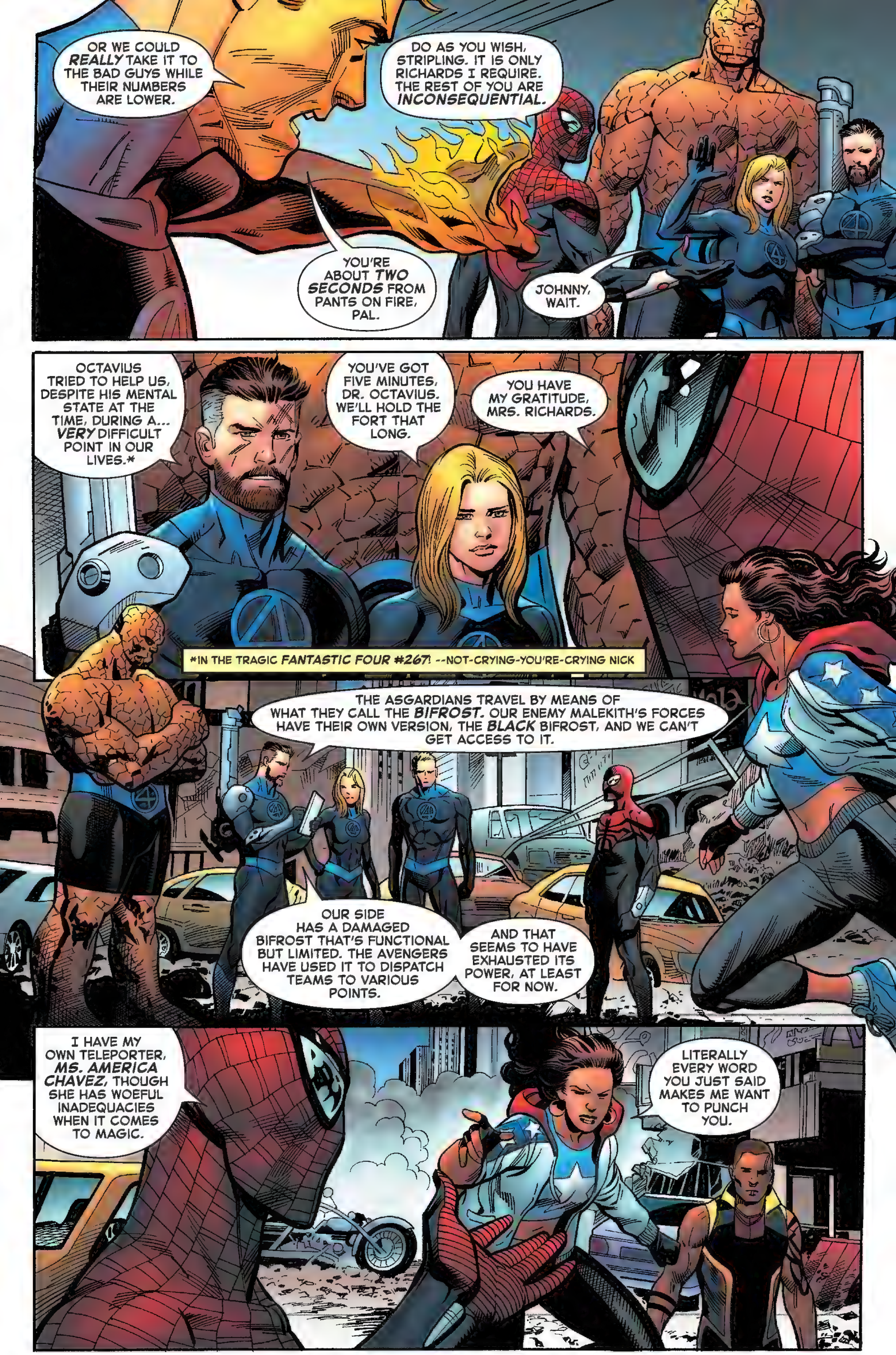

...GIANT BATTLE SCENE!
EWRXL AVENGERS
RICHARDS! EXCELLENT. UNLIKE SOME OF YOUR PEERS, YOU'VE TREATED MY INTELLECT WITH RESPECT IN THE PAST.
SURELY WITH OUR COMBINED GENIUS, WE CAN LOCATE THE SOURCE OF THE INVASION.
I'M OPEN TO THAT, OCTAVIUS...
...AFTER WE END THE IMMEDIATE THREAT.
HAWKEYE? 'ZAT YOU?
IT'S ME, BEN. AND MY WATCH SAYS IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
DON'T BOGART MY CATCHPHRASE, PAL.
WELL, WE'RE GLAD FOR THE HELP. THINGS ARE ESCALATING QUICKLY HERE.

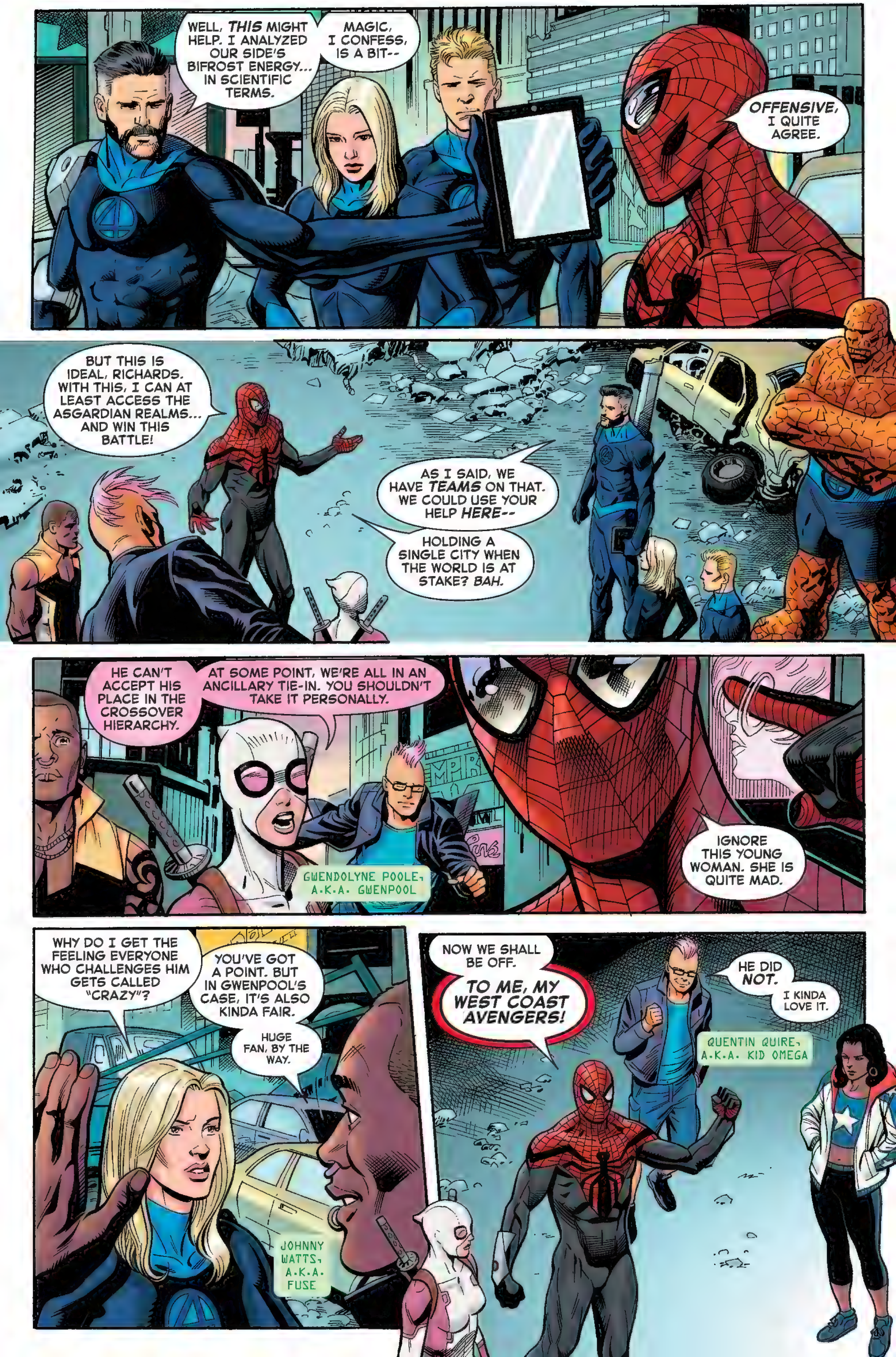

VERY WELL. THEN...
...THE DIE IS CAST!
THWAP
THWAP
DUDE. IS THAT *YOUR* CATCHPHRASE?
IT'S SO BAD IT'S ACTUALLY KINDA AWESOME...
KRAK

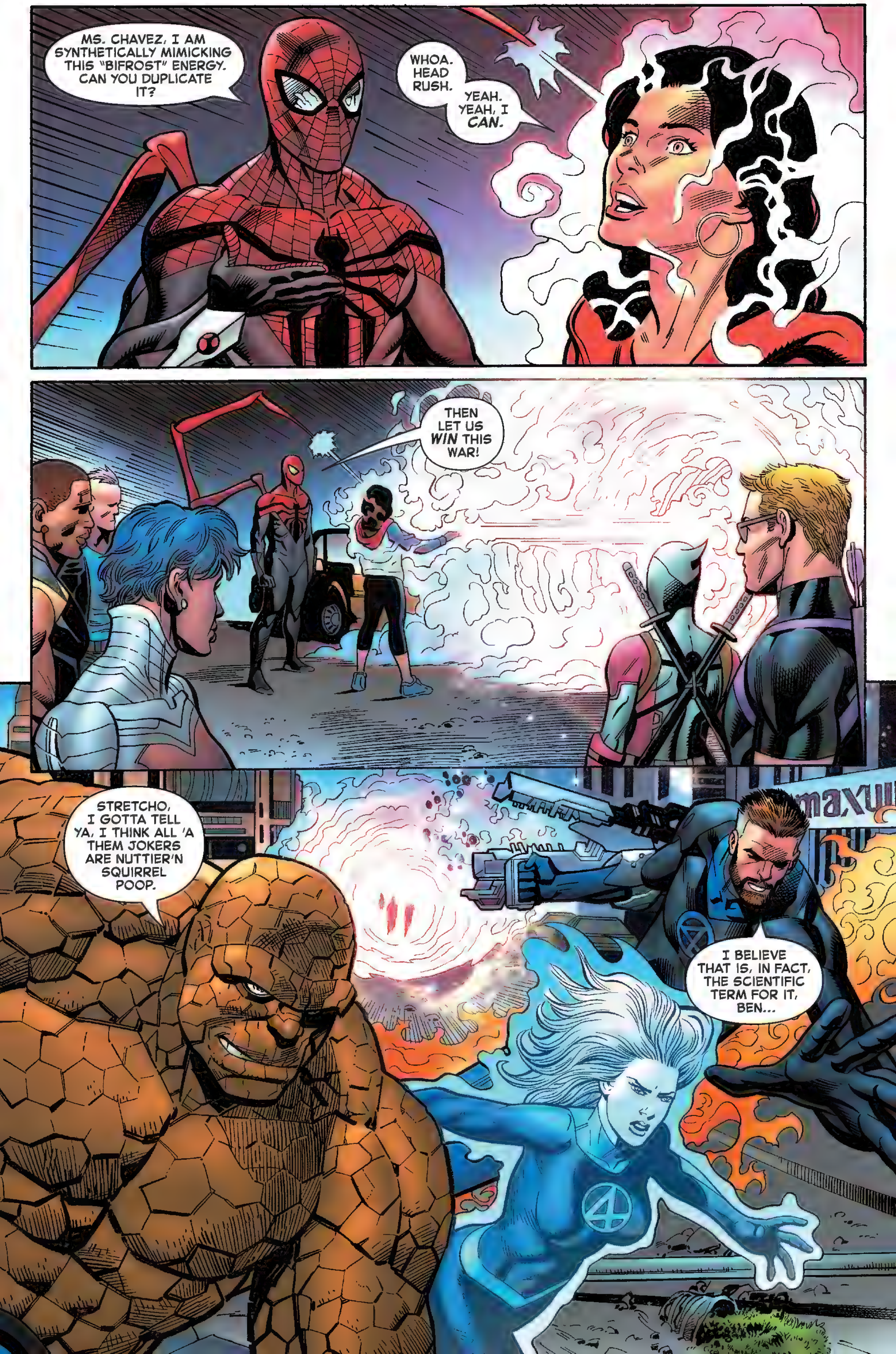
SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN #8

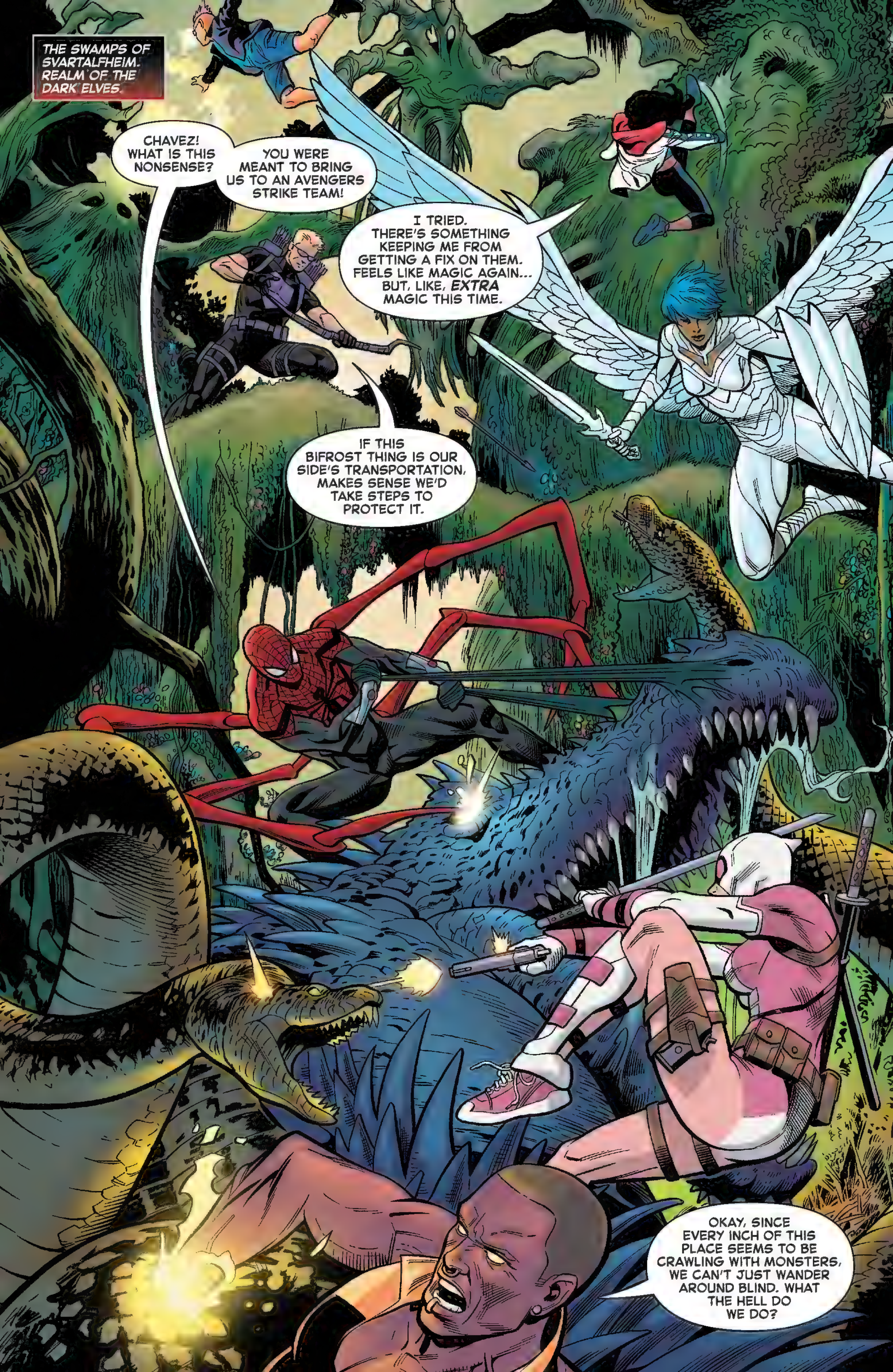

RICHARDS! THIS ENDLESS BATTLE TRIES MY PATIENCE!
IT IS A WASTE OF TIME! WE MUST FIND THE SOURCE OF THE INVASION, AND STRIKE THE ENEMY *THERE!*
WE'VE GOT TEAMS DOING THAT, OCTAVIUS. *OUR* JOB IS TO DEFEND NEW YORK.
EVEN YANCY STREET. SO GET TA CLOBBERIN' AND SHUT YOUR PIE-HOLE!

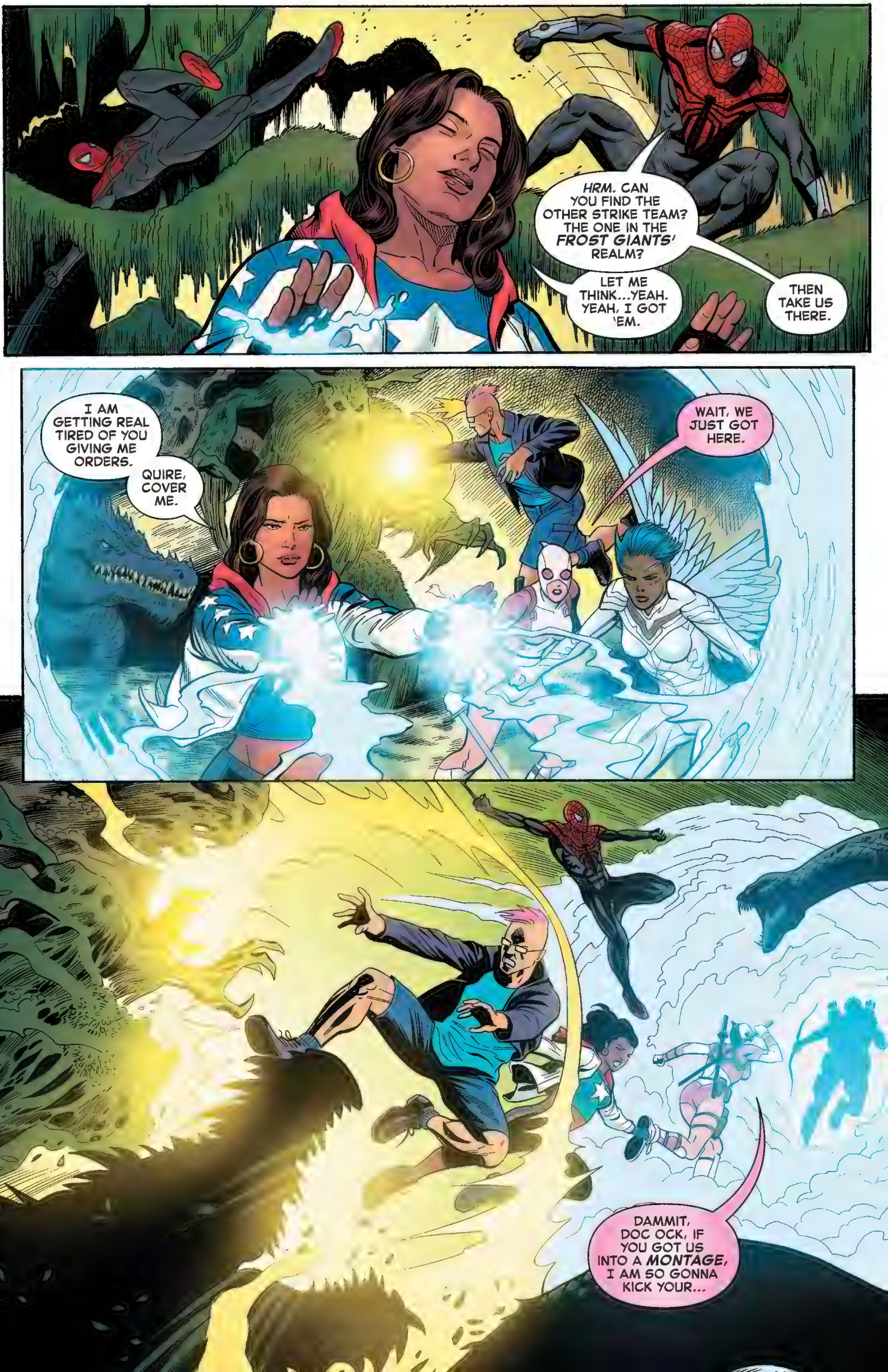

UNACCEPTABLE.
PERHAPS *YOU* ARE CONTENT TO BE A BIT PLAYER IN THIS WAR, BUT THE SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN IS NOT.
TZUUU
IF WE REQUIRE TIME TO SPEAK PROPERLY...
TZUU
TZUU TZUU
...I SHALL BUY US TIME.
THWAP
THWAP
TZUUU
TZUUU
WHERE'D THEY GO?
THEY ARE HERE, BUT OUT OF PHASE WITH OUR DIMENSION. I DID THE SAME TO THE PEOPLE OF SAN FRANCISCO, TO PROTECT THEM.
NOT TO SEEM UNGRATEFUL, BUT IF YOU COULD'VE DONE THIS THE WHOLE TIME...
I HAVE DETERMINED, TO MY SORROW, THAT THE ASGARDIANS' *MYSTICAL* NATURE MAKES THE EFFECT ON THEM ONLY TEMPORARY.
THEY WILL REAPPEAR IN A FEW MINUTES. BUT, FOR A SHORT TIME, OUR RESPECTIVE LACKEYS CAN KEEP THE BATTLE IN HAND, RICHARDS.
CLINT BARTON, A.K.A. HAWKEYE
AMERICA CHAVEZ
DID HE JUST CALL US "LACKEYS"? WE'RE THE *WEST COAST AVENGERS,* NOT "LACKEYS"! AND DEFINITELY NOT *HIS!*
RAMONE WATTS, A.K.A. ALLOY

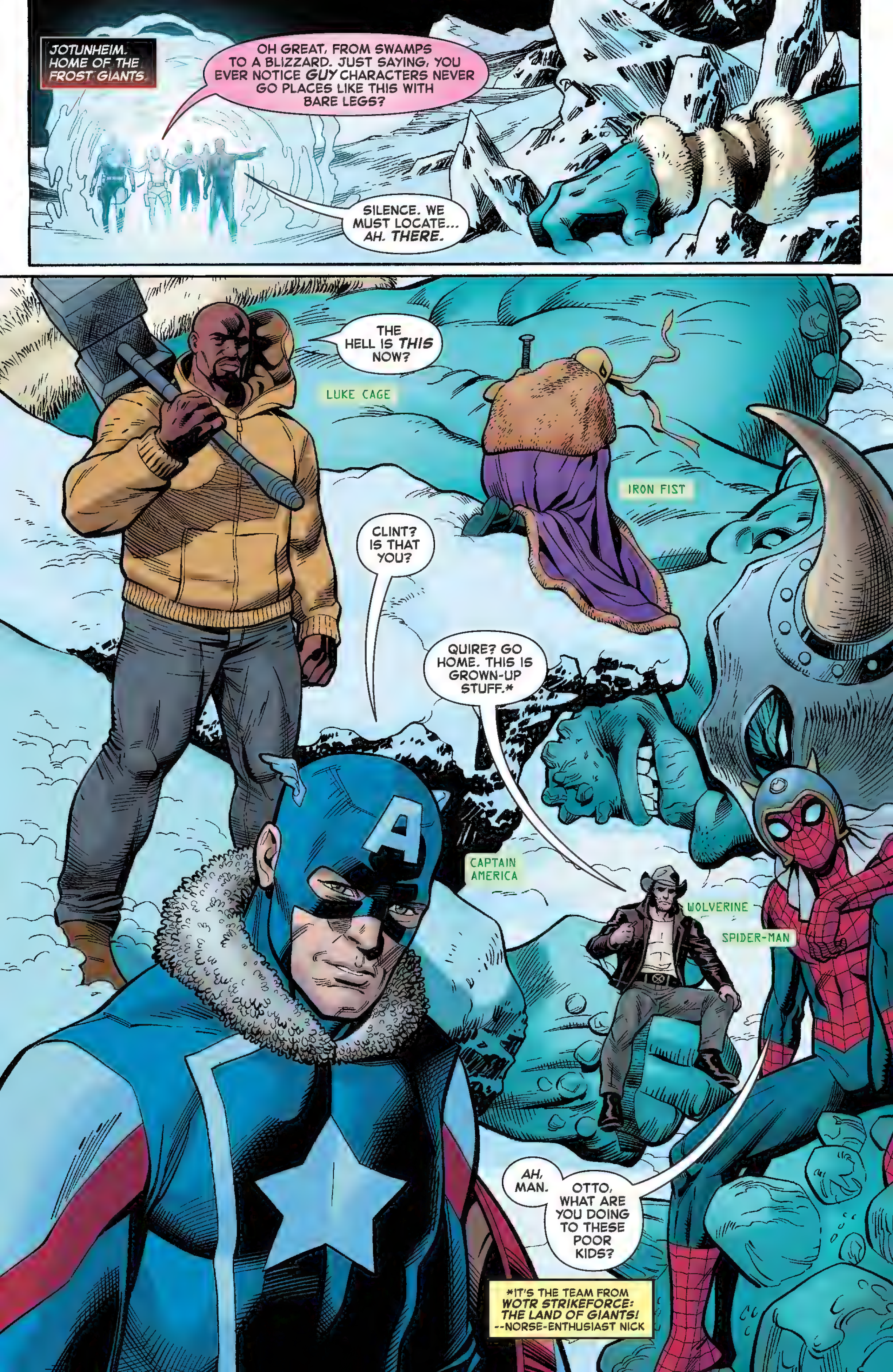

OR WE COULD *REALLY* TAKE IT TO THE BAD GUYS WHILE THEIR NUMBERS ARE LOWER.
DO AS YOU WISH, STRIPLING. IT IS ONLY RICHARDS I REQUIRE. THE REST OF YOU ARE *INCONSEQUENTIAL.*
YOU'RE ABOUT *TWO SECONDS* FROM PANTS ON FIRE, PAL.
JOHNNY, WAIT.
OCTAVIUS TRIED TO HELP US, DESPITE HIS MENTAL STATE AT THE TIME, DURING A... *VERY* DIFFICULT POINT IN OUR LIVES.*
YOU'VE GOT FIVE MINUTES, DR. OCTAVIUS. WE'LL HOLD THE FORT THAT LONG.
YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE, MRS. RICHARDS.
*IN THE TRAGIC *FANTASTIC FOUR #267*! --NOT-CRYING-YOU'RE-CRYING NICK
THE ASGARDIANS TRAVEL BY MEANS OF WHAT THEY CALL THE *BIFROST.* OUR ENEMY MALEKITH'S FORCES HAVE THEIR OWN VERSION, THE *BLACK* BIFROST, AND WE CAN'T GET ACCESS TO IT.
OUR SIDE HAS A DAMAGED BIFROST THAT'S FUNCTIONAL BUT LIMITED. THE AVENGERS HAVE USED IT TO DISPATCH TEAMS TO VARIOUS POINTS.
AND THAT SEEMS TO HAVE EXHAUSTED ITS POWER, AT LEAST FOR NOW.
I HAVE MY OWN TELEPORTER, *MS. AMERICA CHAVEZ,* THOUGH SHE HAS WOEFUL INADEQUACIES WHEN IT COMES TO MAGIC.
LITERALLY EVERY WORD YOU JUST SAID MAKES ME WANT TO PUNCH YOU.

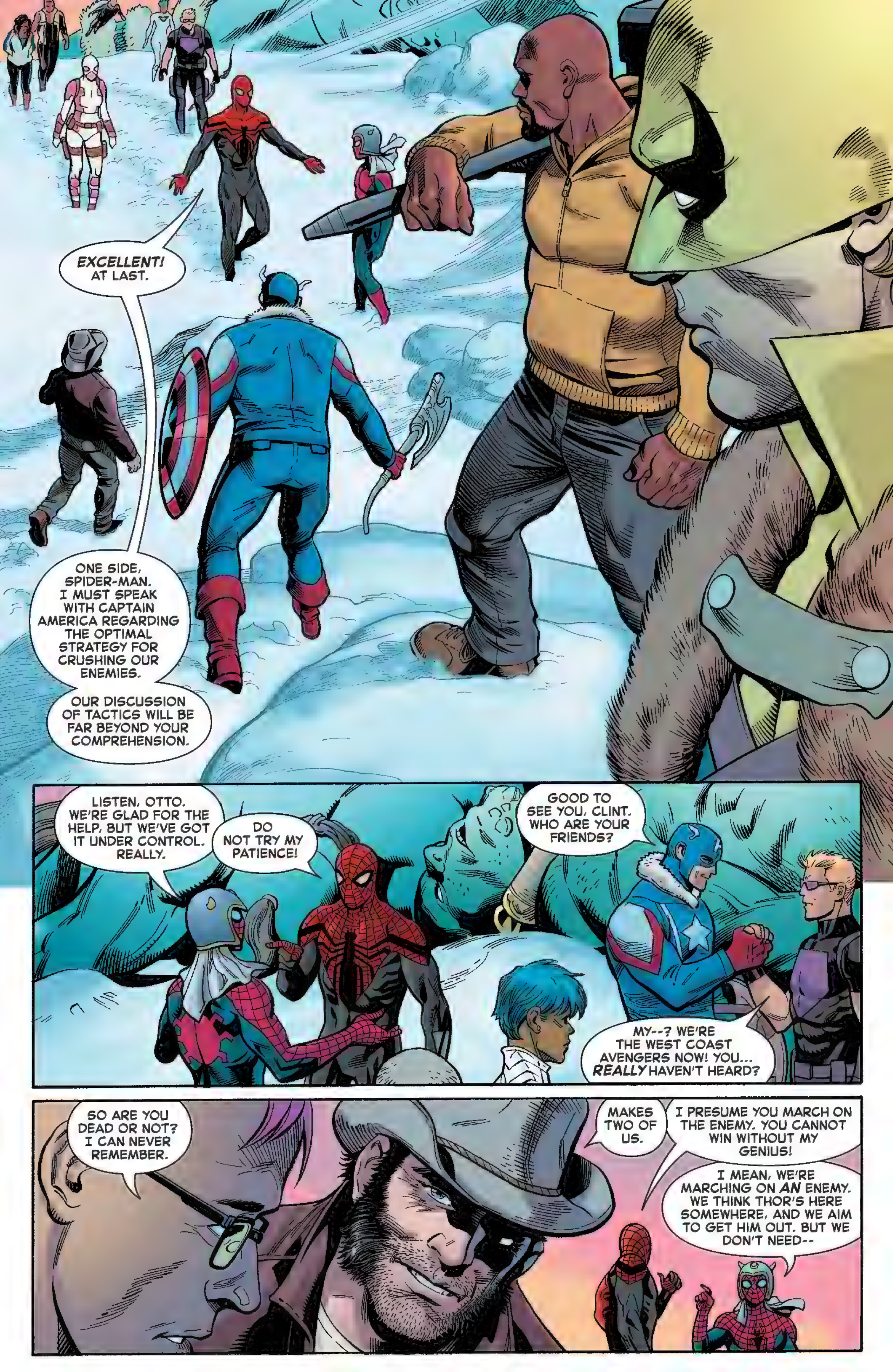

WELL, *THIS* MIGHT HELP. I ANALYZED OUR SIDE'S BIFROST ENERGY... IN SCIENTIFIC TERMS.
MAGIC, I CONFESS, IS A BIT--
OFFENSIVE, I QUITE AGREE.
BUT THIS IS IDEAL, RICHARDS. WITH THIS, I CAN AT LEAST ACCESS THE ASGARDIAN REALMS... AND WIN THIS BATTLE!
AS I SAID, WE HAVE *TEAMS* ON THAT. WE COULD USE YOUR HELP *HERE*--
HOLDING A SINGLE CITY WHEN THE WORLD IS AT STAKE? *BAH.*
HE CAN'T ACCEPT HIS PLACE IN THE CROSSOVER HIERARCHY.
AT SOME POINT, WE'RE ALL IN AN ANCILLARY TIE-IN. YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY.
GWENDOLYNE POOLE, A.K.A. GWENPOOL
IGNORE THIS YOUNG WOMAN. SHE IS QUITE MAD.
WHY DO I GET THE FEELING EVERYONE WHO CHALLENGES HIM GETS CALLED "CRAZY"?
YOU'VE GOT A POINT. BUT IN GWENPOOL'S CASE, IT'S ALSO KINDA FAIR.
HUGE FAN, BY THE WAY.
JOHNNY WATTS, A.K.A. FUSE
NOW WE SHALL BE OFF.
TO ME, MY WEST COAST AVENGERS!
HE DID *NOT.*
I KINDA LOVE IT.
QUENTIN QUIRE, A.K.A. KID OMEGA

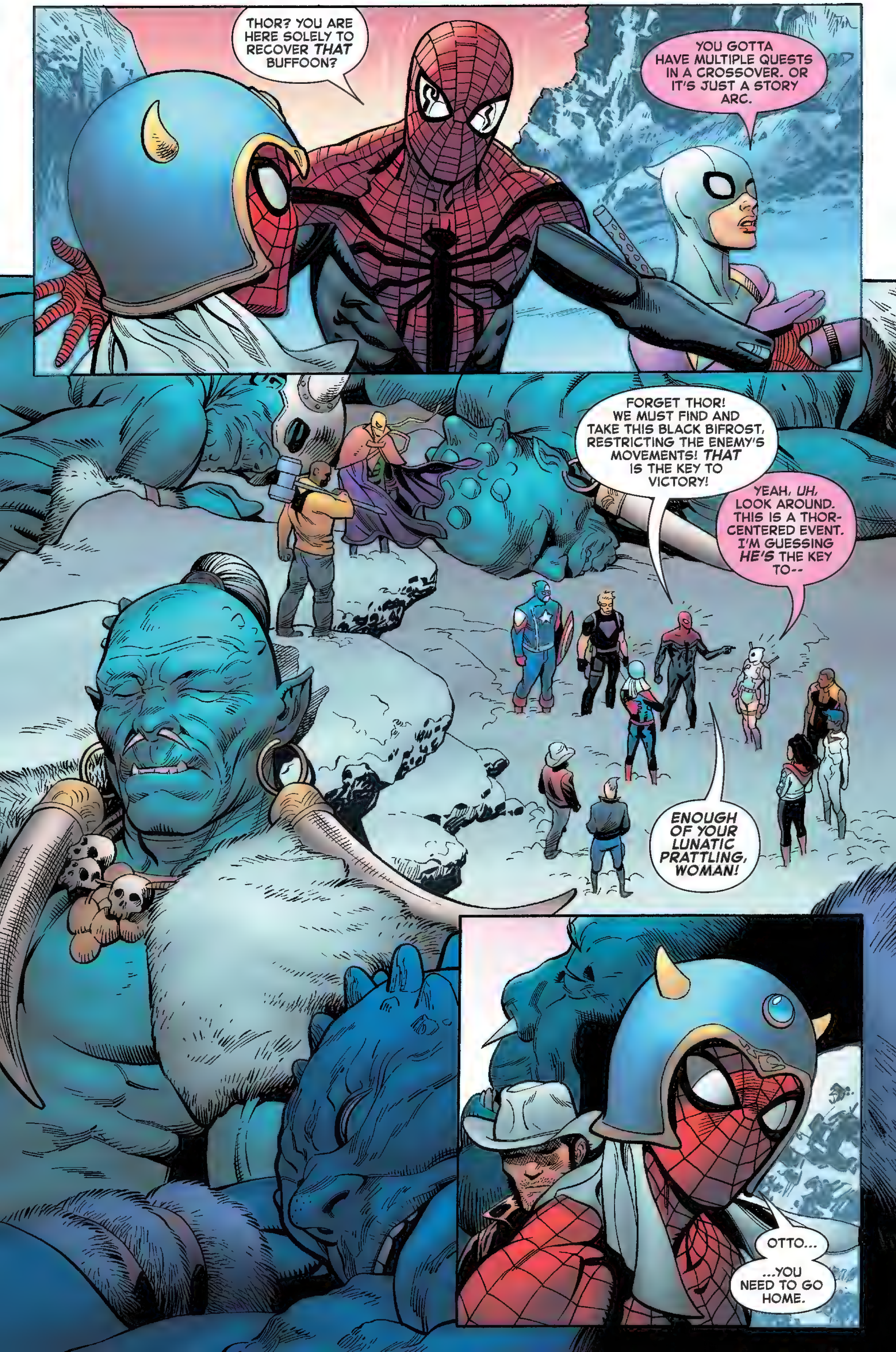

MS. CHAVEZ, I AM SYNTHETICALLY MIMICKING THIS "BIFROST" ENERGY. CAN YOU DUPLICATE IT?
WHOA. HEAD RUSH.
YEAH. YEAH, I *CAN*.
THEN LET US *WIN* THIS WAR!
STRETCHO, I GOTTA TELL YA, I THINK ALL 'A THEM JOKERS ARE NUTTIER'N SQUIRREL POOP.
I BELIEVE THAT IS, IN FACT, THE SCIENTIFIC TERM FOR IT, BEN...
maxu

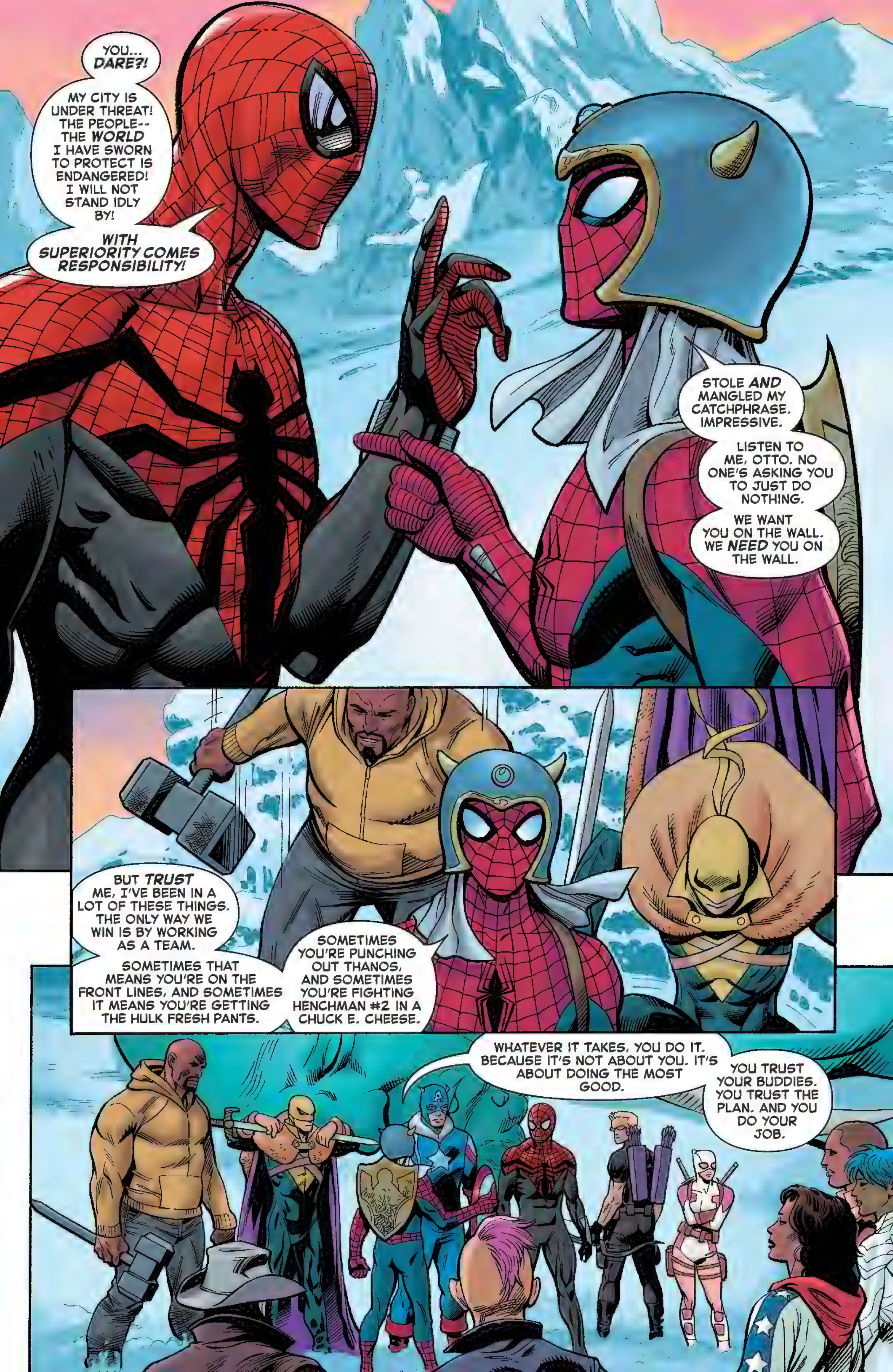

THE SWAMPS OF SVARTALFHEIM. REALM OF THE DARK ELVES.
CHAVEZ! WHAT IS THIS NONSENSE?
YOU WERE MEANT TO BRING US TO AN AVENGERS STRIKE TEAM!
I TRIED. THERE'S SOMETHING KEEPING ME FROM GETTING A FIX ON THEM. FEELS LIKE MAGIC AGAIN... BUT, LIKE, *EXTRA* MAGIC THIS TIME.
IF THIS BIFROST THING IS OUR SIDE'S TRANSPORTATION, MAKES SENSE WE'D TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT IT.
OKAY, SINCE EVERY INCH OF THIS PLACE SEEMS TO BE CRAWLING WITH MONSTERS, WE CAN'T JUST WANDER AROUND BLIND. WHAT THE HELL DO WE DO?

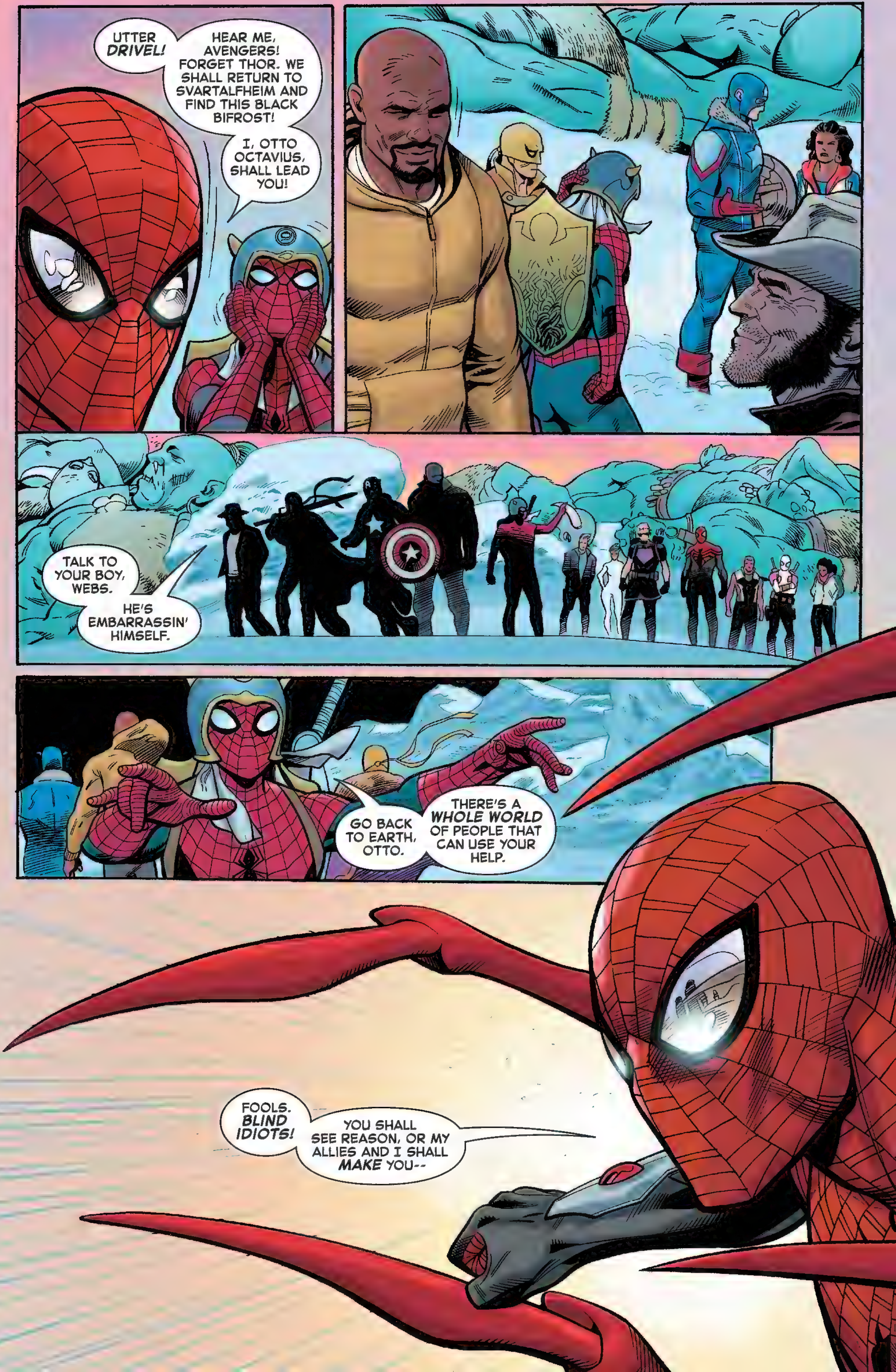

HRM. CAN YOU FIND THE OTHER STRIKE TEAM? THE ONE IN THE *FROST GIANTS'* REALM?
LET ME THINK...YEAH. YEAH, I GOT 'EM.
THEN TAKE US THERE.
I AM GETTING REAL TIRED OF YOU GIVING ME ORDERS.
QUIRE, COVER ME.
WAIT, WE JUST GOT HERE.
DAMMIT, DOC OCK, IF YOU GOT US INTO A *MONTAGE,* I AM SO GONNA KICK YOUR...

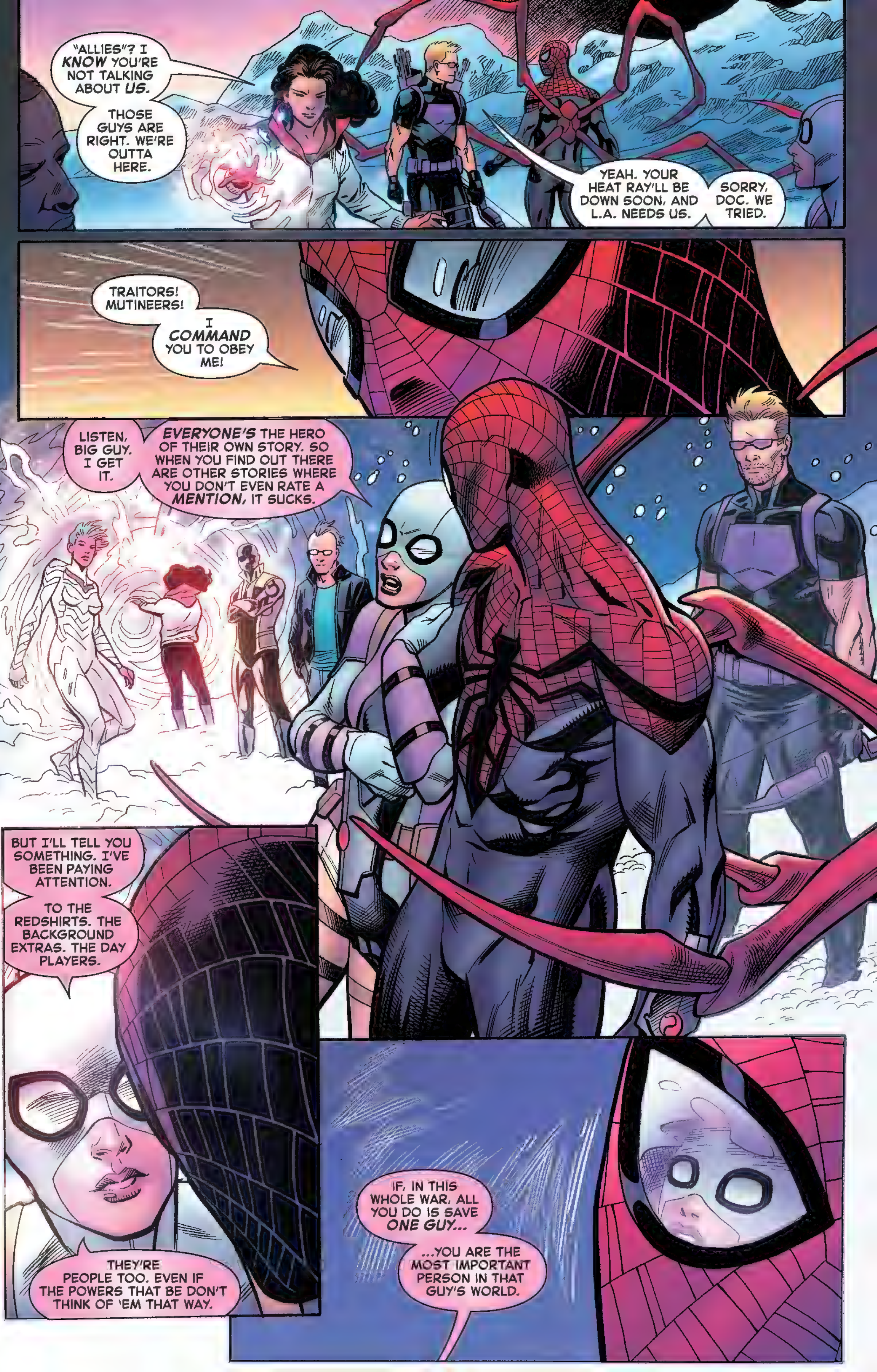

JOTUNHEIM. HOME OF THE FROST GIANTS.
OH GREAT, FROM SWAMPS TO A BLIZZARD. JUST SAYING, YOU EVER NOTICE *GUY* CHARACTERS NEVER GO PLACES LIKE THIS WITH BARE LEGS?
SILENCE. WE MUST LOCATE... *AH. THERE.*
THE HELL IS *THIS* NOW?
LUKE CAGE
IRON FIST
CLINT? IS THAT YOU?
QUIRE? GO HOME. THIS IS GROWN-UP STUFF.*
CAPTAIN AMERICA
WOLVERINE
SPIDER-MAN
AH, MAN.
OTTO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THESE POOR KIDS?
*IT'S THE TEAM FROM *WOTR STRIKEFORCE: THE LAND OF GIANTS!* --NORSE-ENTHUSIAST NICK

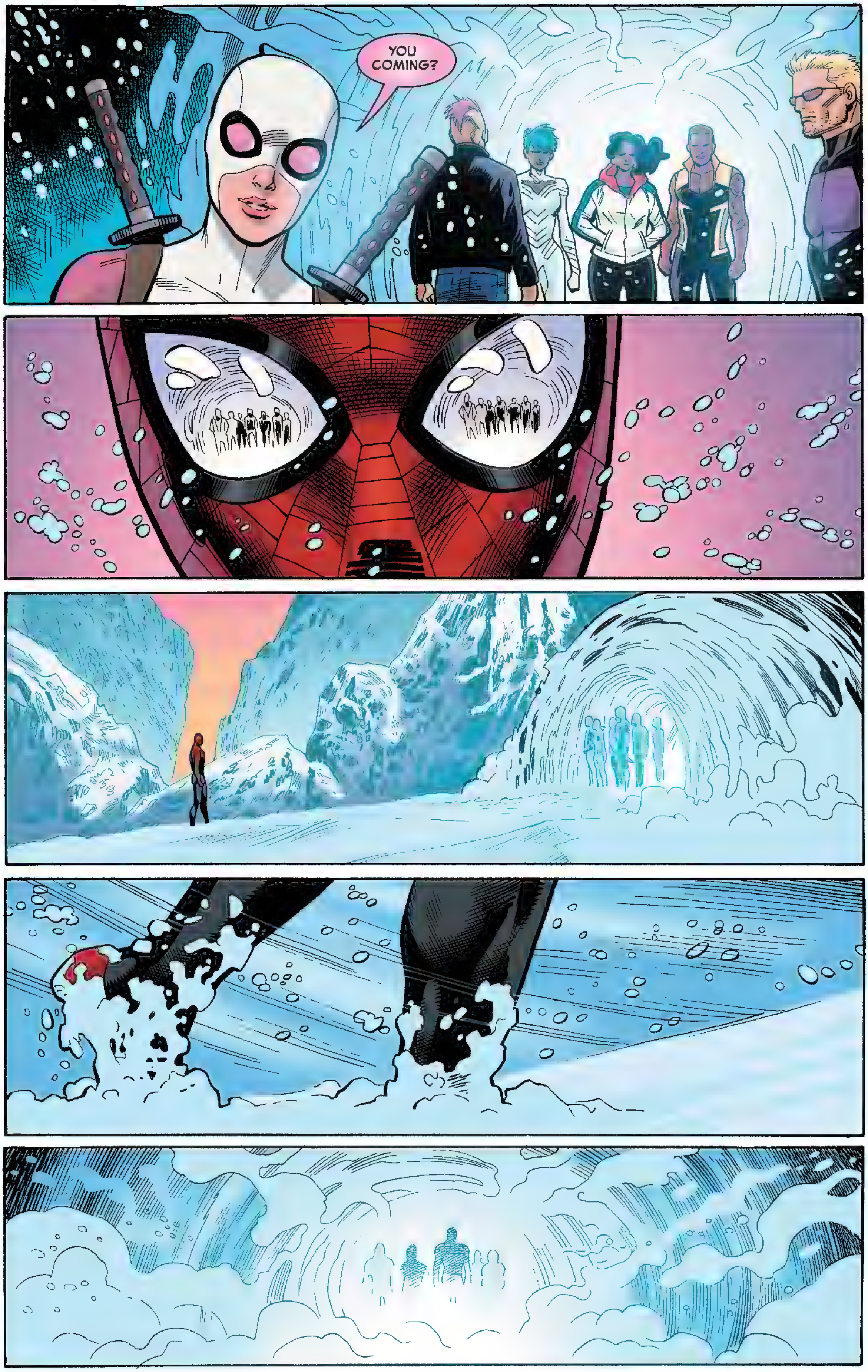

EXCELLENT! AT LAST.
ONE SIDE, SPIDER-MAN. I MUST SPEAK WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA REGARDING THE OPTIMAL STRATEGY FOR CRUSHING OUR ENEMIES.
OUR DISCUSSION OF TACTICS WILL BE FAR BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION.
LISTEN, OTTO. WE'RE GLAD FOR THE HELP, BUT WE'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL. REALLY.
DO NOT TRY MY PATIENCE!
GOOD TO SEE YOU, CLINT. WHO ARE YOUR FRIENDS?
MY--? WE'RE THE WEST COAST AVENGERS NOW! YOU... *REALLY* HAVEN'T HEARD?
SO ARE YOU DEAD OR NOT? I CAN NEVER REMEMBER.
MAKES TWO OF US.
I PRESUME YOU MARCH ON THE ENEMY. YOU CANNOT WIN WITHOUT MY GENIUS!
I MEAN, WE'RE MARCHING ON *AN* ENEMY. WE THINK THOR'S HERE SOMEWHERE, AND WE AIM TO GET HIM OUT. BUT WE DON'T NEED--

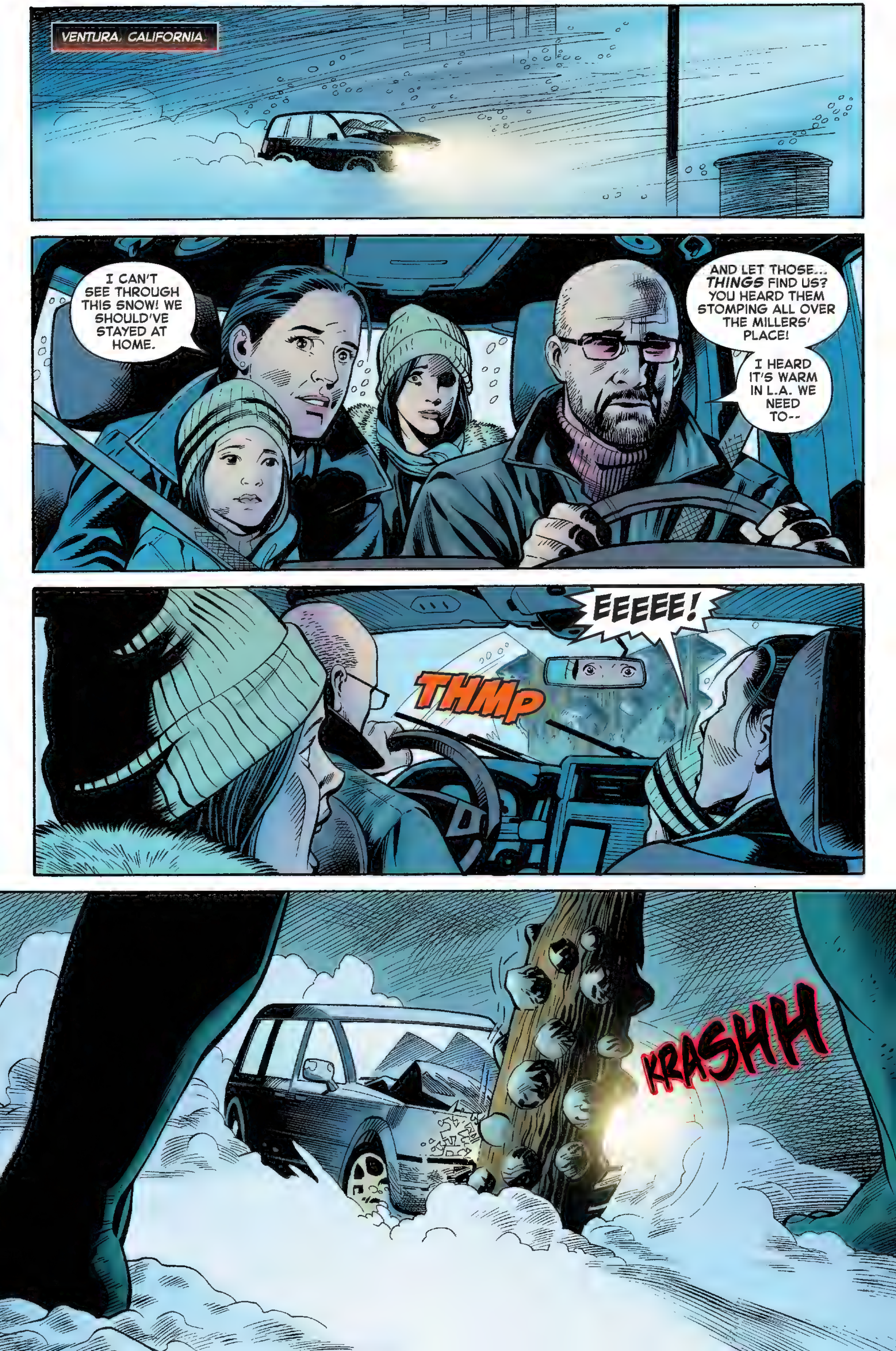

THOR? YOU ARE HERE SOLELY TO RECOVER *THAT* BUFFOON?
YOU GOTTA HAVE MULTIPLE QUESTS IN A CROSSOVER. OR IT'S JUST A STORY ARC.
FORGET THOR! WE MUST FIND AND TAKE THIS BLACK BIFROST, RESTRICTING THE ENEMY'S MOVEMENTS! *THAT* IS THE KEY TO VICTORY!
YEAH, *UH,* LOOK AROUND. THIS IS A THOR-CENTERED EVENT. I'M GUESSING *HE'S* THE KEY TO--
ENOUGH OF YOUR LUNATIC PRATTLING, WOMAN!
OTTO...
...YOU NEED TO GO HOME.

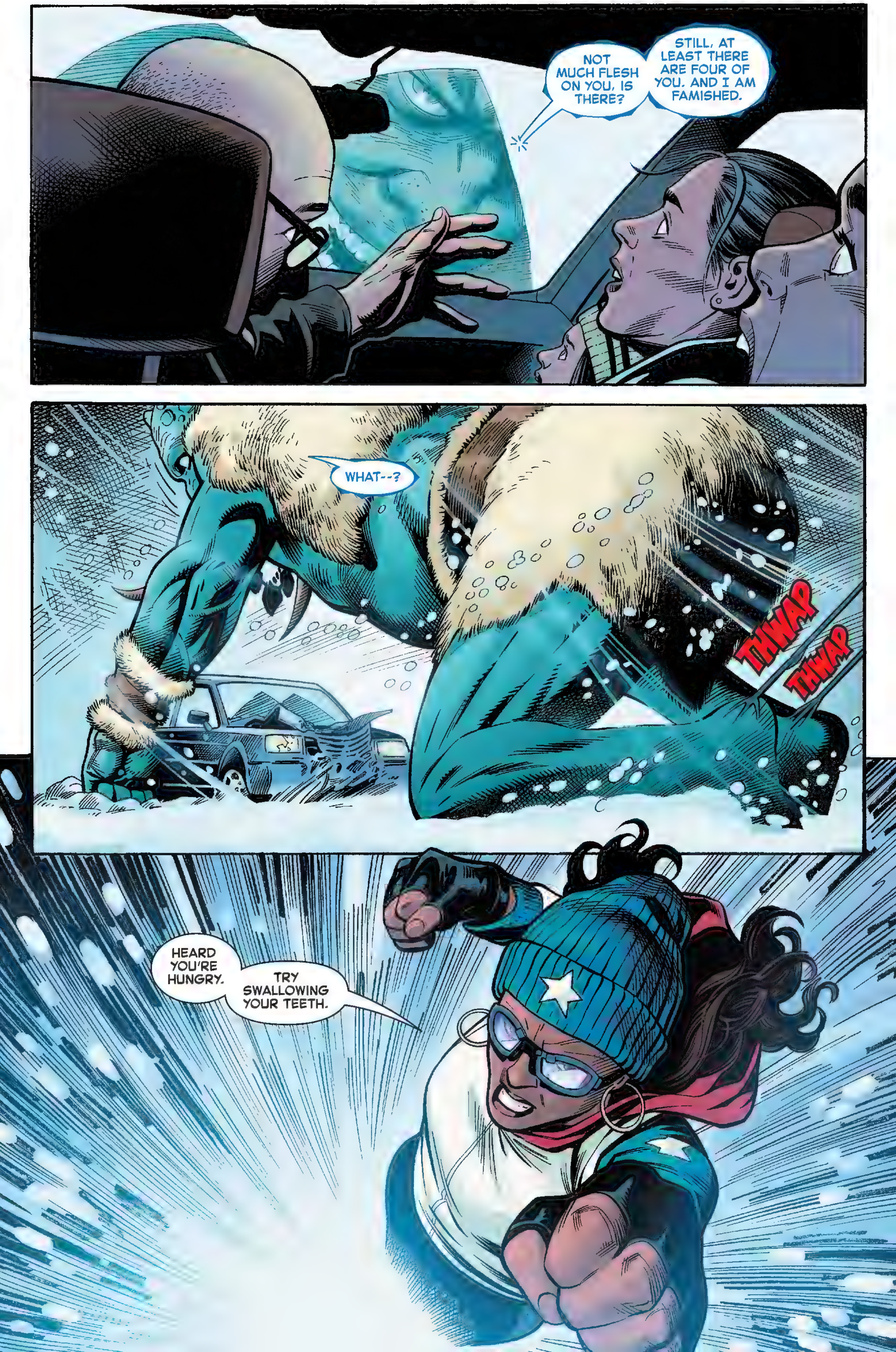

YOU... *DARE?!*
MY CITY IS UNDER THREAT! THE PEOPLE-- THE *WORLD* I HAVE SWORN TO PROTECT IS ENDANGERED! I WILL NOT STAND IDLY BY!
WITH SUPERIORITY COMES RESPONSIBILITY!
STOLE *AND* MANGLED MY CATCHPHRASE. IMPRESSIVE.
LISTEN TO ME, OTTO. NO ONE'S ASKING YOU TO JUST DO NOTHING.
WE WANT YOU ON THE WALL. WE *NEED* YOU ON THE WALL.
BUT *TRUST* ME, I'VE BEEN IN A LOT OF THESE THINGS. THE ONLY WAY WE WIN IS BY WORKING AS A TEAM.
SOMETIMES THAT MEANS YOU'RE ON THE FRONT LINES, AND SOMETIMES IT MEANS YOU'RE GETTING THE HULK FRESH PANTS.
SOMETIMES YOU'RE PUNCHING OUT THANOS, AND SOMETIMES YOU'RE FIGHTING HENCHMAN #2 IN A CHUCK E. CHEESE.
WHATEVER IT TAKES, YOU DO IT. BECAUSE IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU. IT'S ABOUT DOING THE MOST GOOD.
YOU TRUST YOUR BUDDIES. YOU TRUST THE PLAN. AND YOU DO YOUR JOB.

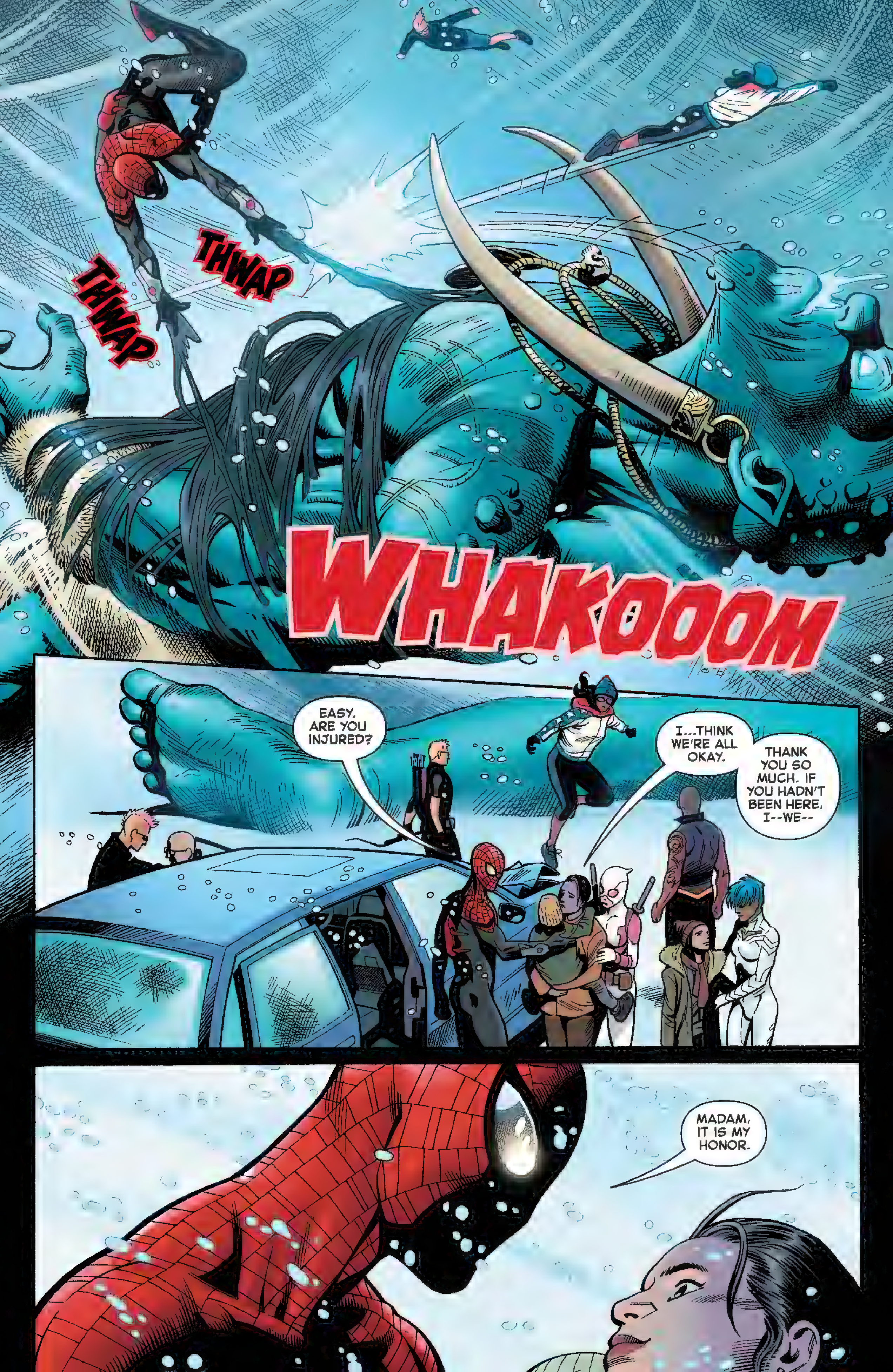

UTTER DRIVEL!
HEAR ME, AVENGERS! FORGET THOR. WE SHALL RETURN TO SVARTALFHEIM AND FIND THIS BLACK BIFROST!
I, OTTO OCTAVIUS, SHALL LEAD YOU!
TALK TO YOUR BOY, WEBS.
HE'S EMBARRASSIN' HIMSELF.
GO BACK TO EARTH, OTTO.
THERE'S A WHOLE WORLD OF PEOPLE THAT CAN USE YOUR HELP.
FOOLS. BLIND IDIOTS!
YOU SHALL SEE REASON, OR MY ALLIES AND I SHALL MAKE YOU--

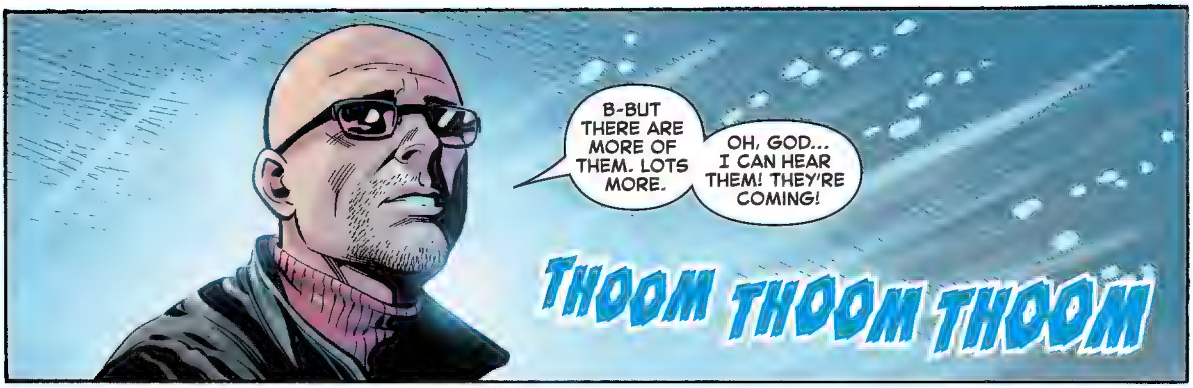

"ALLIES"? I *KNOW* YOU'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT *US*.
THOSE GUYS ARE RIGHT. WE'RE OUTTA HERE.
YEAH. YOUR HEAT RAY'LL BE DOWN SOON, AND L.A. NEEDS US.
SORRY, DOC. WE TRIED.
TRAITORS! MUTINEERS!
I *COMMAND* YOU TO OBEY ME!
LISTEN, BIG GUY. I GET IT.
EVERYONE'S THE HERO OF THEIR OWN STORY. SO WHEN YOU FIND OUT THERE ARE OTHER STORIES WHERE YOU DON'T EVEN RATE A *MENTION*, IT SUCKS.
BUT I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING. I'VE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION.
TO THE REDSHIRTS. THE BACKGROUND EXTRAS. THE DAY PLAYERS.
THEY'RE PEOPLE TOO. EVEN IF THE POWERS THAT BE DON'T THINK OF 'EM THAT WAY.
IF, IN THIS WHOLE WAR, ALL YOU DO IS SAVE *ONE GUY*...
...YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN THAT GUY'S WORLD.

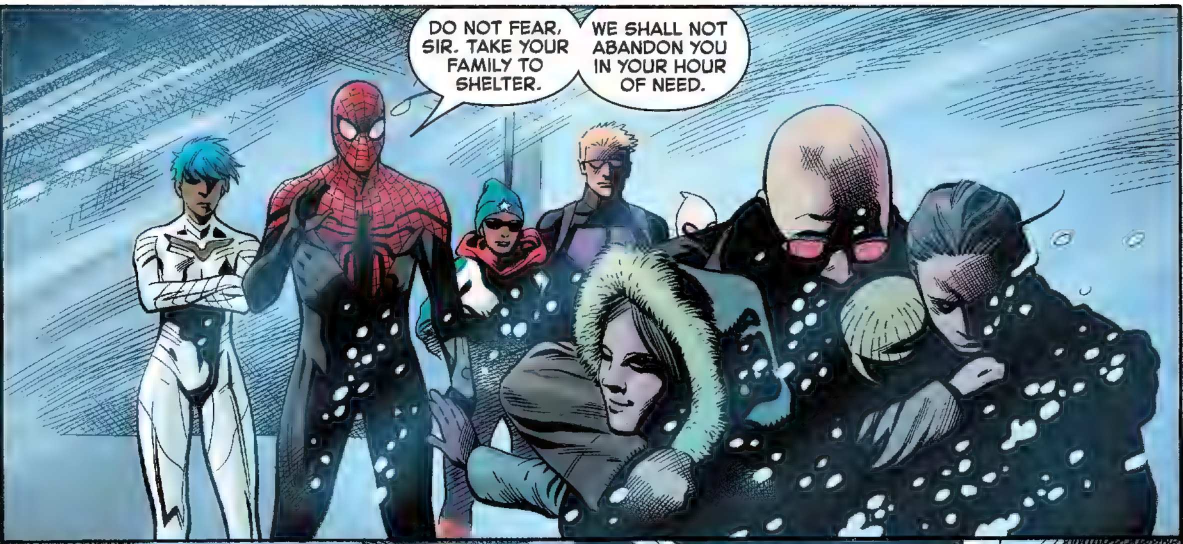

YOU COMING?

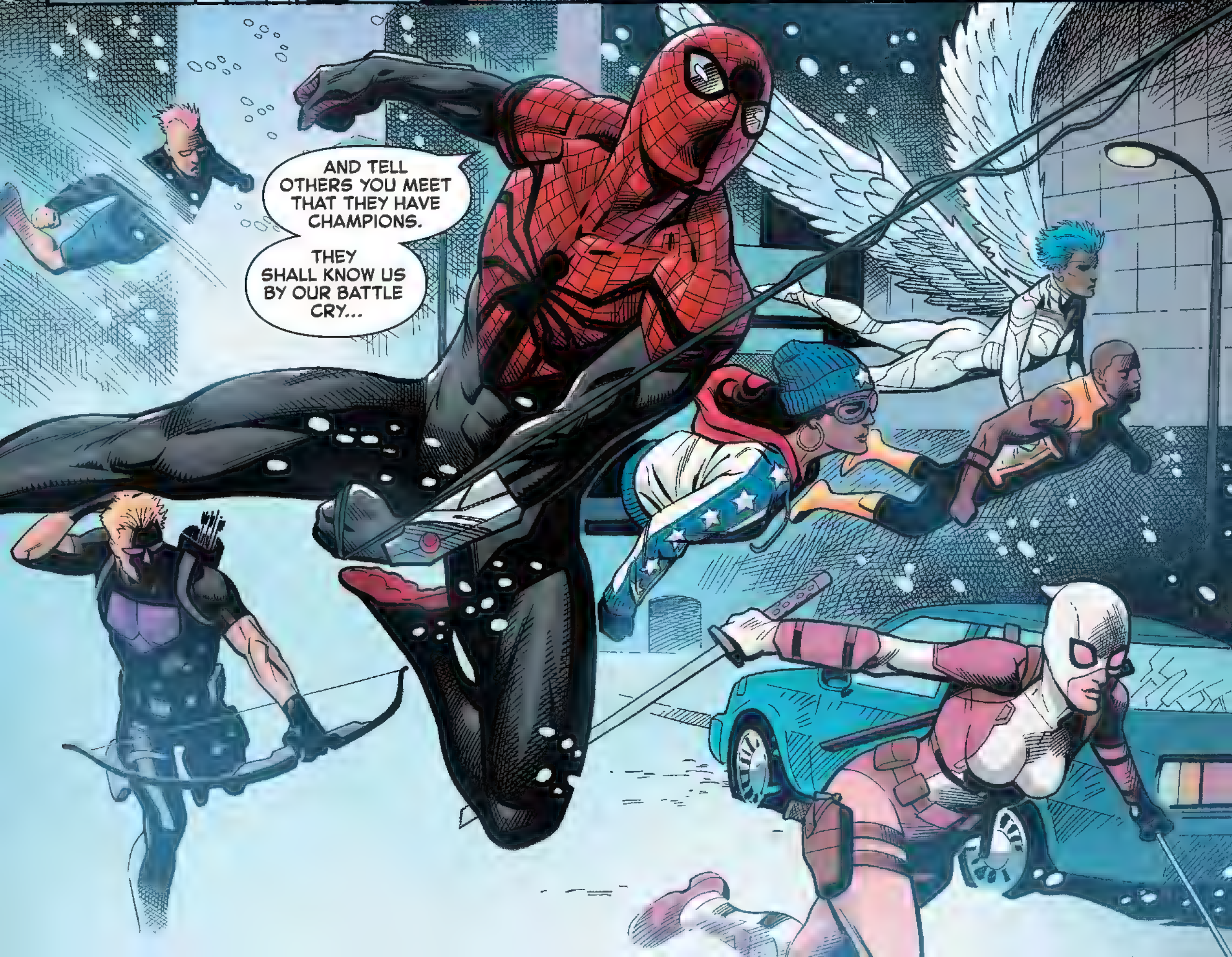

VENTURA, CALIFORNIA.
I CAN'T SEE THROUGH THIS SNOW! WE SHOULD'VE STAYED AT HOME.
AND LET THOSE... *THINGS* FIND US? YOU HEARD THEM STOMPING ALL OVER THE MILLERS' PLACE!
I HEARD IT'S WARM IN L.A. WE NEED TO--
EEEEE!
THMP
KRASHH

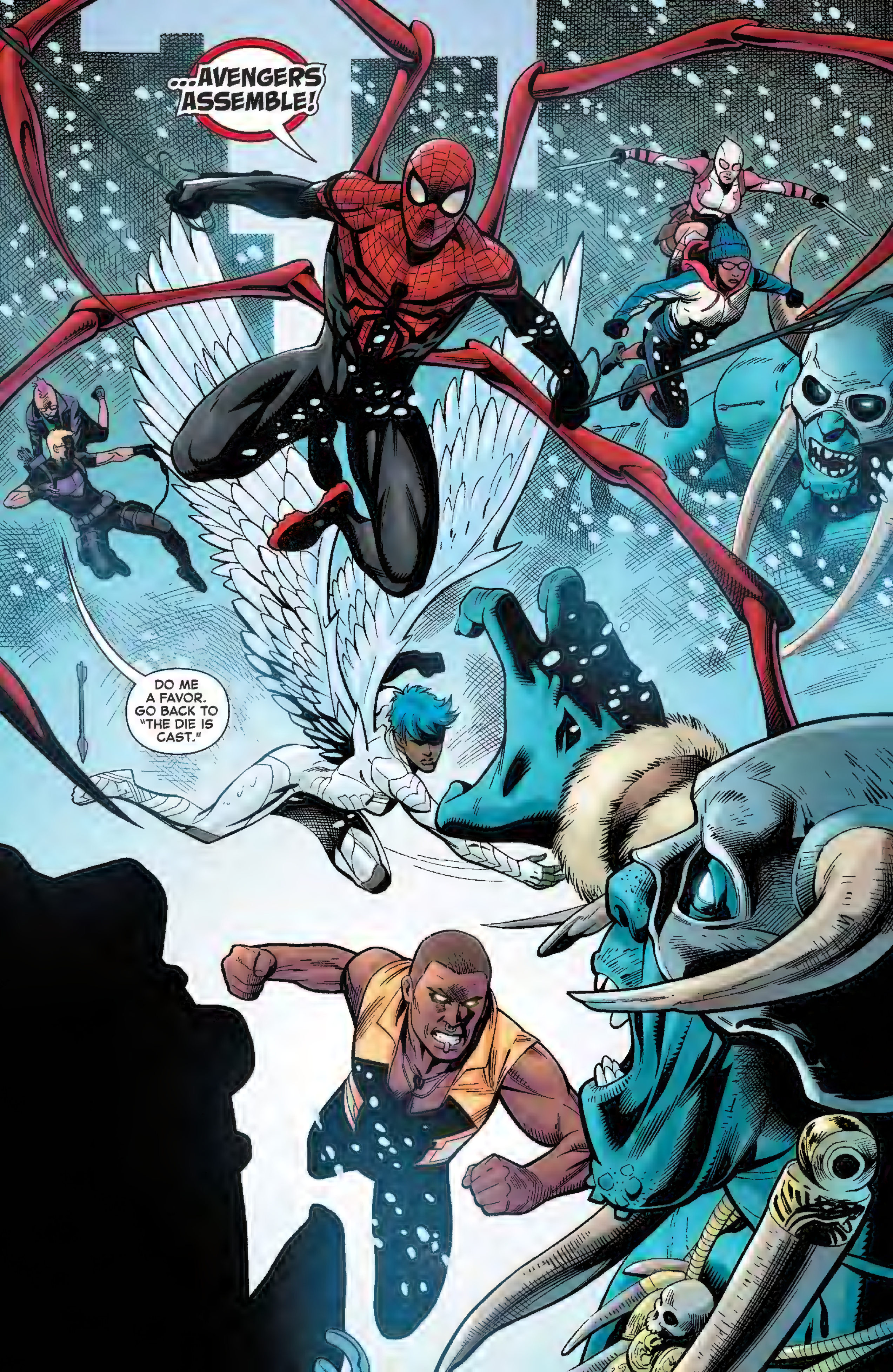

NOT MUCH FLESH ON YOU, IS THERE?
STILL, AT LEAST THERE ARE FOUR OF YOU. AND I AM FAMISHED.
WHAT--?
THWAP
THWAP
HEARD YOU'RE HUNGRY.
TRY SWALLOWING YOUR TEETH.


THWAP
THWAP
WHAKOOOM
EASY. ARE YOU INJURED?
I...THINK WE'RE ALL OKAY.
THANK YOU SO MUCH. IF YOU HADN'T BEEN HERE, I--WE--
MADAM, IT IS MY HONOR.

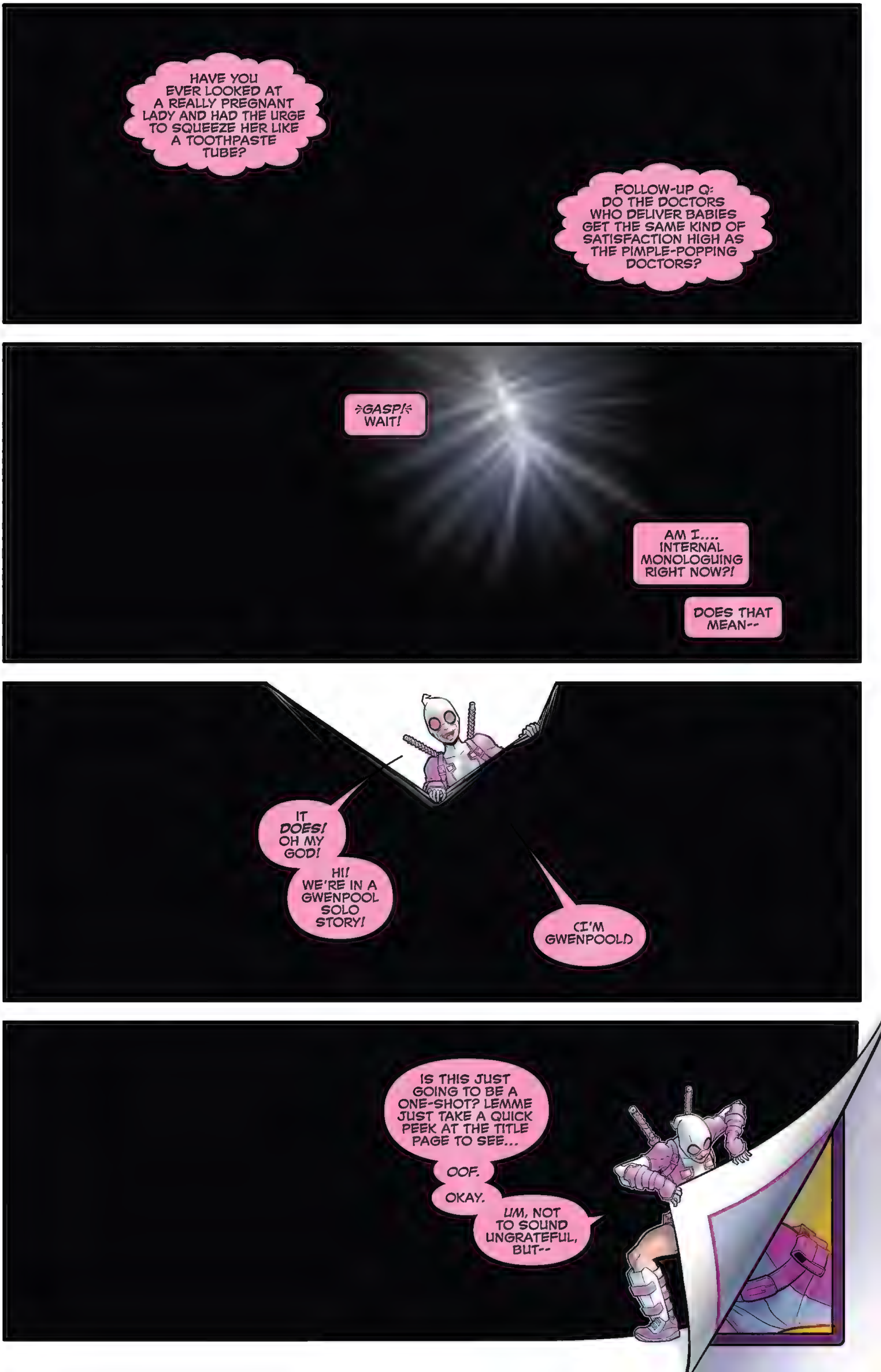

B-BUT THERE ARE MORE OF THEM. LOTS MORE.
OH, GOD... I CAN HEAR THEM! THEY'RE COMING!
THOOM THOOM THOOM

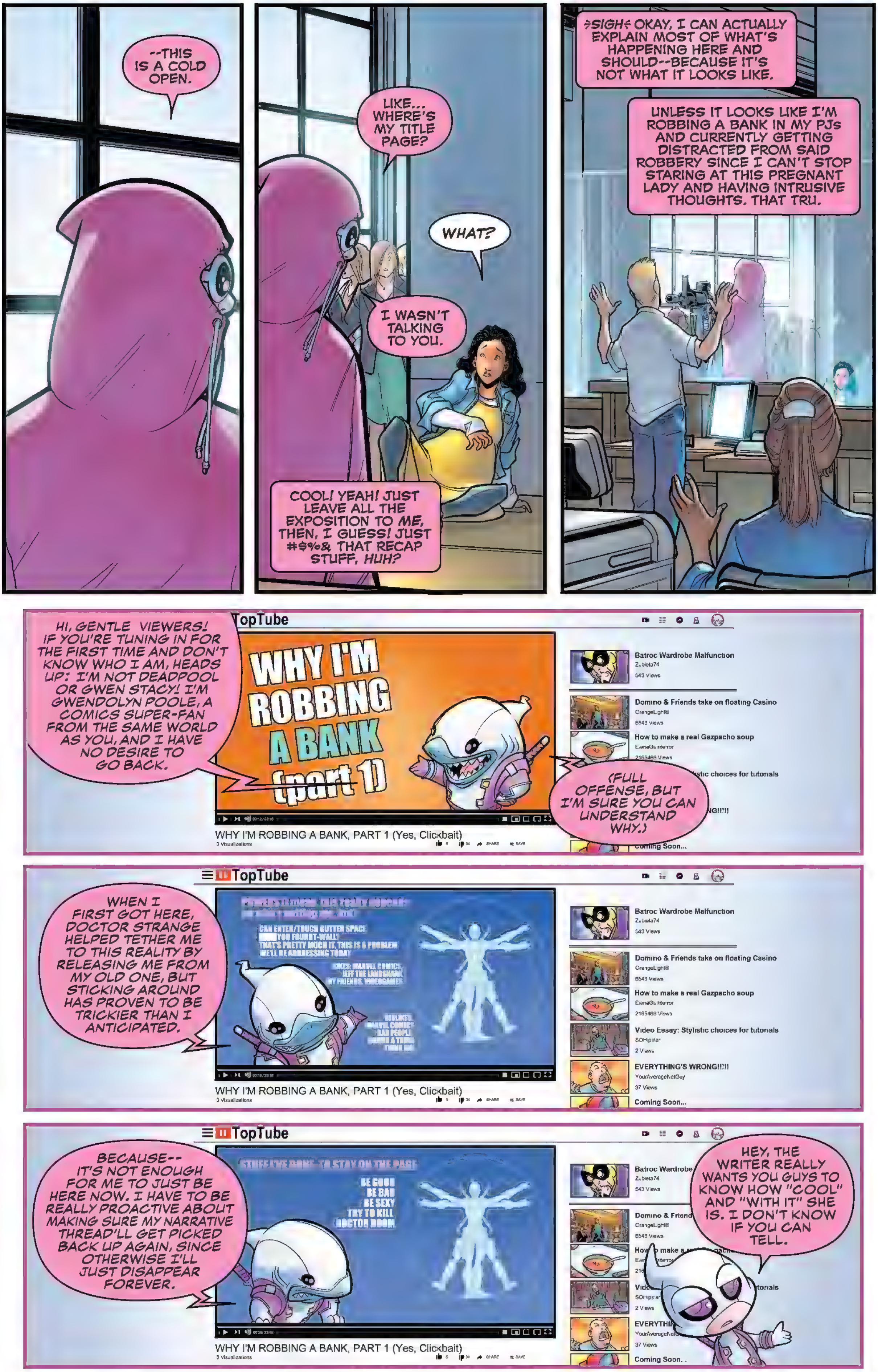

DO NOT FEAR, SIR. TAKE YOUR FAMILY TO SHELTER.
WE SHALL NOT ABANDON YOU IN YOUR HOUR OF NEED.


AND TELL OTHERS YOU MEET THAT THEY HAVE CHAMPIONS.
THEY SHALL KNOW US BY OUR BATTLE CRY...


...AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
DO ME A FAVOR. GO BACK TO "THE DIE IS CAST."

GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #1


HAVE YOU EVER LOOKED AT A REALLY PREGNANT LADY AND HAD THE URGE TO SQUEEZE HER LIKE A TOOTHPASTE TUBE?
FOLLOW-UP Q: DO THE DOCTORS WHO DELIVER BABIES GET THE SAME KIND OF SATISFACTION HIGH AS THE PIMPLE-POPPING DOCTORS?
GASP! WAIT!
AM I.... INTERNAL MONOLOGUING RIGHT NOW?!
DOES THAT MEAN--
IT DOES! OH MY GOD!
HI! WE'RE IN A GWENPOOL SOLO STORY!
(I'M GWENPOOL)
IS THIS JUST GOING TO BE A ONE-SHOT? LEMME JUST TAKE A QUICK PEEK AT THE TITLE PAGE TO SEE...
OOF.
OKAY.
UM, NOT TO SOUND UNGRATEFUL, BUT--


--THIS IS A COLD OPEN.
LIKE... WHERE'S MY TITLE PAGE?
WHAT?
I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU.
COOL! YEAH! JUST LEAVE ALL THE EXPOSITION TO ME, THEN, I GUESS! JUST #$%& THAT RECAP STUFF, HUH?
≯SIGH≮ OKAY, I CAN ACTUALLY EXPLAIN MOST OF WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE AND SHOULD--BECAUSE IT'S NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
UNLESS IT LOOKS LIKE I'M ROBBING A BANK IN MY PJs AND CURRENTLY GETTING DISTRACTED FROM SAID ROBBERY SINCE I CAN'T STOP STARING AT THIS PREGNANT LADY AND HAVING INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS. THAT TRU.
TopTube
WHY I'M ROBBING A BANK ~~(part 1)~~
HI, GENTLE VIEWERS! IF YOU'RE TUNING IN FOR THE FIRST TIME AND DON'T KNOW WHO I AM, HEADS UP: I'M NOT DEADPOOL OR GWEN STACY! I'M GWENDOLYN POOLE, A COMICS SUPER-FAN FROM THE SAME WORLD AS YOU, AND I HAVE NO DESIRE TO GO BACK.
(FULL OFFENSE, BUT I'M SURE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHY.)
WHY I'M ROBBING A BANK, PART 1 (Yes, Clickbait)
3 Visualizations
5
34
SHARE
SAVE
Batroc Wardrobe Malfunction
Zubiata74
543 Views
Domino & Friends take on floating Casino
OrangeLight®
6543 Views
How to make a real Gazpacho soup
ElenaGuinterror
2165466 Views
...stic choices for tutorials
...NG!!!!!
Coming Soon...
TopTube
CAN ENTER/TOUCH GUTTER SPACE
YOU FOURHT-WALL!
THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT, THIS IS A PROBLEM WE'LL BE ADDRESSING TODAY
LIKES: MARVEL COMICS, JEFF THE LANDSHARK, MY FRIENDS, VIDEOGAMES
DISLIKES: MARVEL COMICS, BAD PEOPLE
WHEN I FIRST GOT HERE, DOCTOR STRANGE HELPED TETHER ME TO THIS REALITY BY RELEASING ME FROM MY OLD ONE, BUT STICKING AROUND HAS PROVEN TO BE TRICKIER THAN I ANTICIPATED.
WHY I'M ROBBING A BANK, PART 1 (Yes, Clickbait)
3 Visualizations
Batroc Wardrobe Malfunction
Zubiata74
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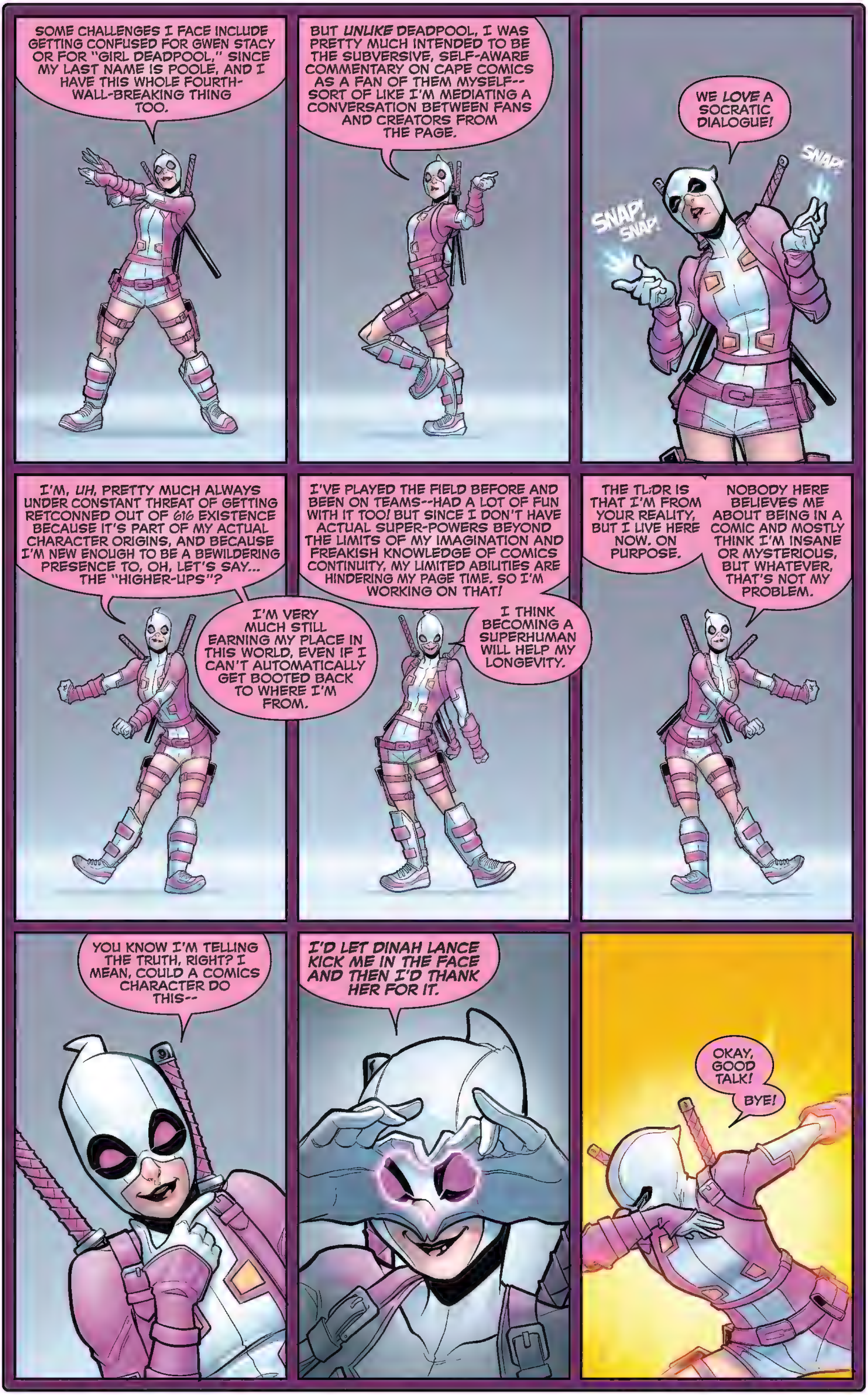
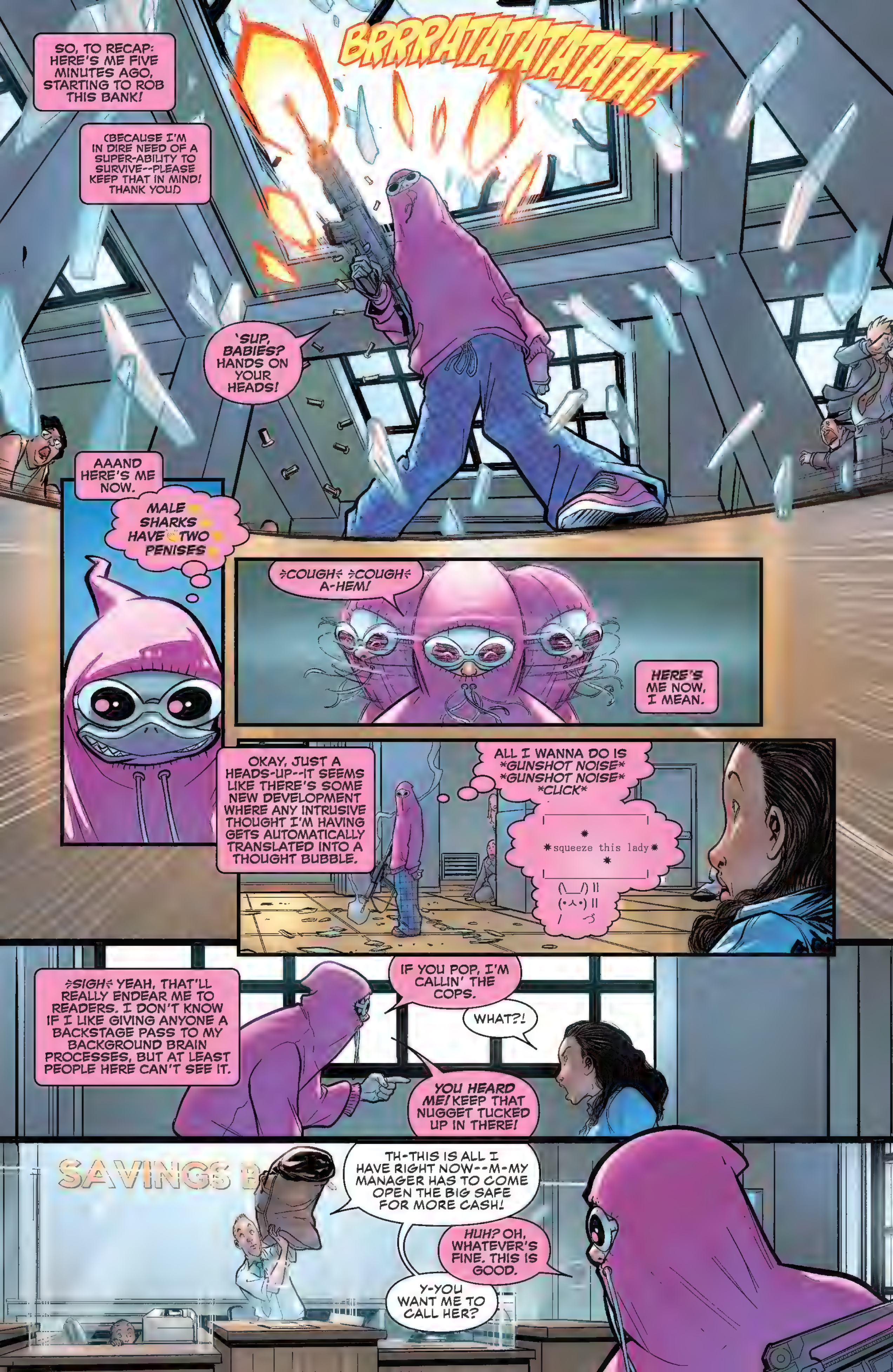
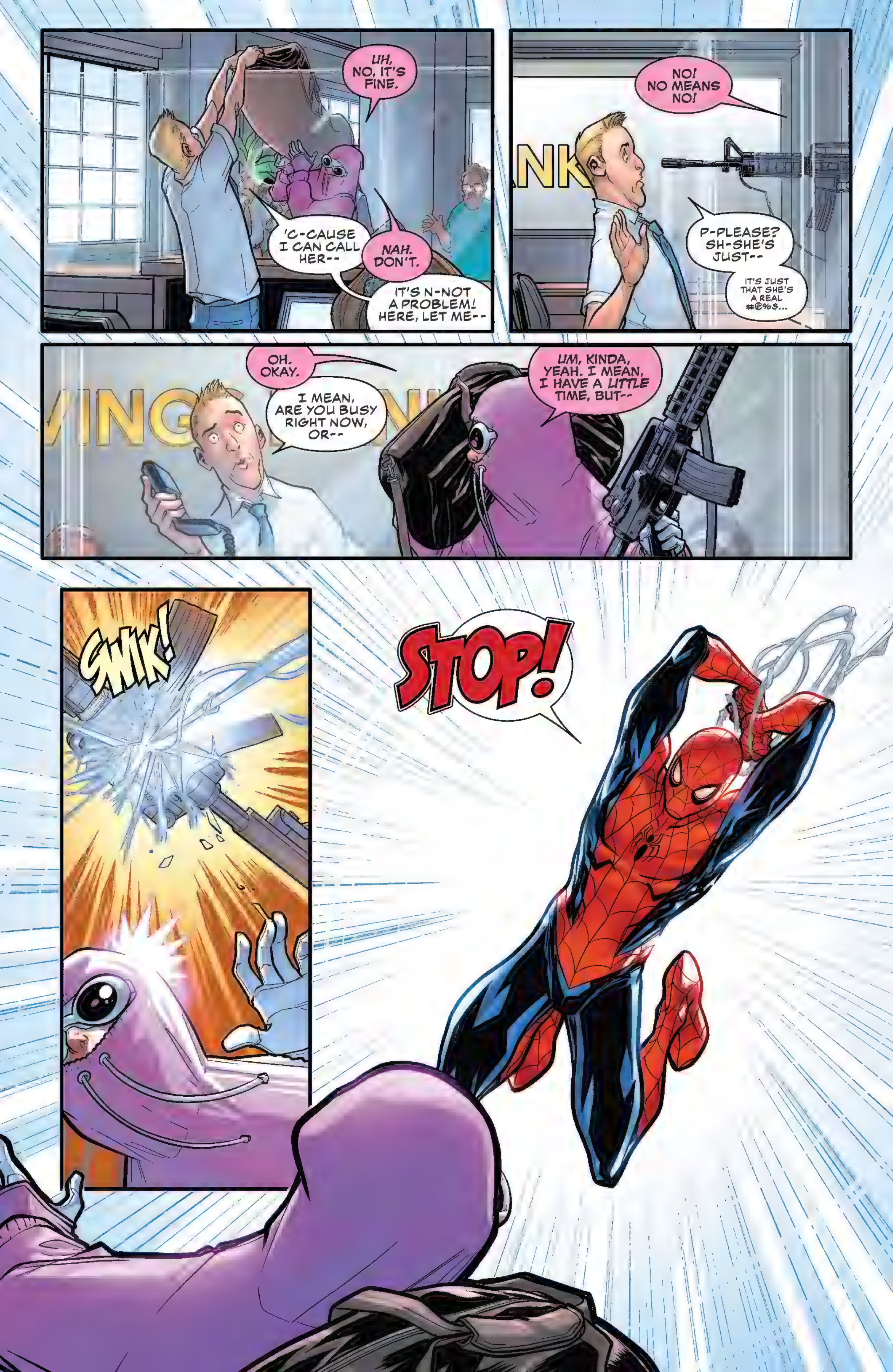
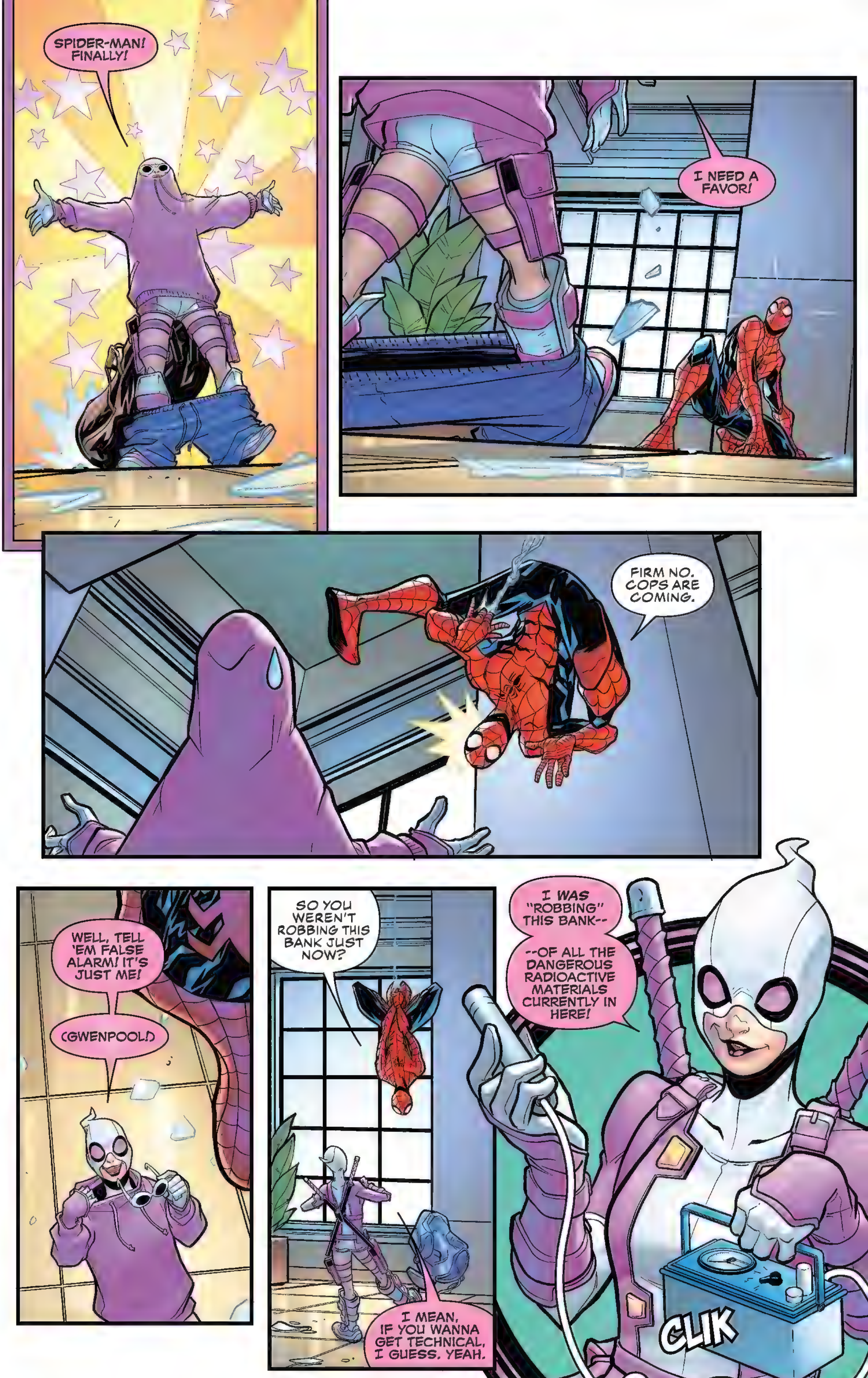
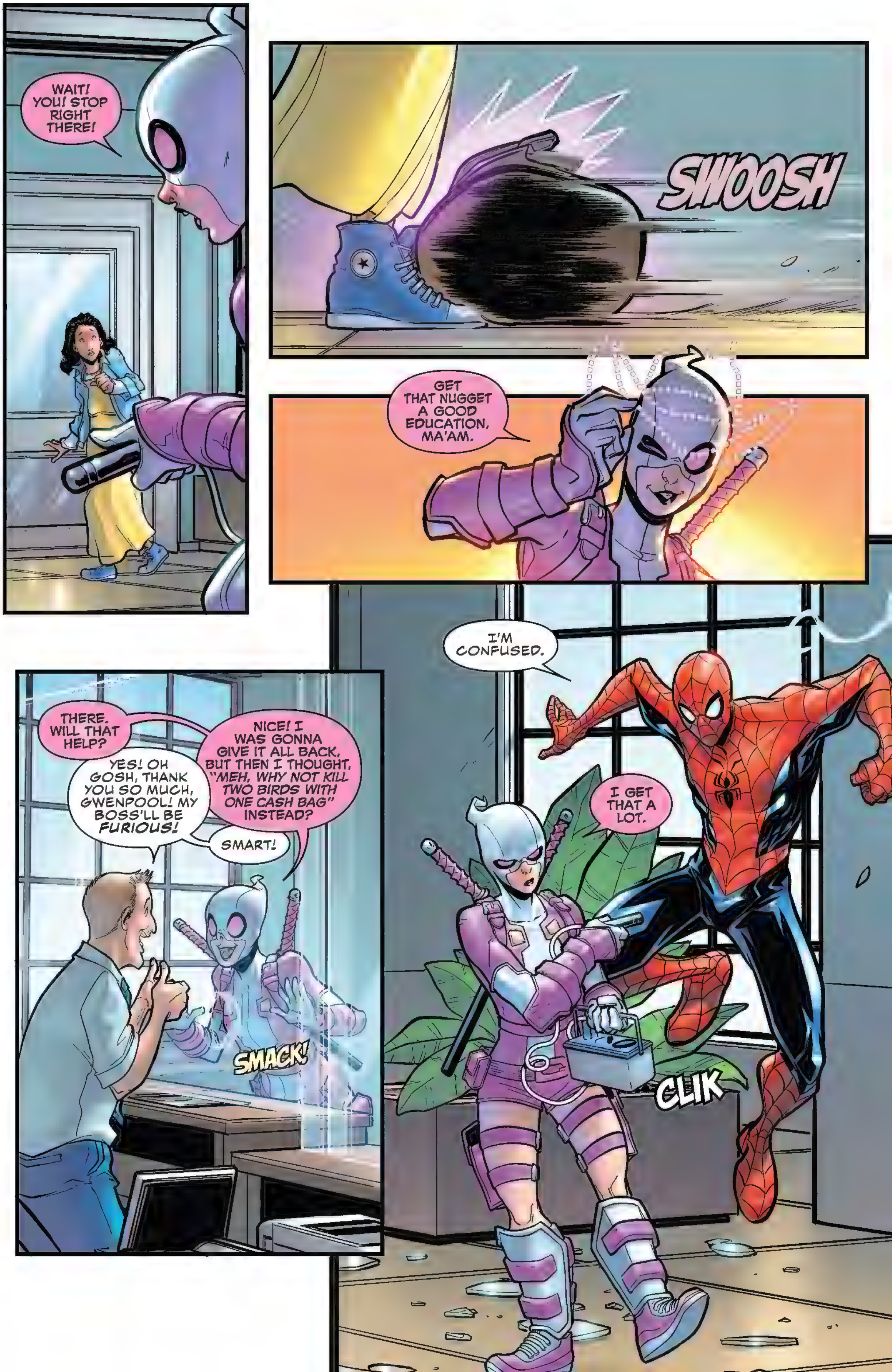
2165466 Views
Video Essay: Stylistic choices for tutorials
SOHipster
2 Views
EVERYTHING'S WRONG!!!!!
YourAverageNetGuy
37 Views
Coming Soon...
TopTube
STUFF I'VE DONE TO STAY ON THE PAGE
BE GOOD
BE BAD
BE SEXY
TRY TO KILL DOCTOR DOOM
BECAUSE--IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR ME TO JUST BE HERE NOW. I HAVE TO BE REALLY PROACTIVE ABOUT MAKING SURE MY NARRATIVE THREAD'LL GET PICKED BACK UP AGAIN, SINCE OTHERWISE I'LL JUST DISAPPEAR FOREVER.
HEY, THE WRITER REALLY WANTS YOU GUYS TO KNOW HOW "COOL" AND "WITH IT" SHE IS. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN TELL.
WHY I'M ROBBING A BANK, PART 1 (Yes, Clickbait)
3 Visualizations
Coming Soon. .

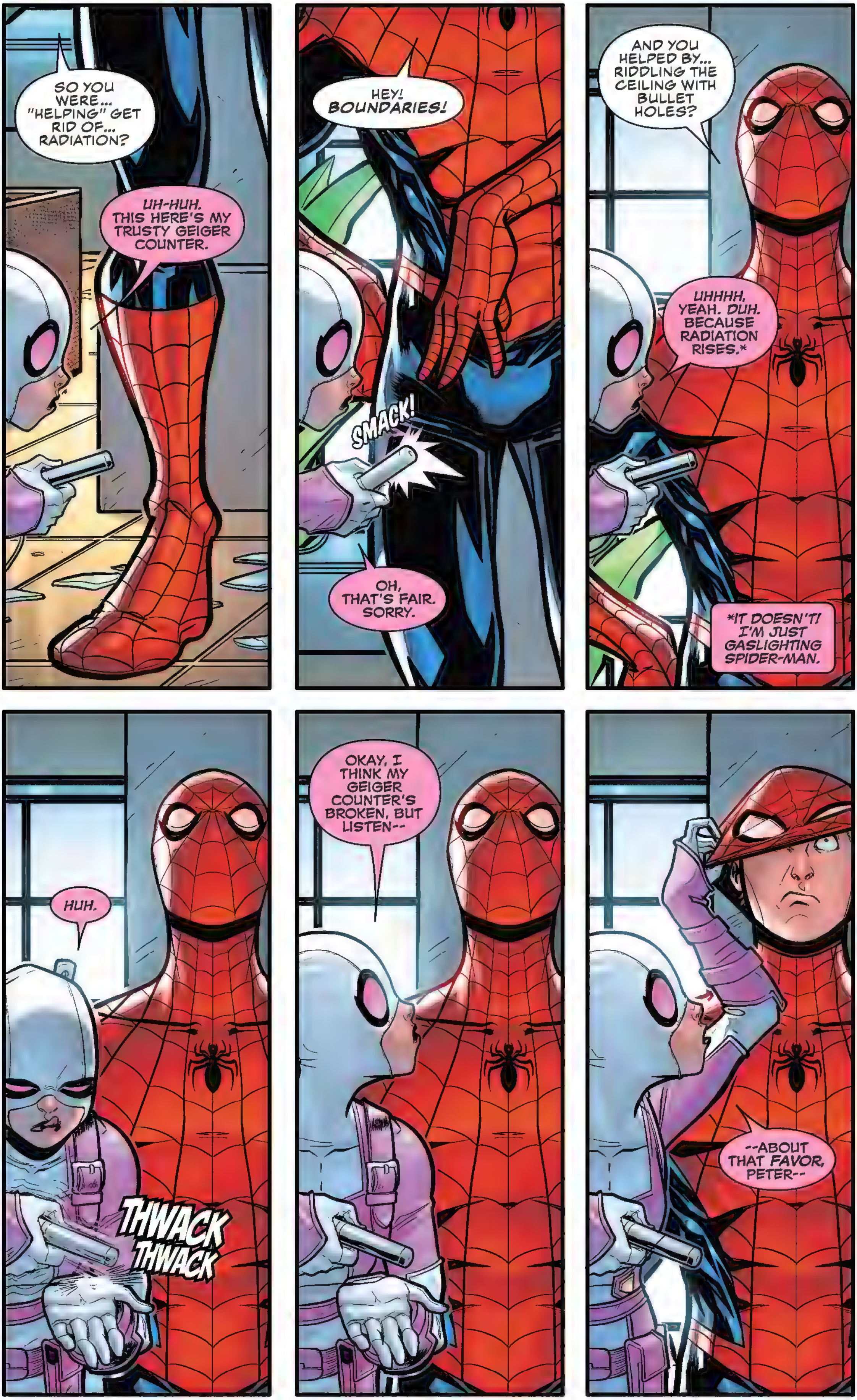

SOME CHALLENGES I FACE INCLUDE GETTING CONFUSED FOR GWEN STACY OR FOR "GIRL DEADPOOL," SINCE MY LAST NAME IS POOLE, AND I HAVE THIS WHOLE FOURTH-WALL-BREAKING THING TOO.
BUT *UNLIKE* DEADPOOL, I WAS PRETTY MUCH INTENDED TO BE THE SUBVERSIVE, SELF-AWARE COMMENTARY ON CAPE COMICS AS A FAN OF THEM MYSELF--SORT OF LIKE I'M MEDIATING A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FANS AND CREATORS FROM THE PAGE.
WE *LOVE* A SOCRATIC DIALOGUE!
SNAP! SNAP!
SNAP!
I'M, *UH*, PRETTY MUCH ALWAYS UNDER CONSTANT THREAT OF GETTING RETCONNED OUT OF 616 EXISTENCE BECAUSE IT'S PART OF MY ACTUAL CHARACTER ORIGINS, AND BECAUSE I'M NEW ENOUGH TO BE A BEWILDERING PRESENCE TO, OH, LET'S SAY... THE "HIGHER-UPS"?
I'M VERY MUCH STILL EARNING MY PLACE IN THIS WORLD, EVEN IF I CAN'T AUTOMATICALLY GET BOOTED BACK TO WHERE I'M FROM.
I'VE PLAYED THE FIELD BEFORE AND BEEN ON TEAMS--HAD A LOT OF FUN WITH IT TOO! BUT SINCE I DON'T HAVE ACTUAL SUPER-POWERS BEYOND THE LIMITS OF MY IMAGINATION AND FREAKISH KNOWLEDGE OF COMICS CONTINUITY, MY LIMITED ABILITIES ARE HINDERING MY PAGE TIME. SO I'M WORKING ON THAT!
I THINK BECOMING A SUPERHUMAN WILL HELP MY LONGEVITY.
THE TL;DR IS THAT I'M FROM YOUR REALITY, BUT I LIVE HERE NOW. ON PURPOSE.
NOBODY HERE BELIEVES ME ABOUT BEING IN A COMIC AND MOSTLY THINK I'M INSANE OR MYSTERIOUS, BUT WHATEVER, THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM.
YOU KNOW I'M TELLING THE TRUTH, RIGHT? I MEAN, COULD A COMICS CHARACTER DO THIS--
I'D LET DINAH LANCE KICK ME IN THE FACE AND THEN I'D THANK HER FOR IT.
OKAY, GOOD TALK!
BYE!

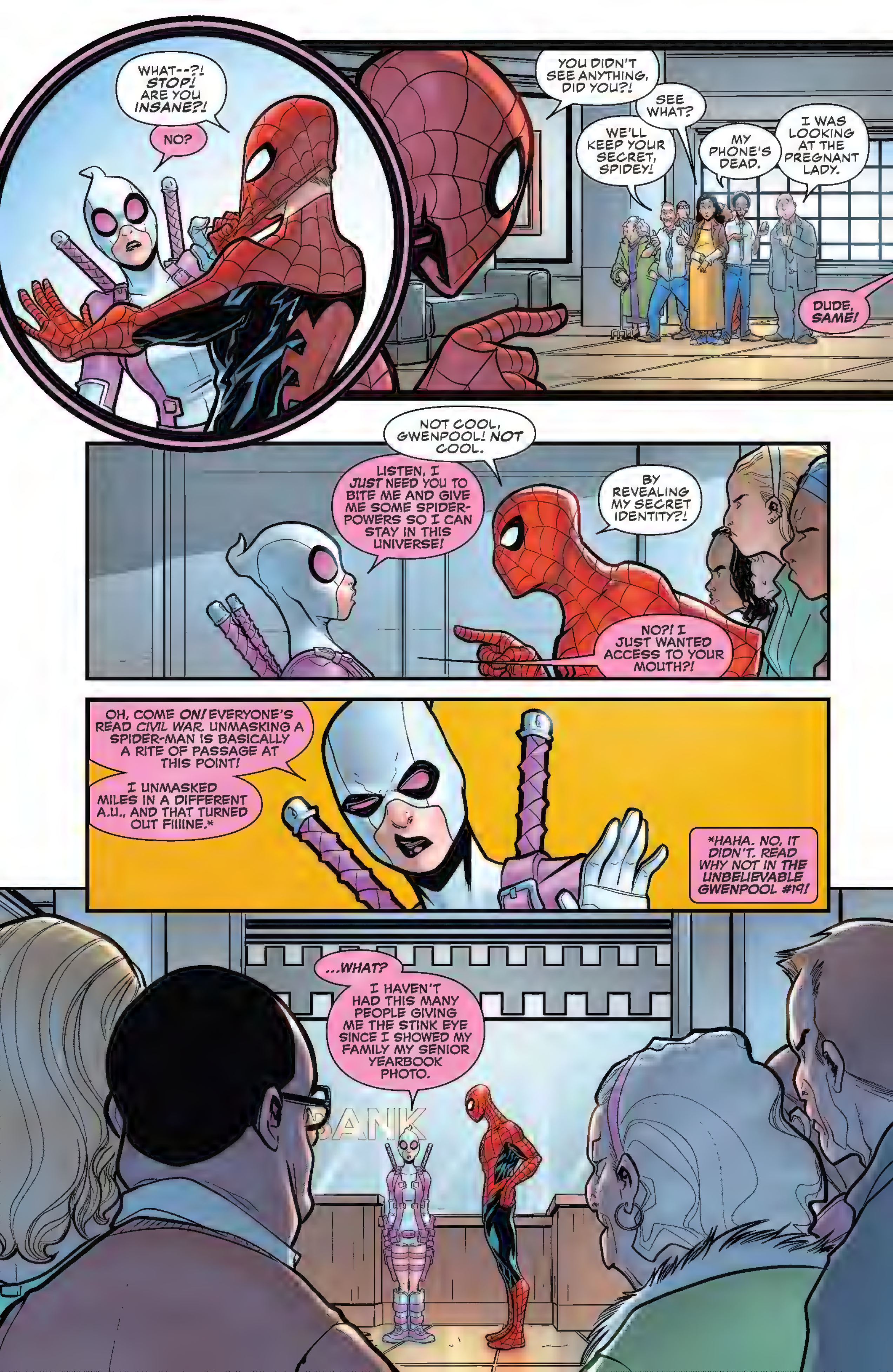

SO, TO RECAP: HERE'S ME FIVE MINUTES AGO, STARTING TO ROB THIS BANK!
(BECAUSE I'M IN DIRE NEED OF A SUPER-ABILITY TO SURVIVE--PLEASE KEEP THAT IN MIND! THANK YOU!)
BRRRATATATATATAT!
'SUP, BABIES? HANDS ON YOUR HEADS!
AAAND HERE'S ME NOW.
MALE SHARKS HAVE TWO PENISES
COUGH *COUGH* A-HEM!
HERE'S ME NOW, I MEAN.
OKAY, JUST A HEADS-UP--IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'S SOME NEW DEVELOPMENT WHERE ANY INTRUSIVE THOUGHT I'M HAVING GETS AUTOMATICALLY TRANSLATED INTO A THOUGHT BUBBLE.
ALL I WANNA DO IS *GUNSHOT NOISE* *GUNSHOT NOISE* *CLICK*
✸ ✸squeeze this lady✸ ✸
SIGH YEAH, THAT'LL REALLY ENDEAR ME TO READERS. I DON'T KNOW IF I LIKE GIVING ANYONE A BACKSTAGE PASS TO MY BACKGROUND BRAIN PROCESSES, BUT AT LEAST PEOPLE HERE CAN'T SEE IT.
IF YOU POP, I'M CALLIN' THE COPS.
WHAT?!
YOU HEARD ME! KEEP THAT NUGGET TUCKED UP IN THERE!
SAVINGS B
TH-THIS IS ALL I HAVE RIGHT NOW--M-MY MANAGER HAS TO COME OPEN THE BIG SAFE FOR MORE CASH!
HUH? OH, WHATEVER'S FINE. THIS IS GOOD.
Y-YOU WANT ME TO CALL HER?

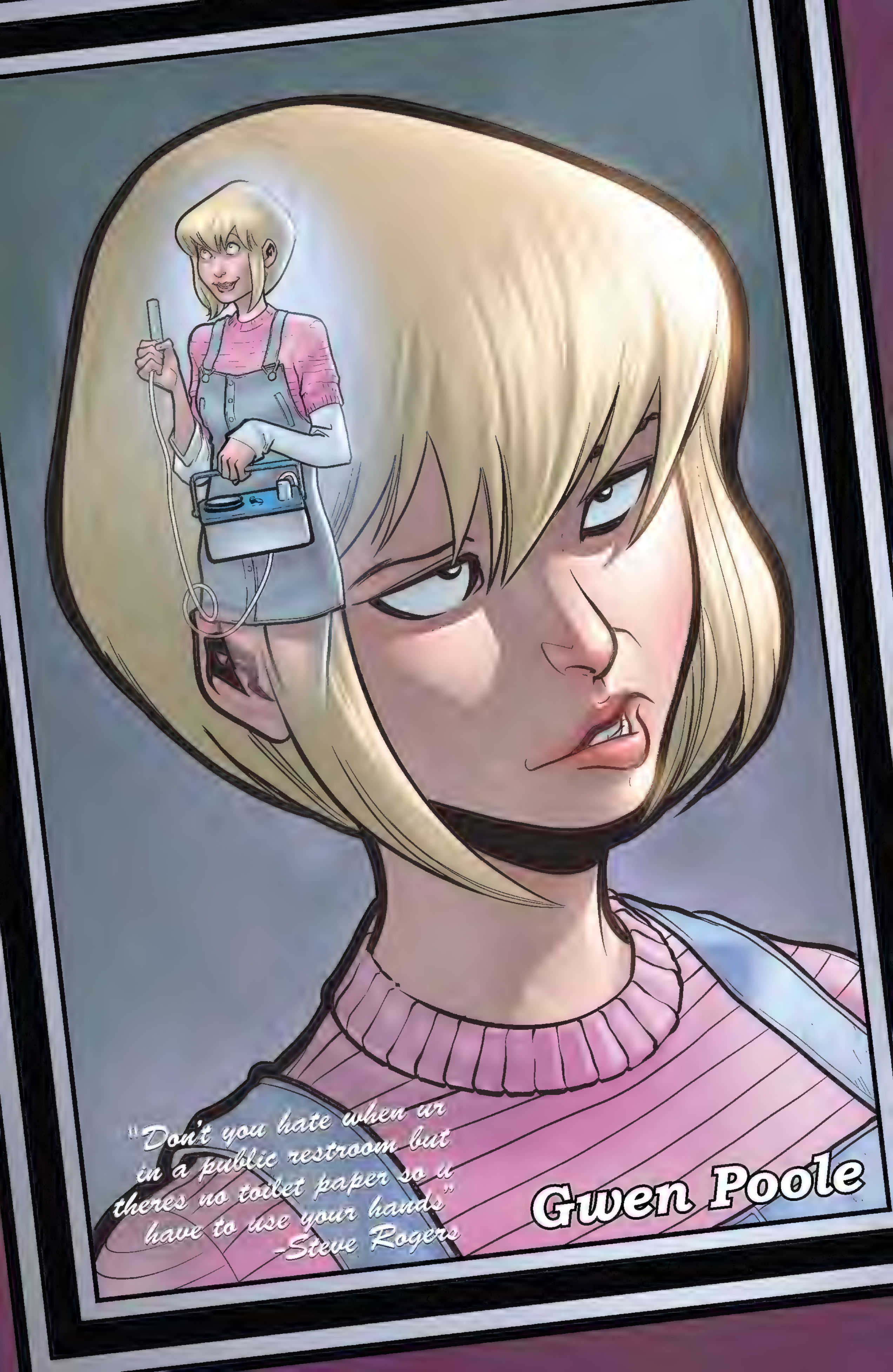

UH, NO, IT'S FINE.
'C-CAUSE I CAN CALL HER--
NAH. DON'T.
IT'S N-NOT A PROBLEM! HERE, LET ME--
NO! NO MEANS NO!
ANK
P-PLEASE? SH-SHE'S JUST--
IT'S JUST THAT SHE'S A REAL #@%$...
OH. OKAY.
I MEAN, ARE YOU BUSY RIGHT NOW, OR--
UM, KINDA, YEAH. I MEAN, I HAVE A LITTLE TIME, BUT--
VINGS
SWIK!
STOP!

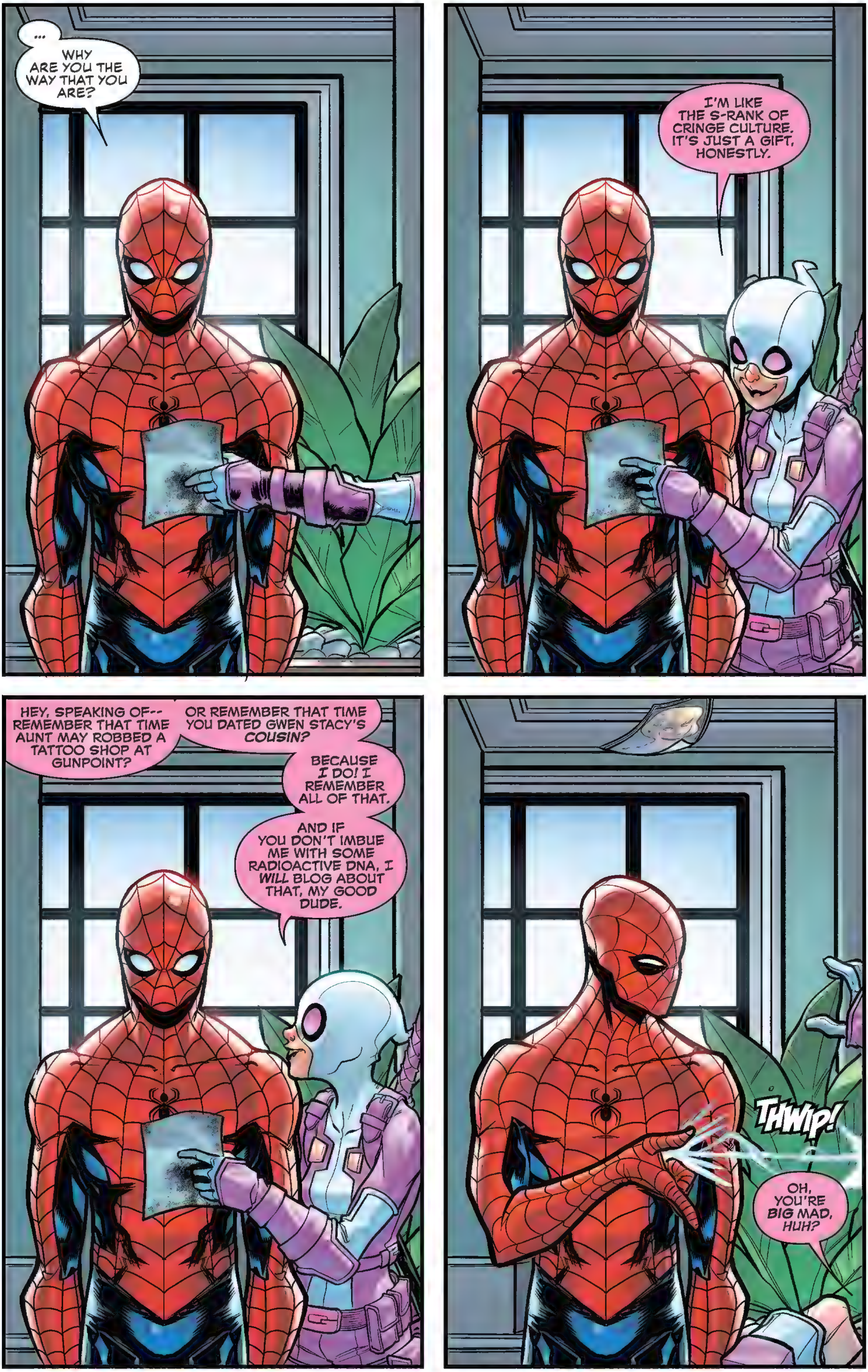

SPIDER-MAN! FINALLY!
I NEED A FAVOR!
FIRM NO. COPS ARE COMING.
WELL, TELL 'EM FALSE ALARM! IT'S JUST ME!
(GWENPOOL!)
SO YOU WEREN'T ROBBING THIS BANK JUST NOW?
I MEAN, IF YOU WANNA GET TECHNICAL, I GUESS. YEAH.
I WAS "ROBBING" THIS BANK--
--OF ALL THE DANGEROUS RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS CURRENTLY IN HERE!
CLIK

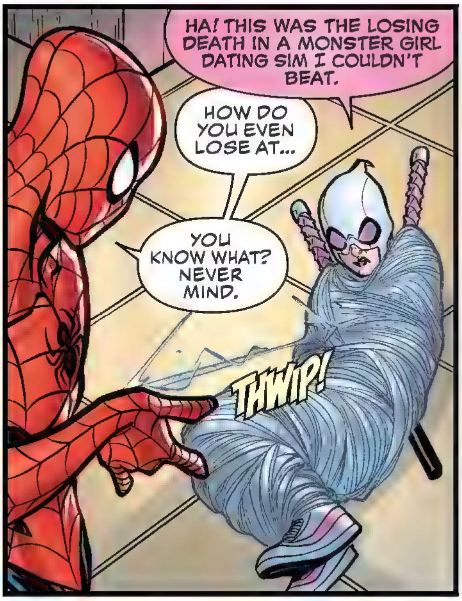

WAIT! YOU! STOP RIGHT THERE!
SWOOSH
GET THAT NUGGET A GOOD EDUCATION, MA'AM.
THERE. WILL THAT HELP?
YES! OH GOSH, THANK YOU SO MUCH, GWENPOOL! MY BOSS'LL BE *FURIOUS!*
NICE! I WAS GONNA GIVE IT ALL BACK, BUT THEN I THOUGHT, *"MEH, WHY NOT KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE CASH BAG"* INSTEAD?
SMART!
SMACK!
I'M CONFUSED.
I GET THAT A LOT.
CLIK

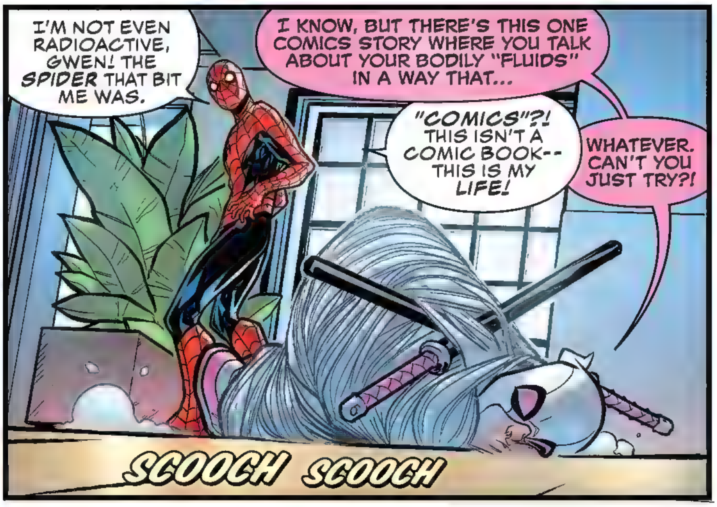

SO YOU WERE... "HELPING" GET RID OF... RADIATION?
UH-HUH. THIS HERE'S MY TRUSTY GEIGER COUNTER.
HEY! BOUNDARIES!
SMACK!
OH, THAT'S FAIR. SORRY.
AND YOU HELPED BY... RIDDLING THE CEILING WITH BULLET HOLES?
UHHHH, YEAH. DUH. BECAUSE RADIATION RISES.*
*IT DOESN'T! I'M JUST GASLIGHTING SPIDER-MAN.
HUH.
THWACK THWACK
OKAY, I THINK MY GEIGER COUNTER'S BROKEN, BUT LISTEN--
--ABOUT THAT FAVOR, PETER--

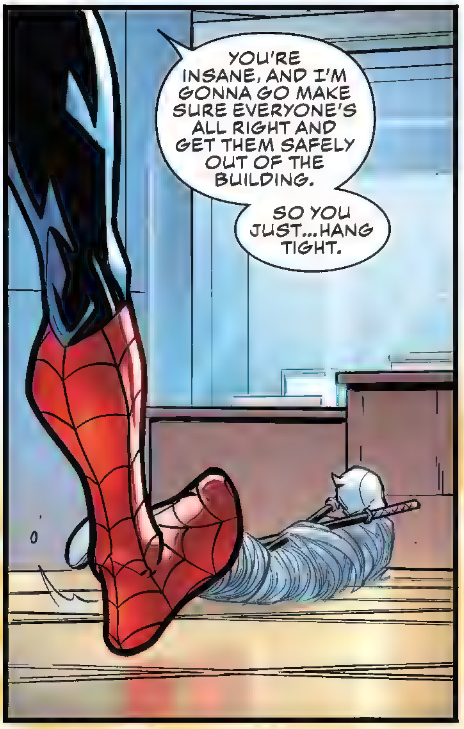

WHAT--?! *STOP!* ARE YOU *INSANE?!*
NO?
YOU DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING, DID YOU?!
SEE WHAT?
WE'LL KEEP YOUR SECRET, SPIDEY!
MY PHONE'S DEAD.
I WAS LOOKING AT THE PREGNANT LADY.
DUDE, SAME!
NOT COOL, GWENPOOL! **NOT** COOL.
LISTEN, I *JUST* NEED YOU TO BITE ME AND GIVE ME SOME SPIDER-POWERS SO I CAN STAY IN THIS UNIVERSE!
BY REVEALING MY SECRET IDENTITY?!
NO?! I JUST WANTED ACCESS TO YOUR MOUTH?!
OH, COME *ON!* EVERYONE'S READ *CIVIL WAR.* UNMASKING A SPIDER-MAN IS BASICALLY A RITE OF PASSAGE AT THIS POINT!
I UNMASKED MILES IN A DIFFERENT A.U., AND THAT TURNED OUT FIIIINE.*
*HAHA. NO, IT DIDN'T. READ WHY NOT IN THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #19!
...WHAT?
I HAVEN'T HAD THIS MANY PEOPLE GIVING ME THE STINK EYE SINCE I SHOWED MY FAMILY MY SENIOR YEARBOOK PHOTO.
BANK

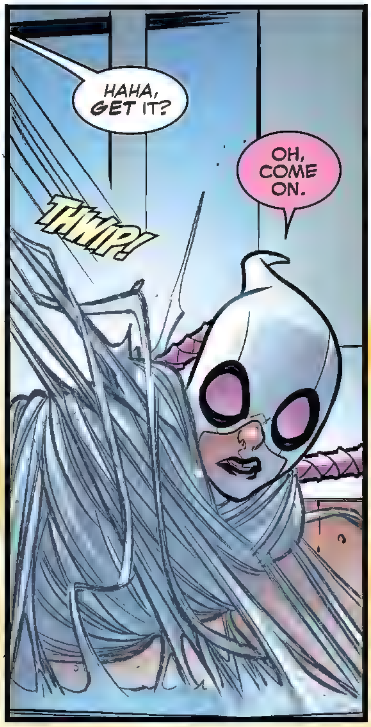

"Don't you hate when ur in a public restroom but theres no toilet paper so u have to use your hands"
-Steve Rogers
Gwen Poole

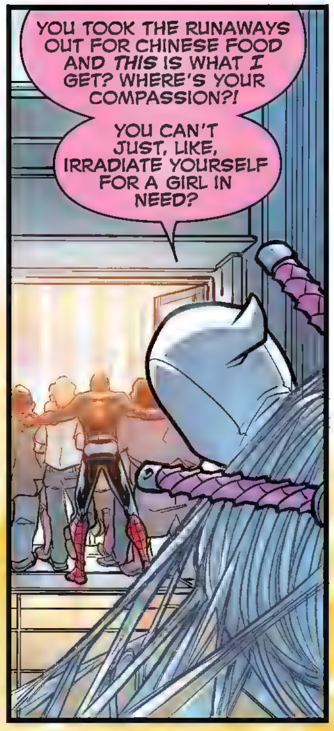

...
WHY ARE YOU THE WAY THAT YOU ARE?
I'M LIKE THE S-RANK OF CRINGE CULTURE. IT'S JUST A GIFT, HONESTLY.
HEY, SPEAKING OF-- REMEMBER THAT TIME AUNT MAY ROBBED A TATTOO SHOP AT GUNPOINT?
OR REMEMBER THAT TIME YOU DATED GWEN STACY'S *COUSIN?*
BECAUSE *I DO! I* REMEMBER ALL OF THAT.
AND IF YOU DON'T IMBUE ME WITH SOME RADIOACTIVE DNA, I *WILL* BLOG ABOUT THAT, MY GOOD DUDE.
THWIP!
OH, YOU'RE *BIG MAD,* HUH?

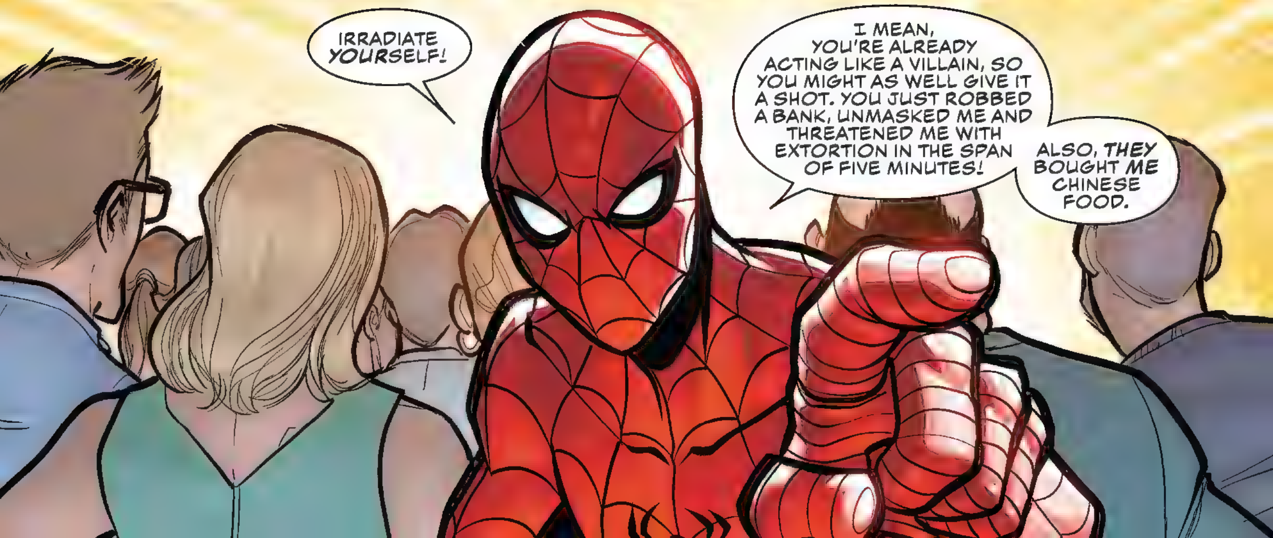

HA! THIS WAS THE LOSING DEATH IN A MONSTER GIRL DATING SIM I COULDN'T BEAT.
HOW DO YOU EVEN LOSE AT...
YOU KNOW WHAT? NEVER MIND.
THWIP!

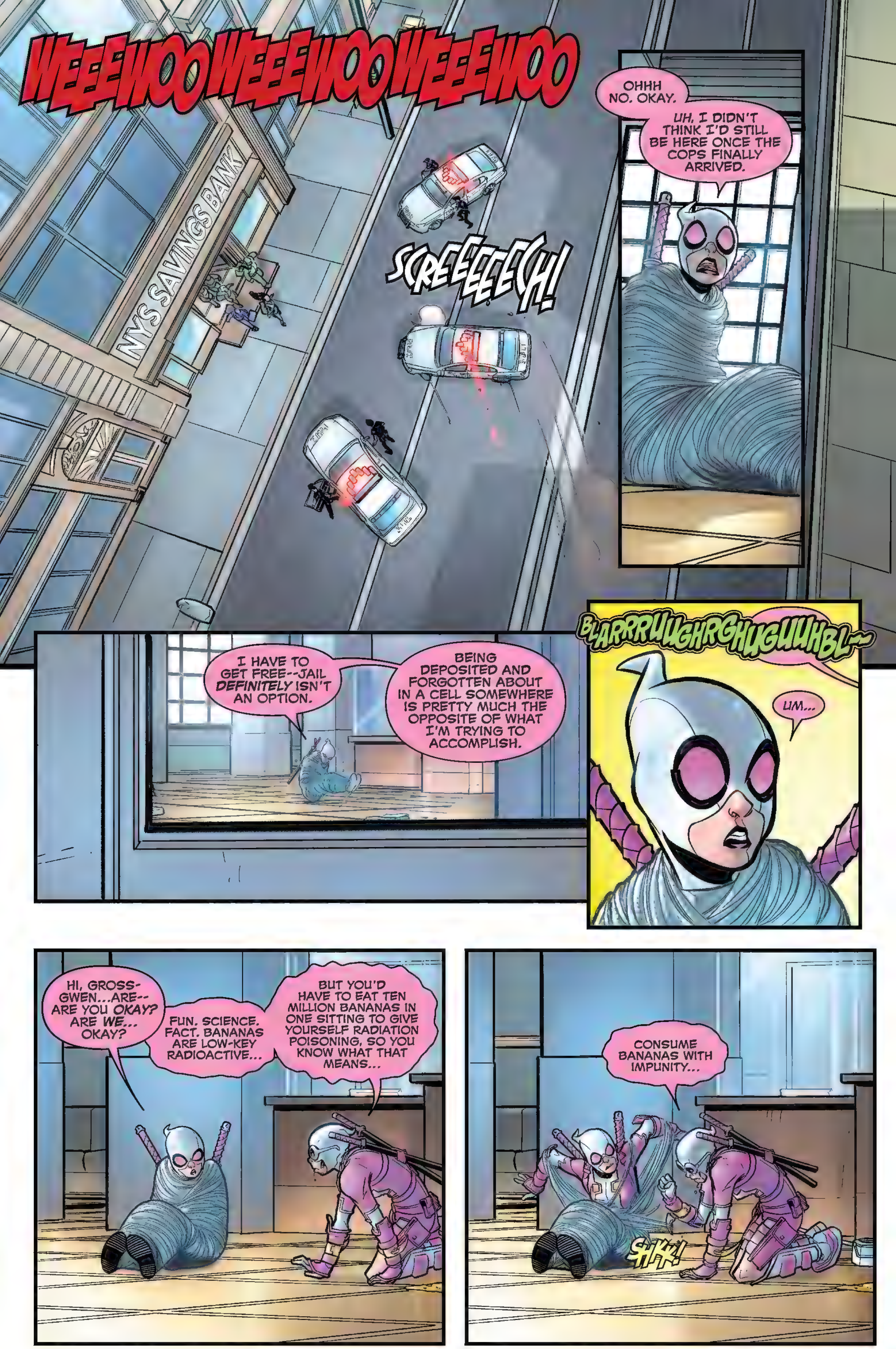

I'M NOT EVEN RADIOACTIVE, GWEN! THE SPIDER THAT BIT ME WAS.
I KNOW, BUT THERE'S THIS ONE COMICS STORY WHERE YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR BODILY "FLUIDS" IN A WAY THAT...
"COMICS"?! THIS ISN'T A COMIC BOOK-- THIS IS MY LIFE!
WHATEVER. CAN'T YOU JUST TRY?!
SCOOCH SCOOCH

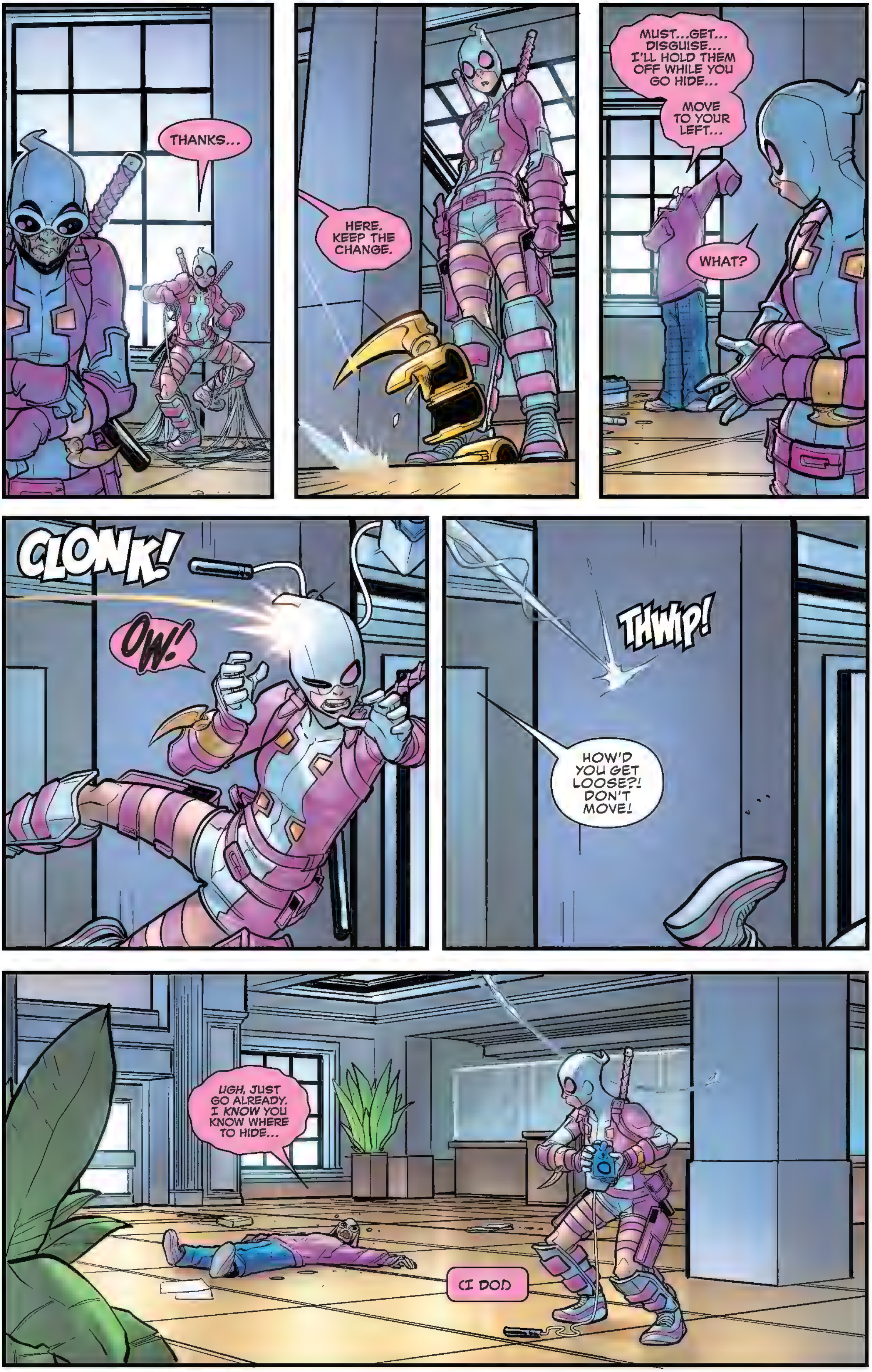

YOU'RE INSANE, AND I'M GONNA GO MAKE SURE EVERYONE'S ALL RIGHT AND GET THEM SAFELY OUT OF THE BUILDING.
SO YOU JUST...HANG TIGHT.

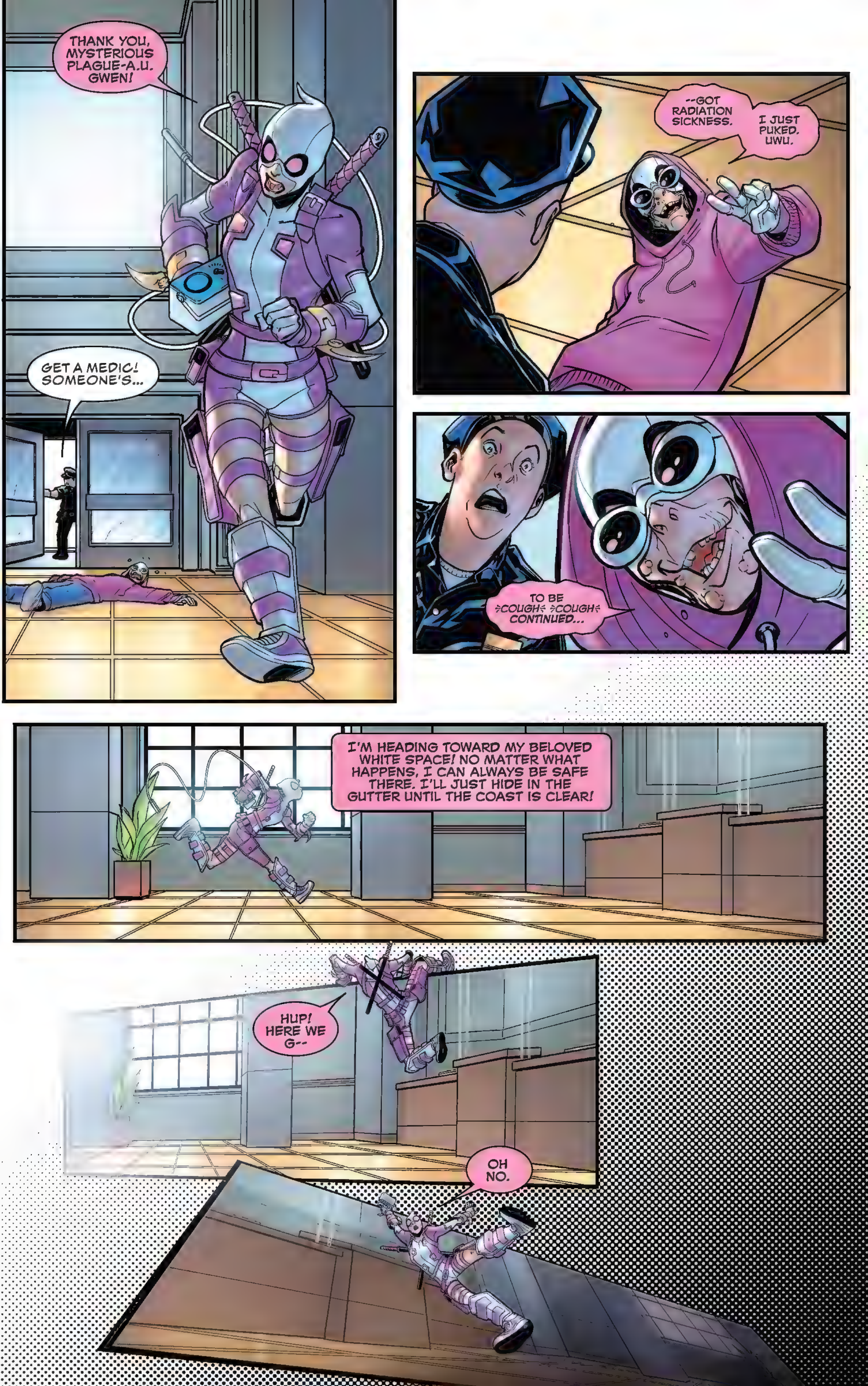

HAHA, GET IT?
THWIP!
OH, COME ON.

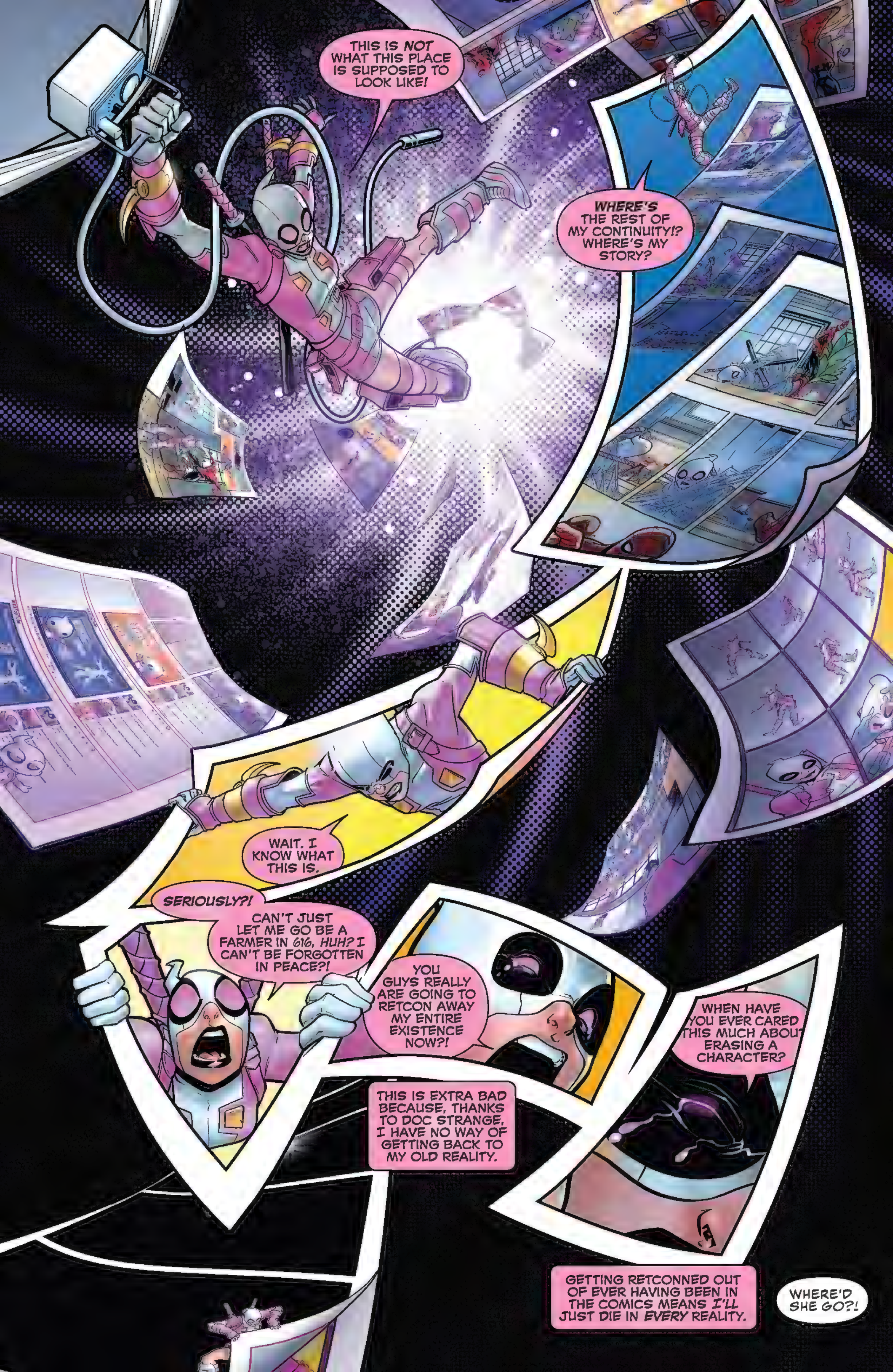

YOU TOOK THE RUNAWAYS OUT FOR CHINESE FOOD AND THIS IS WHAT I GET? WHERE'S YOUR COMPASSION?!
YOU CAN'T JUST, LIKE, IRRADIATE YOURSELF FOR A GIRL IN NEED?

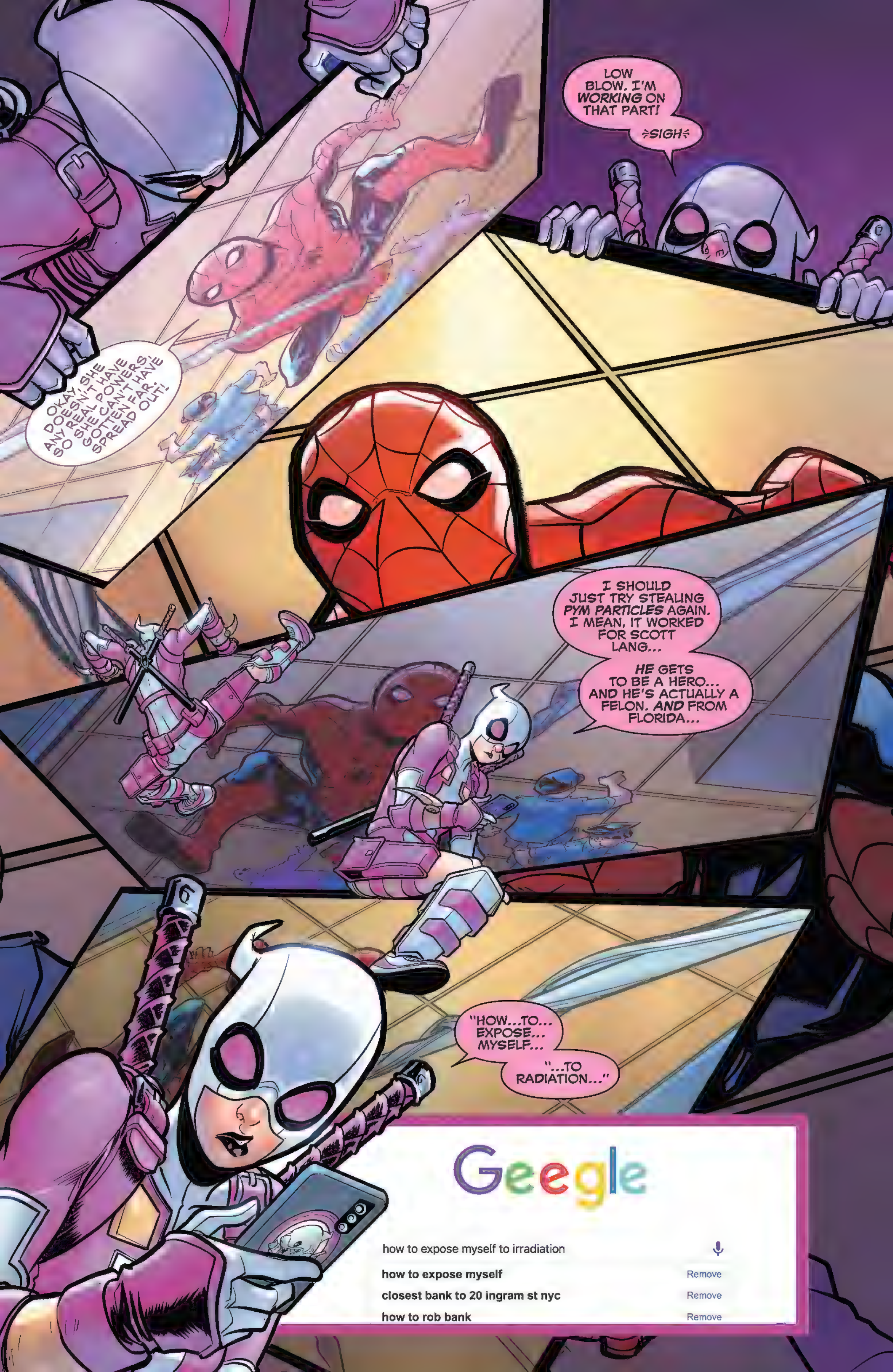

IRRADIATE YOURSELF!
I MEAN, YOU'RE ALREADY ACTING LIKE A VILLAIN, SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE IT A SHOT. YOU JUST ROBBED A BANK, UNMASKED ME AND THREATENED ME WITH EXTORTION IN THE SPAN OF FIVE MINUTES!
ALSO, THEY BOUGHT ME CHINESE FOOD.


WEEEWOO WEEEWOO WEEEWOO
NYS SAVINGS BANK
SCREEEEEECH!
OHHH NO. OKAY.
UH, I DIDN'T THINK I'D STILL BE HERE ONCE THE COPS FINALLY ARRIVED.
I HAVE TO GET FREE--JAIL *DEFINITELY* ISN'T AN OPTION.
BEING DEPOSITED AND FORGOTTEN ABOUT IN A CELL SOMEWHERE IS PRETTY MUCH THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT I'M TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH.
BLARRRUUGHRGHUGUUHBL~
UM...
HI, GROSS-GWEN...ARE--ARE YOU *OKAY?* ARE *WE*... OKAY?
FUN. SCIENCE. FACT. BANANAS ARE LOW-KEY RADIOACTIVE...
BUT YOU'D HAVE TO EAT TEN MILLION BANANAS IN ONE SITTING TO GIVE YOURSELF RADIATION POISONING, SO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS...
CONSUME BANANAS WITH IMPUNITY...
SHK!


THANKS...
HERE. KEEP THE CHANGE.
MUST...GET... DISGUISE... I'LL HOLD THEM OFF WHILE YOU GO HIDE...
MOVE TO YOUR LEFT...
WHAT?
CLONK!
OW!
THWIP!
HOW'D YOU GET LOOSE?! DON'T MOVE!
UGH, JUST GO ALREADY. I KNOW YOU KNOW WHERE TO HIDE...
CI DOD


THANK YOU, MYSTERIOUS PLAGUE-A.U. GWEN!
GET A MEDIC! SOMEONE'S...
--GOT RADIATION SICKNESS.
I JUST PUKED. UWU.
TO BE ⸗COUGH⸗ ⸗COUGH⸗ CONTINUED...
I'M HEADING TOWARD MY BELOVED WHITE SPACE! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I CAN ALWAYS BE SAFE THERE. I'LL JUST HIDE IN THE GUTTER UNTIL THE COAST IS CLEAR!
HUP! HERE WE G--
OH NO.


THIS IS *NOT* WHAT THIS PLACE IS SUPPOSED TO LOOK LIKE!
WHERE'S THE REST OF MY CONTINUITY!? WHERE'S MY STORY?
WAIT. I KNOW WHAT THIS IS.
SERIOUSLY?!
CAN'T JUST LET ME GO BE A FARMER IN 616, HUH? I CAN'T BE FORGOTTEN IN PEACE?!
YOU GUYS REALLY ARE GOING TO RETCON AWAY MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE NOW?!
WHEN HAVE YOU EVER CARED THIS MUCH ABOUT ERASING A CHARACTER?
THIS IS EXTRA BAD BECAUSE, THANKS TO DOC STRANGE, I HAVE NO WAY OF GETTING BACK TO MY OLD REALITY.
GETTING RETCONNED OUT OF EVER HAVING BEEN IN THE COMICS MEANS *I'LL* JUST DIE IN *EVERY* REALITY.
WHERE'D SHE GO?!

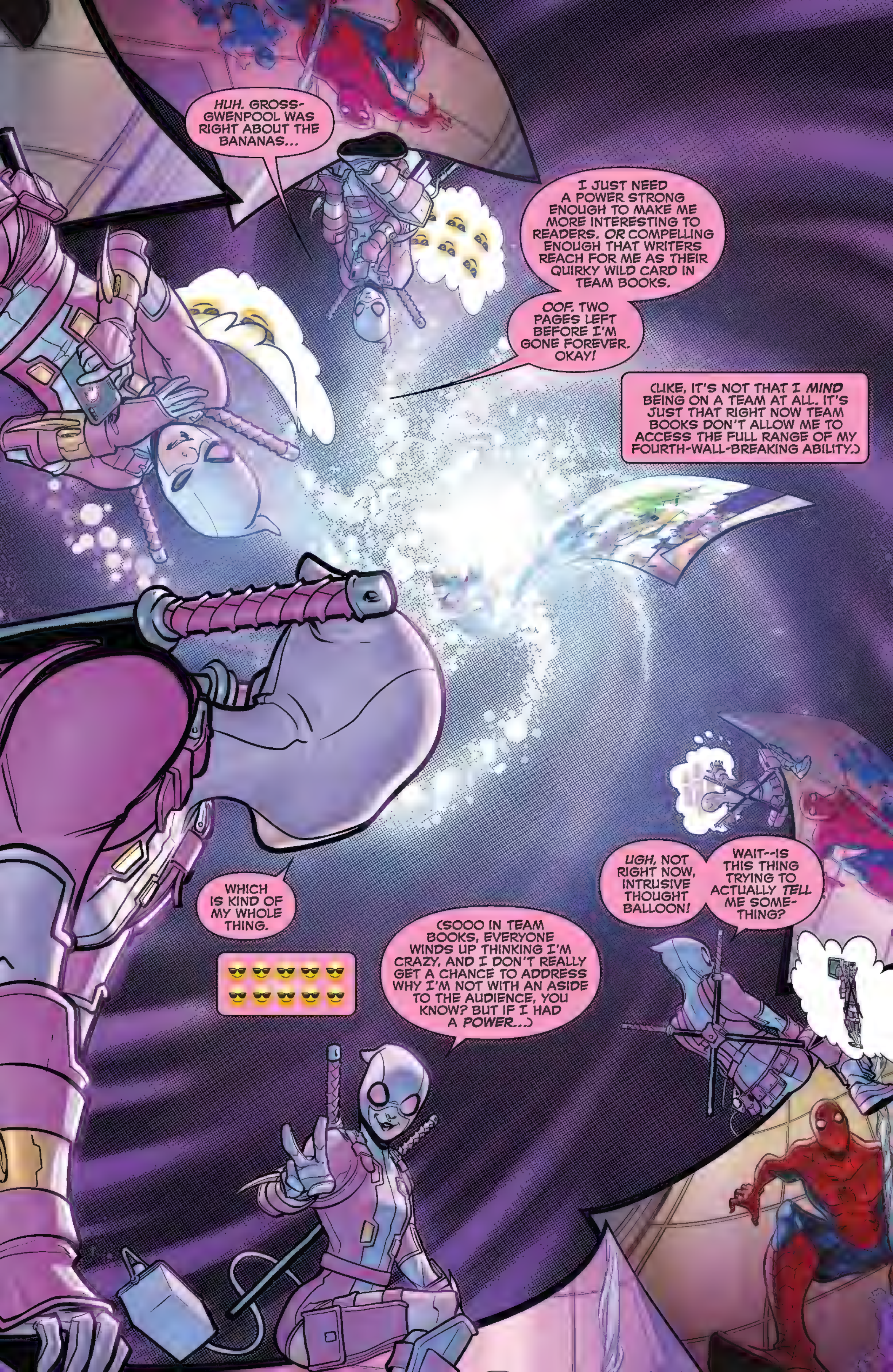

OKAY, SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY REAL POWERS SO SHE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR. SPREAD OUT!
LOW BLOW. I'M *WORKING* ON THAT PART!
≶SIGH≶
I SHOULD JUST TRY STEALING *PYM PARTICLES* AGAIN. I MEAN, IT WORKED FOR SCOTT LANG...
HE GETS TO BE A HERO... AND HE'S ACTUALLY A FELON. *AND* FROM FLORIDA...
"HOW...TO... EXPOSE... MYSELF...
"...TO RADIATION..."
Geegle
Remove
Remove
Remove

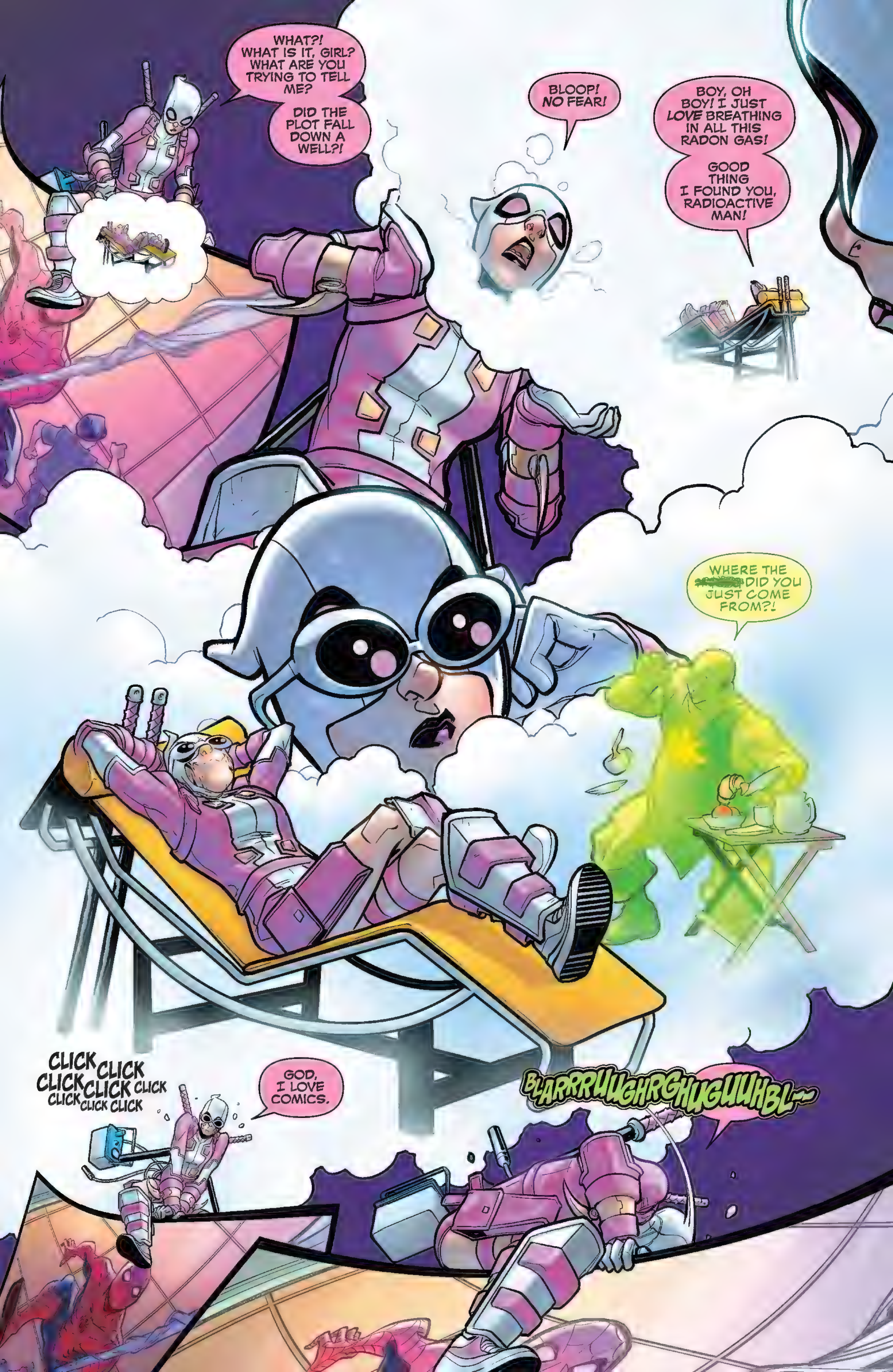
how to expose myself to irradiation

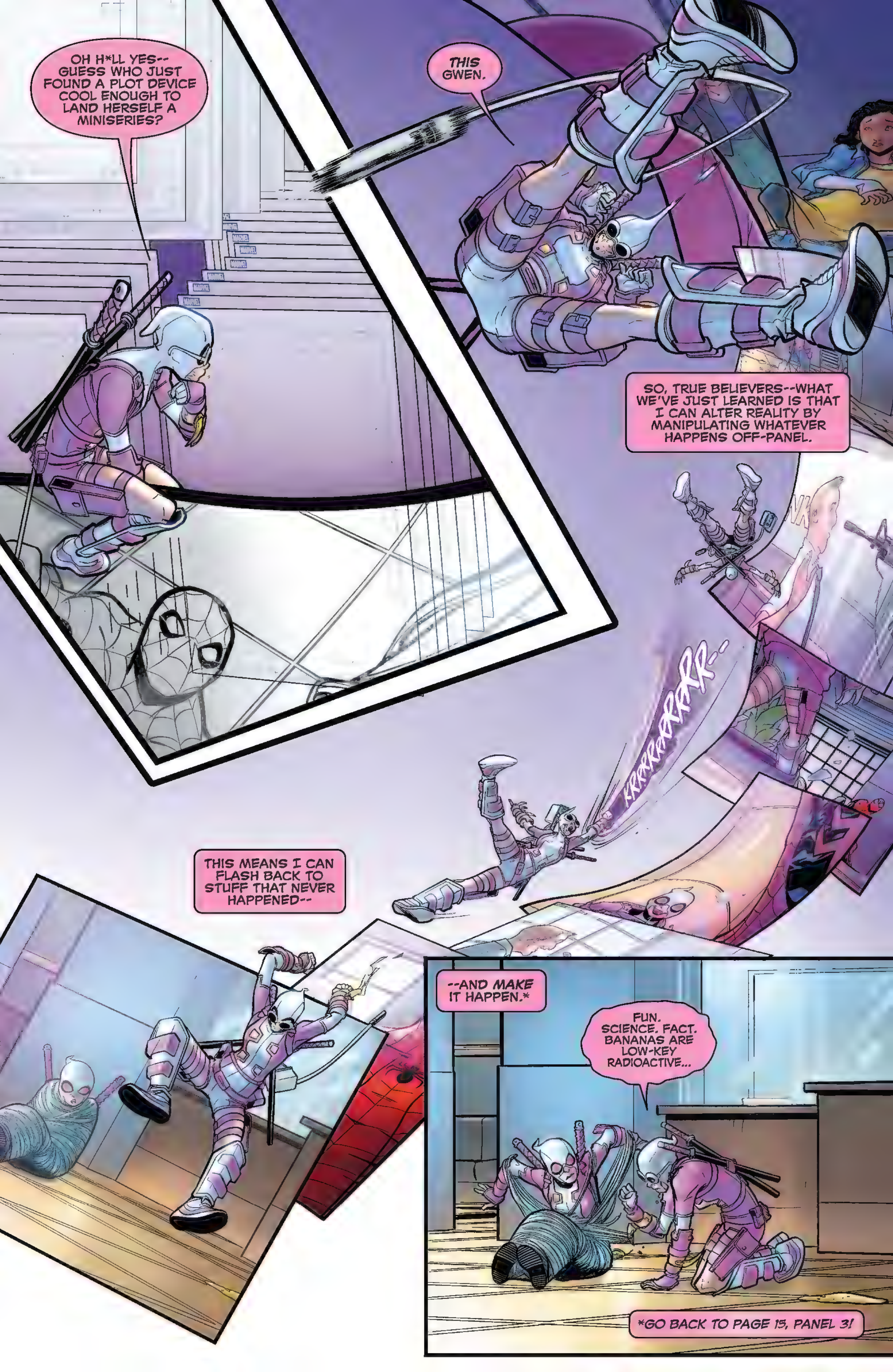
how to expose myself

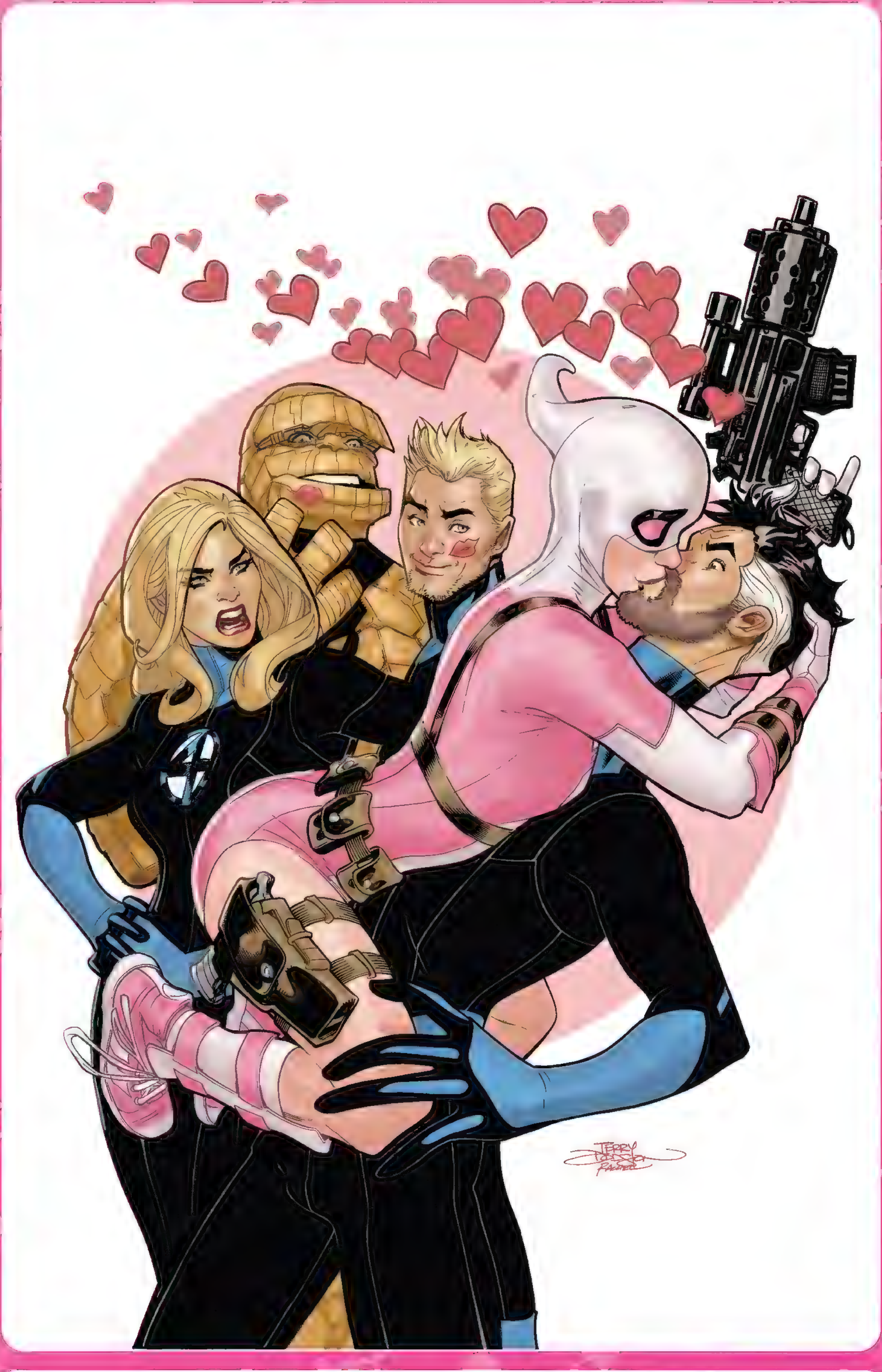
closest bank to 20 ingram st nyc

how to rob bank


HUH. GROSS-GWENPOOL WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE BANANAS...
I JUST NEED A POWER STRONG ENOUGH TO MAKE ME MORE INTERESTING TO READERS. *OR* COMPELLING ENOUGH THAT WRITERS REACH FOR ME AS THEIR QUIRKY WILD CARD IN TEAM BOOKS.
OOF. TWO PAGES LEFT BEFORE I'M GONE FOREVER. OKAY!
(LIKE, IT'S NOT THAT I *MIND* BEING ON A TEAM AT ALL. IT'S JUST THAT RIGHT NOW TEAM BOOKS DON'T ALLOW ME TO ACCESS THE FULL RANGE OF MY FOURTH-WALL-BREAKING ABILITY.)
WHICH IS KIND OF MY WHOLE THING.
😎😎😎😎😎 😎😎😎😎😎
(SOOO IN TEAM BOOKS, EVERYONE WINDS UP THINKING I'M CRAZY, AND I DON'T REALLY GET A CHANCE TO ADDRESS WHY I'M NOT WITH AN ASIDE TO THE AUDIENCE, YOU KNOW? BUT IF I HAD A *POWER*...)
UGH, NOT RIGHT NOW, INTRUSIVE THOUGHT BALLOON!
WAIT--IS THIS THING TRYING TO ACTUALLY *TELL* ME SOME-THING?


WHAT?! WHAT IS IT, GIRL? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME?
DID THE PLOT FALL DOWN A WELL?!
BLOOP! NO FEAR!
BOY, OH BOY! I JUST *LOVE* BREATHING IN ALL THIS RADON GAS!
GOOD THING I FOUND YOU, RADIOACTIVE MAN!
WHERE THE [redacted] DID YOU JUST COME FROM?!
CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK
GOD, I LOVE COMICS.
BLARRRRUUGHRGHUGUUHBL~


OH H*LL YES-- GUESS WHO JUST FOUND A PLOT DEVICE COOL ENOUGH TO LAND HERSELF A MINISERIES?
THIS GWEN.
SO, TRUE BELIEVERS--WHAT WE'VE JUST LEARNED IS THAT I CAN ALTER REALITY BY MANIPULATING WHATEVER HAPPENS OFF-PANEL.
KRRRRRRRRR--
THIS MEANS I CAN FLASH BACK TO STUFF THAT NEVER HAPPENED--
--AND *MAKE* IT HAPPEN.*
FUN. SCIENCE. FACT. BANANAS ARE LOW-KEY RADIOACTIVE...
*GO BACK TO PAGE 15, PANEL 3!


TERRY DODSON RACHEL

GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #2

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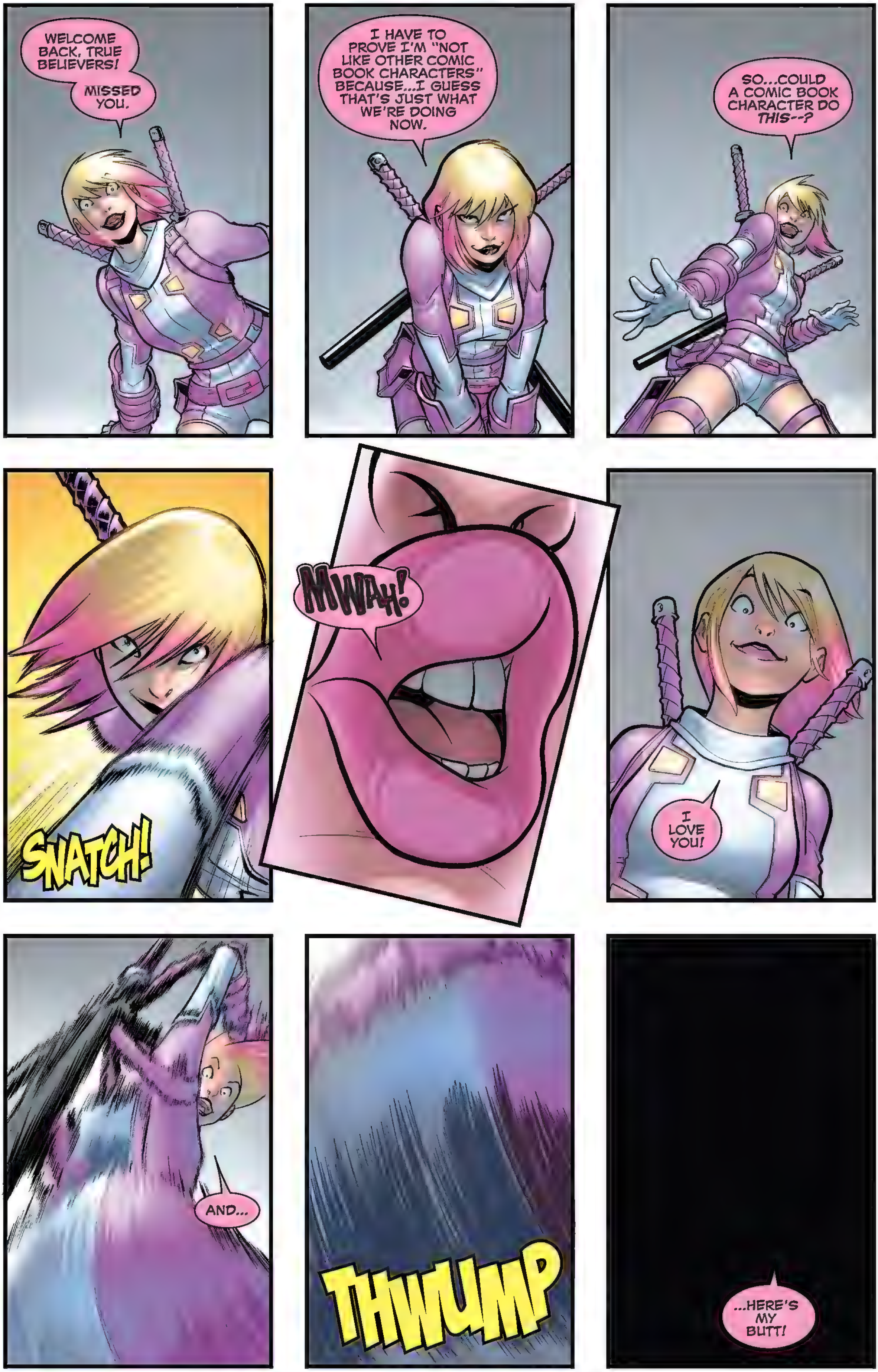
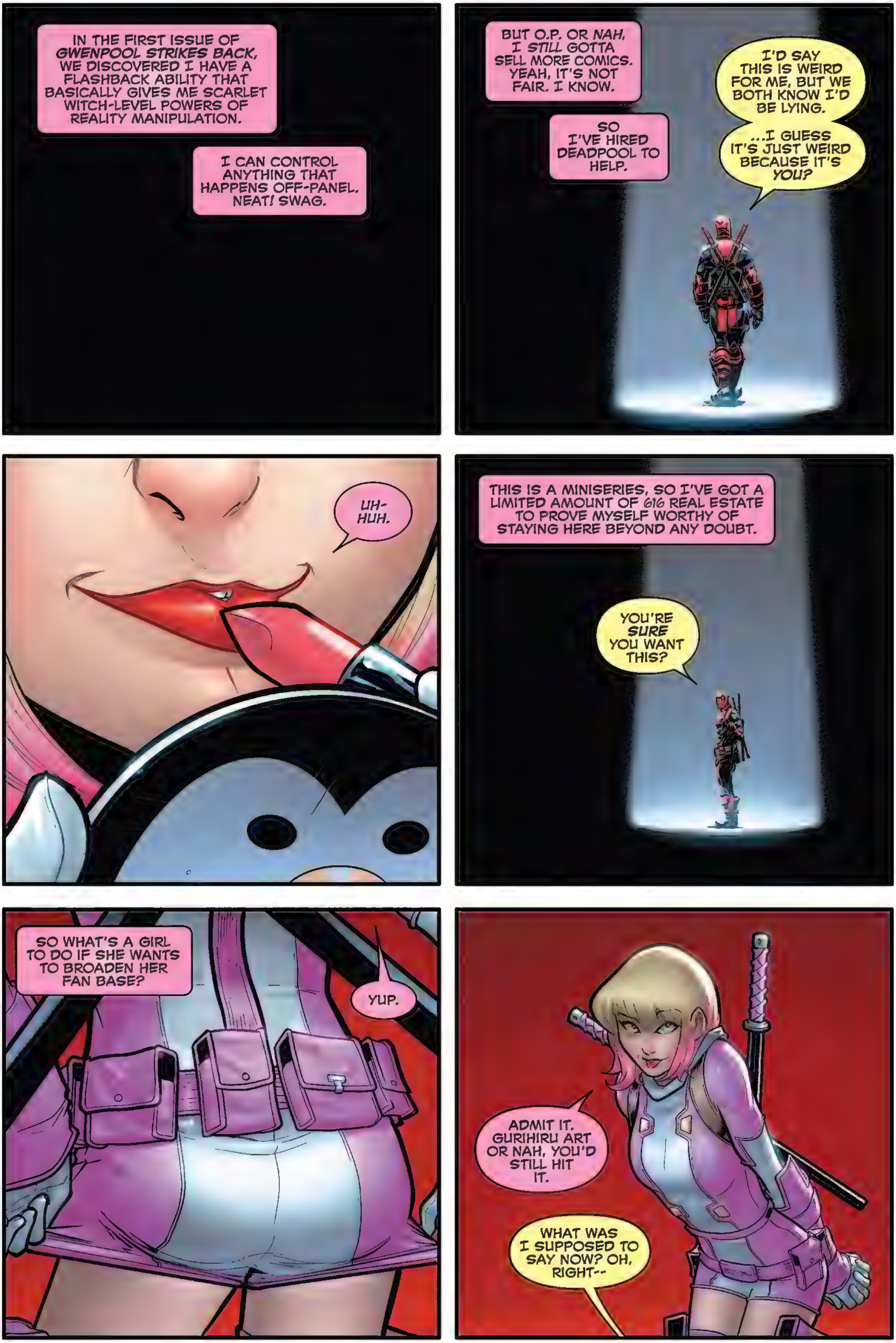
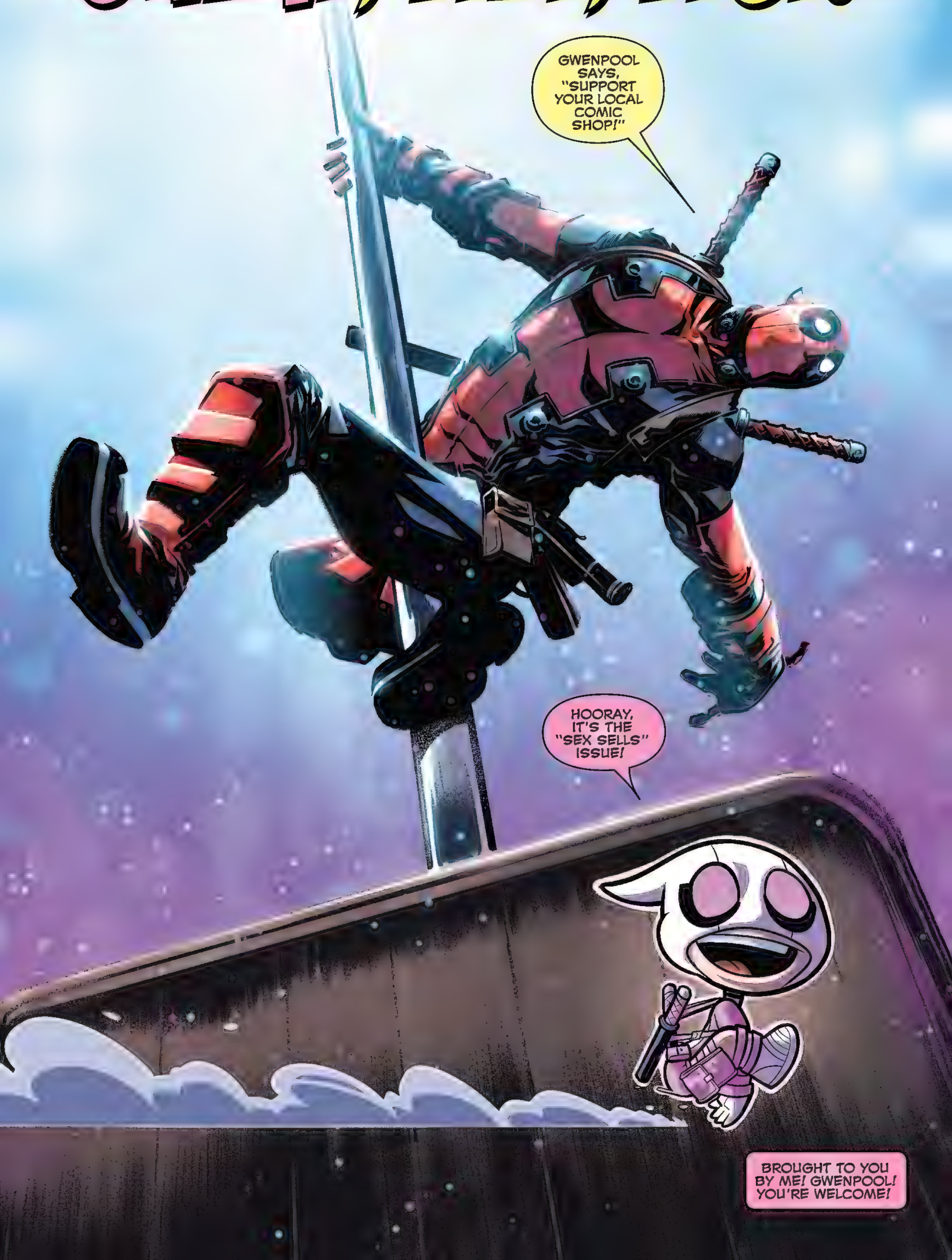
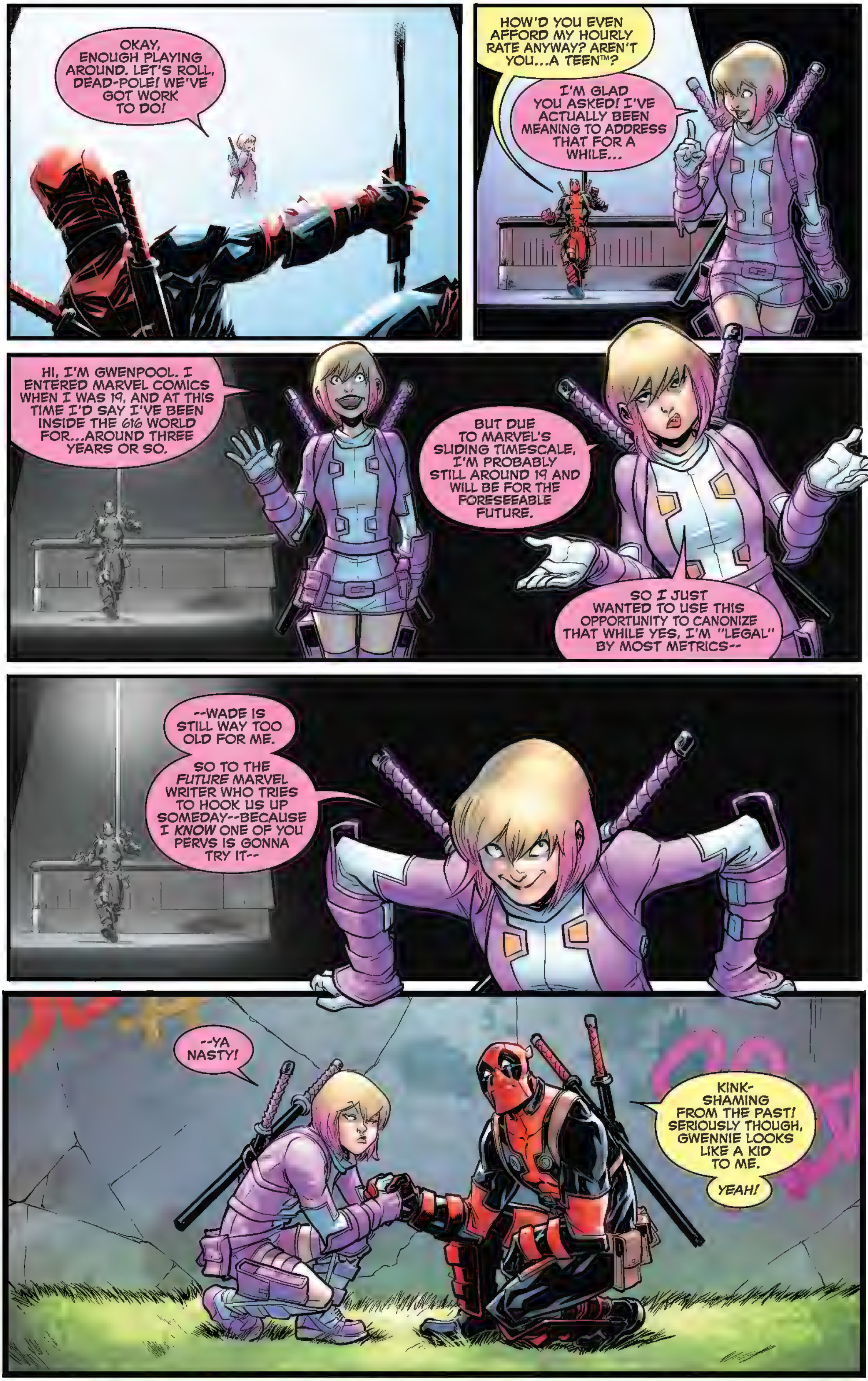

WELCOME BACK, TRUE BELIEVERS!
MISSED YOU.
I HAVE TO PROVE I'M "NOT LIKE OTHER COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS" BECAUSE...I GUESS THAT'S JUST WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW.
SO...COULD A COMIC BOOK CHARACTER DO *THIS*--?
SNATCH!
MWAH!
I LOVE YOU!
AND...
THWUMP
...HERE'S MY BUTT!

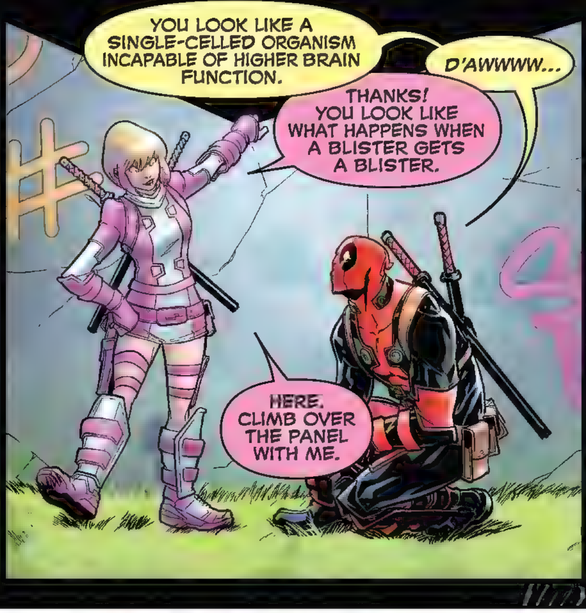

IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF *GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK*, WE DISCOVERED I HAVE A FLASHBACK ABILITY THAT BASICALLY GIVES ME SCARLET WITCH-LEVEL POWERS OF REALITY MANIPULATION.
I CAN CONTROL ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS OFF-PANEL. NEAT! SWAG.
BUT O.P. OR *NAH*, I *STILL* GOTTA SELL MORE COMICS. YEAH, IT'S NOT FAIR. I KNOW.
SO I'VE HIRED DEADPOOL TO HELP.
I'D SAY THIS IS WEIRD FOR ME, BUT WE BOTH KNOW I'D BE LYING.
...I GUESS IT'S JUST WEIRD BECAUSE IT'S *YOU?*
UH-HUH.
THIS IS A MINISERIES, SO I'VE GOT A LIMITED AMOUNT OF 616 REAL ESTATE TO PROVE MYSELF WORTHY OF STAYING HERE BEYOND ANY DOUBT.
YOU'RE *SURE* YOU WANT THIS?
SO WHAT'S A GIRL TO DO IF SHE WANTS TO BROADEN HER FAN BASE?
YUP.
ADMIT IT. GURIHIRU ART OR NAH, YOU'D STILL HIT IT.
WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO SAY NOW? OH, RIGHT--

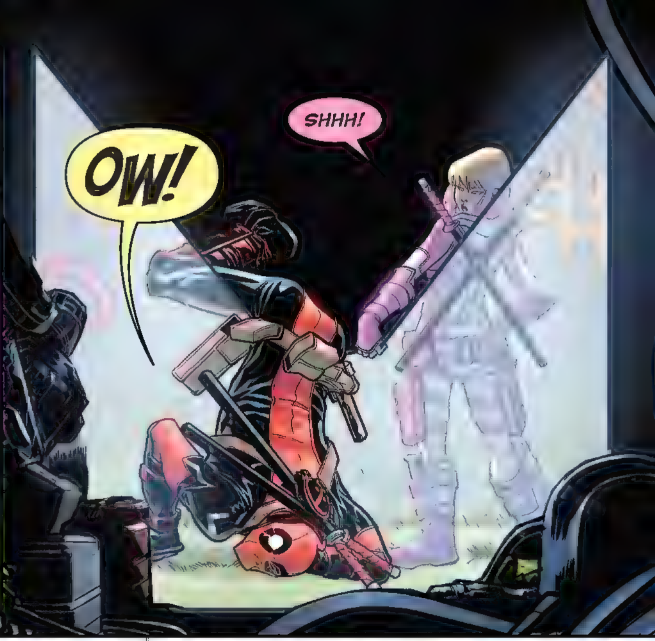
GWENPOOL and DEADPOOL in

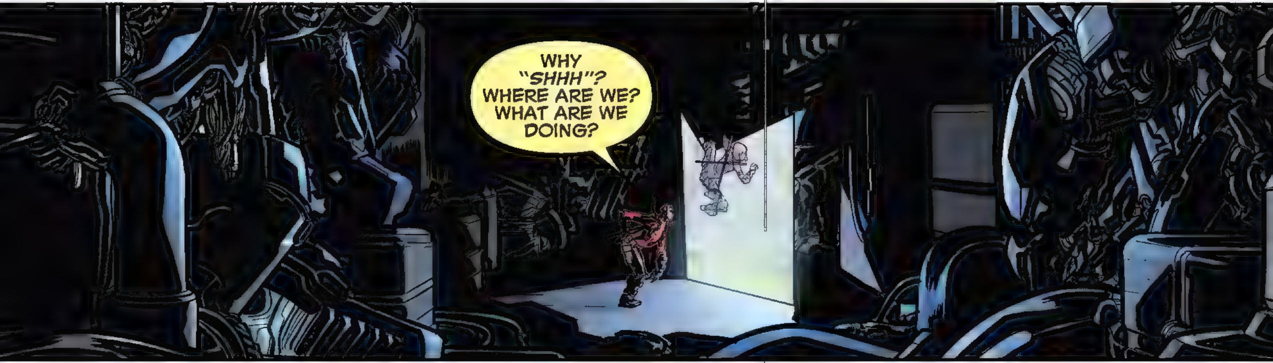
"GWENI, VIDI, VICI!"

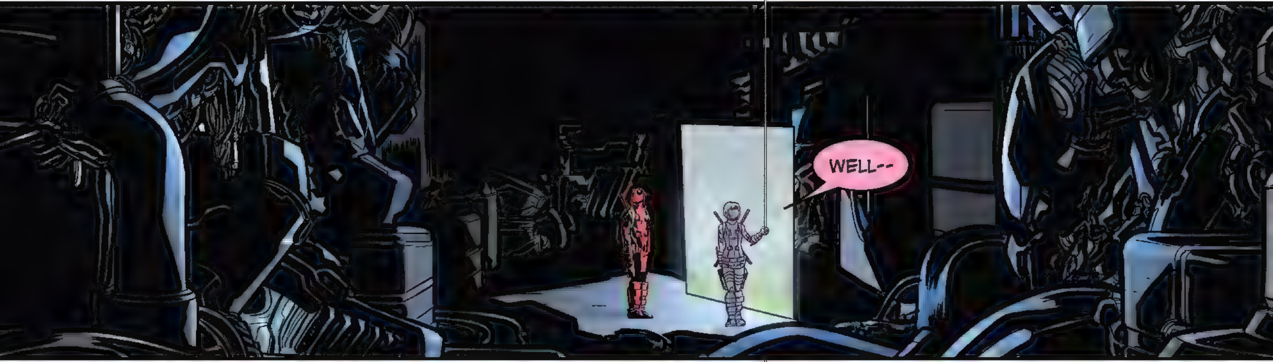

GWENPOOL SAYS, "SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL COMIC SHOP!"
HOORAY, IT'S THE "SEX SELLS" ISSUE!
BROUGHT TO YOU BY ME! GWENPOOL! YOU'RE WELCOME!

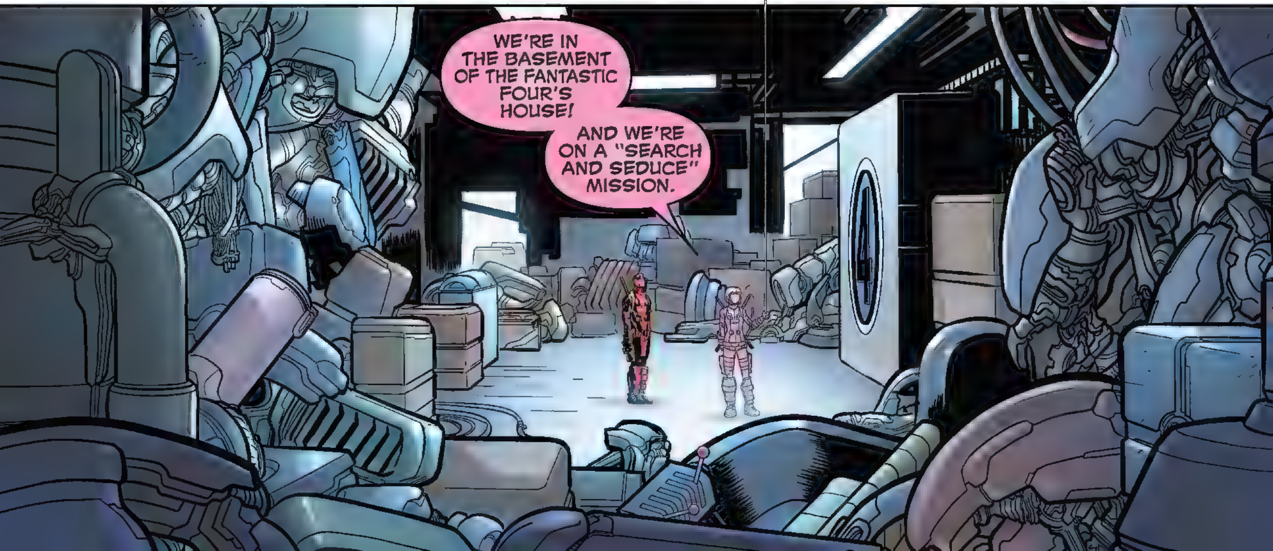

OKAY, ENOUGH PLAYING AROUND. LET'S ROLL, DEAD-POLE! WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO!
HOW'D YOU EVEN AFFORD MY HOURLY RATE ANYWAY? AREN'T YOU...A TEEN™?
I'M GLAD YOU ASKED! I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN MEANING TO ADDRESS THAT FOR A WHILE...
HI, I'M GWENPOOL. I ENTERED MARVEL COMICS WHEN I WAS 19, AND AT THIS TIME I'D SAY I'VE BEEN INSIDE THE 616 WORLD FOR...AROUND THREE YEARS OR SO.
BUT DUE TO MARVEL'S SLIDING TIMESCALE, I'M PROBABLY STILL AROUND 19 AND WILL BE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
SO I JUST WANTED TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CANONIZE THAT WHILE YES, I'M "LEGAL" BY MOST METRICS--
--WADE IS STILL WAY TOO OLD FOR ME.
SO TO THE *FUTURE* MARVEL WRITER WHO TRIES TO HOOK US UP SOMEDAY--BECAUSE I *KNOW* ONE OF YOU PERVS IS GONNA TRY IT--
--YA NASTY!
KINK-SHAMING FROM THE PAST! SERIOUSLY THOUGH, GWENNIE LOOKS LIKE A KID TO ME.
YEAH!

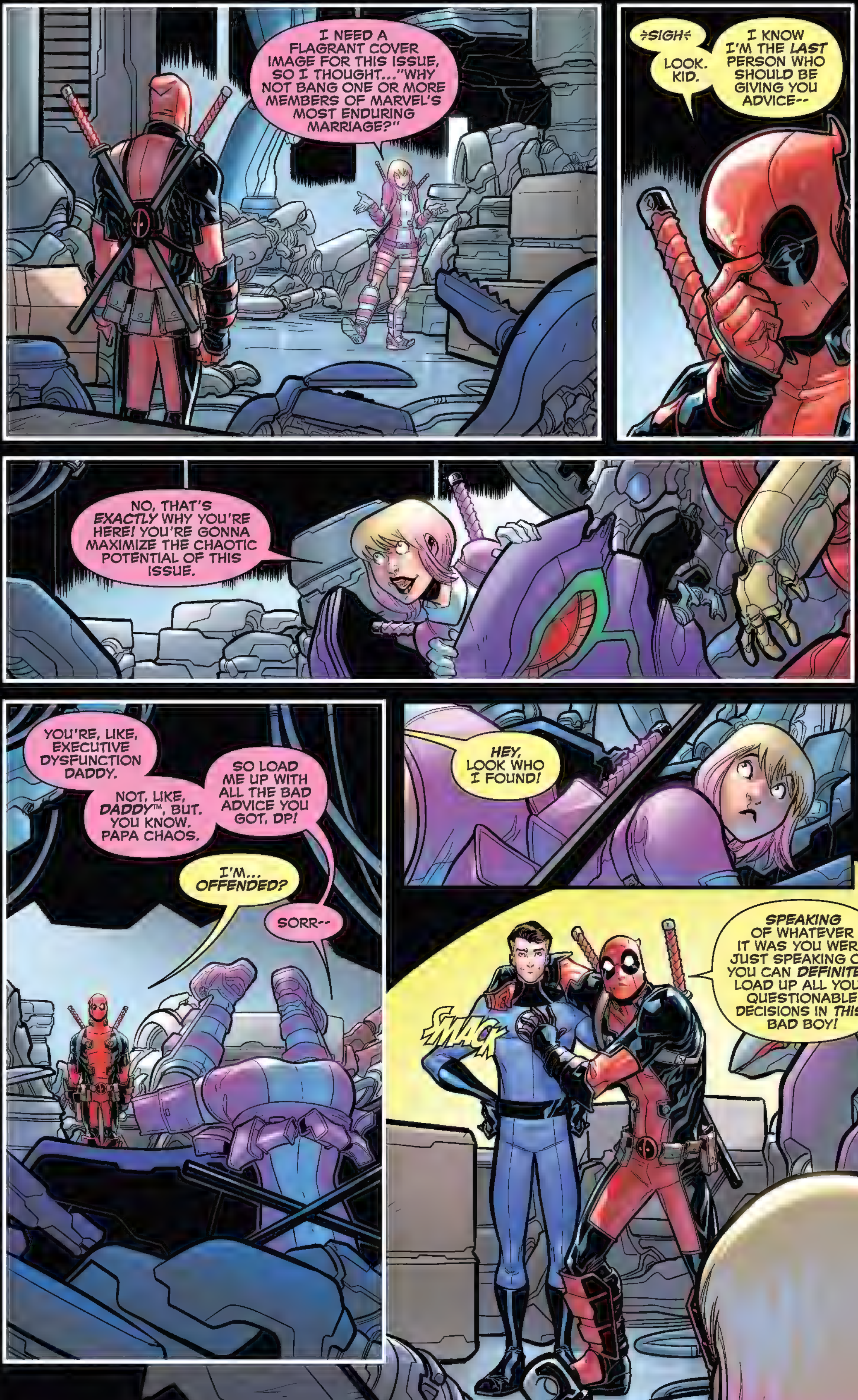

YOU LOOK LIKE A SINGLE-CELLED ORGANISM INCAPABLE OF HIGHER BRAIN FUNCTION.
D'AWWWW...
THANKS! YOU LOOK LIKE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A BLISTER GETS A BLISTER.
HERE. CLIMB OVER THE PANEL WITH ME.

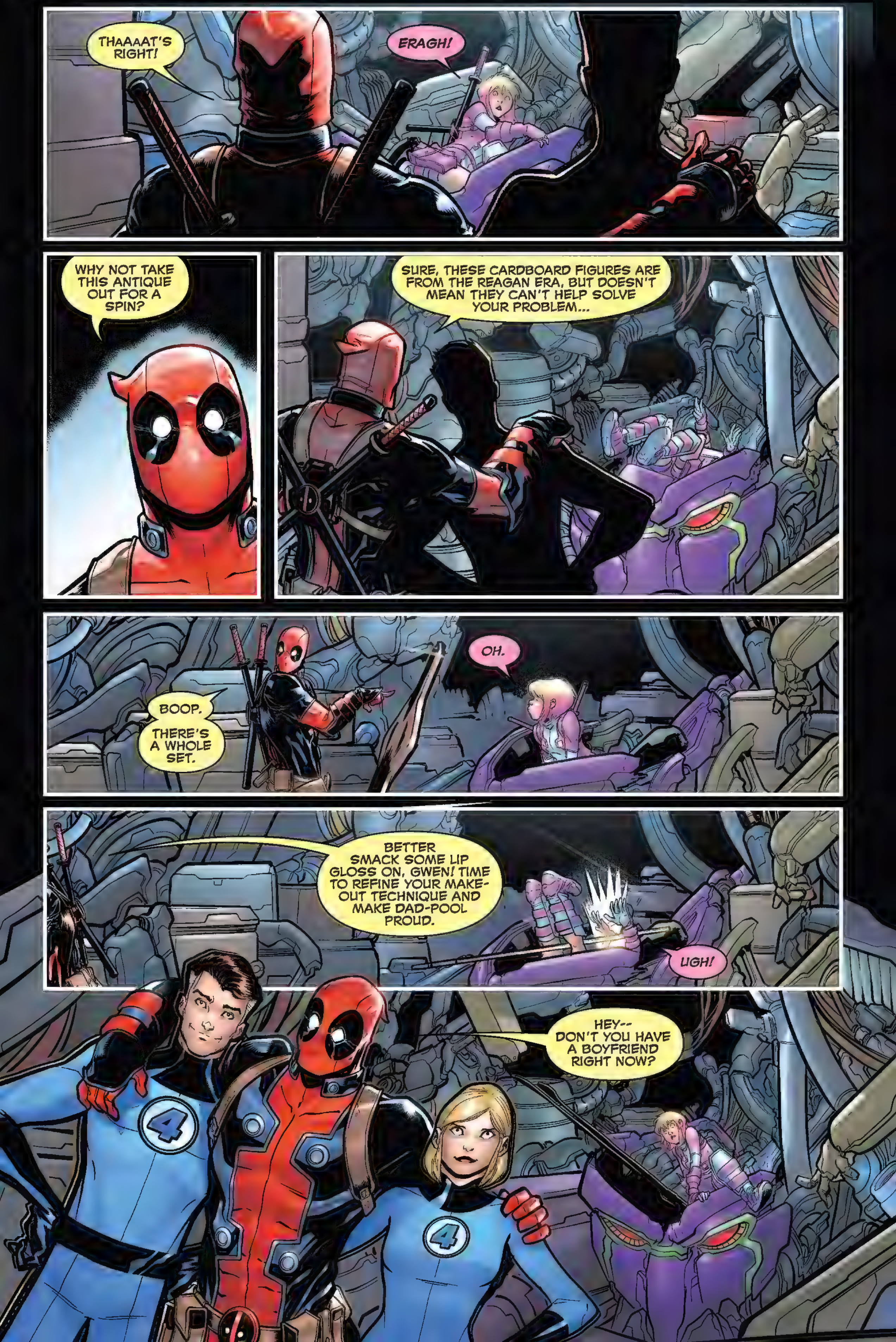

SHHH!
OW!

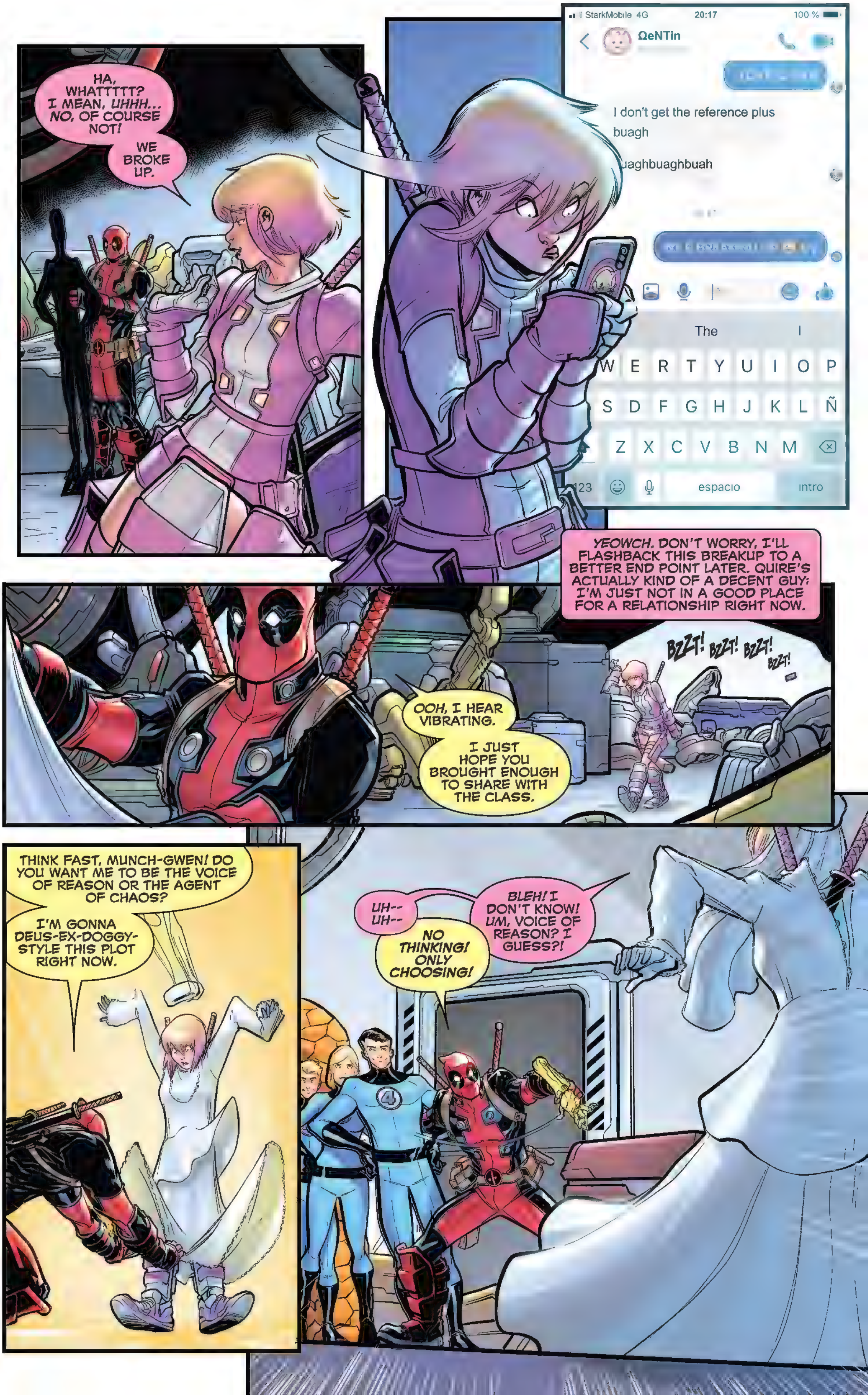

WHY "SHHH"? WHERE ARE WE? WHAT ARE WE DOING?


WELL--


WE'RE IN THE BASEMENT OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S HOUSE!
AND WE'RE ON A "SEARCH AND SEDUCE" MISSION.


I NEED A FLAGRANT COVER IMAGE FOR THIS ISSUE, SO I THOUGHT..."WHY NOT BANG ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF MARVEL'S MOST ENDURING MARRIAGE?"
⸗SIGH⸗
LOOK. KID.
I KNOW I'M THE *LAST* PERSON WHO SHOULD BE GIVING YOU ADVICE--
NO, THAT'S *EXACTLY* WHY YOU'RE HERE! YOU'RE GONNA MAXIMIZE THE CHAOTIC POTENTIAL OF THIS ISSUE.
YOU'RE, LIKE, EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION DADDY.
NOT, LIKE, *DADDY*™, BUT. YOU KNOW. PAPA CHAOS.
SO LOAD ME UP WITH ALL THE BAD ADVICE YOU GOT, DP!
I'M... *OFFENDED?*
SORR--
HEY, LOOK WHO I FOUND!
SMACK
SPEAKING OF WHATEVER IT WAS YOU WERE JUST SPEAKING OF: YOU CAN *DEFINITELY* LOAD UP ALL YOUR QUESTIONABLE DECISIONS IN *THIS* BAD BOY!


THAAAAT'S RIGHT!
ERAGH!
WHY NOT TAKE THIS ANTIQUE OUT FOR A SPIN?
SURE, THESE CARDBOARD FIGURES ARE FROM THE REAGAN ERA, BUT DOESN'T MEAN THEY CAN'T HELP SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM...
BOOP.
THERE'S A WHOLE SET.
OH.
BETTER SMACK SOME LIP GLOSS ON, GWEN! TIME TO REFINE YOUR MAKE-OUT TECHNIQUE AND MAKE DAD-POOL PROUD.
UGH!
HEY-- DON'T YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND RIGHT NOW?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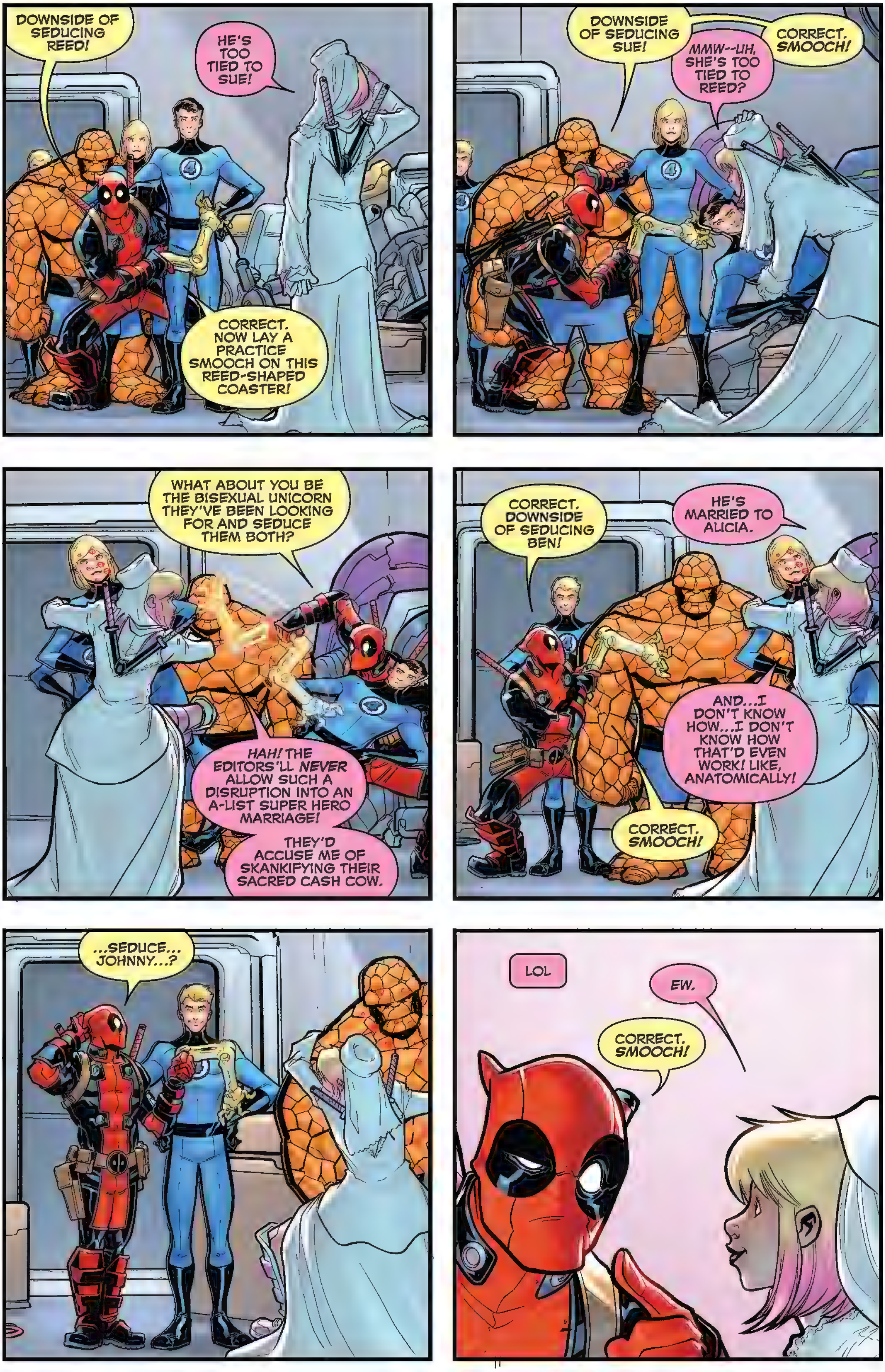
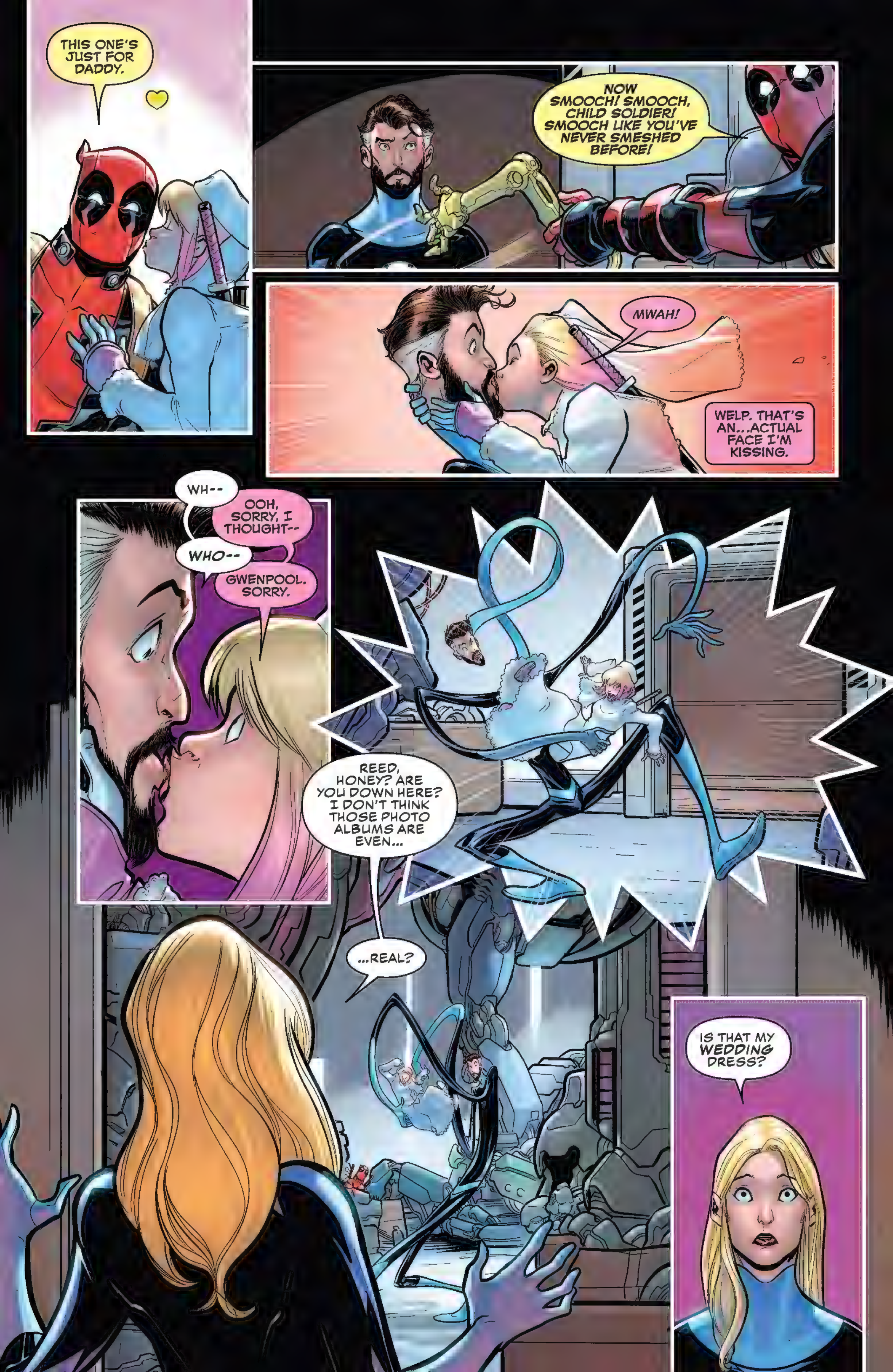
intro

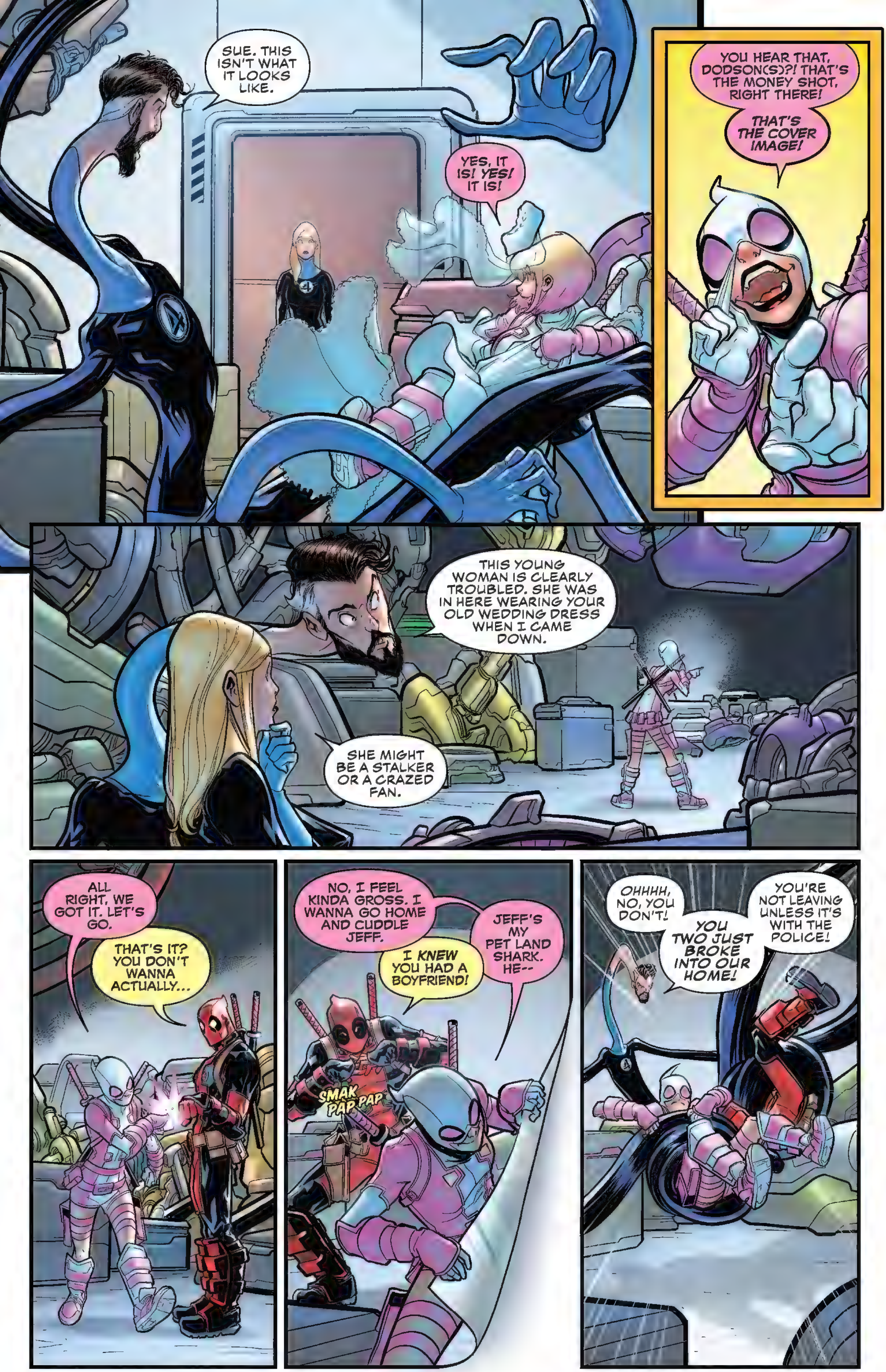
I don't get the reference plus buagh

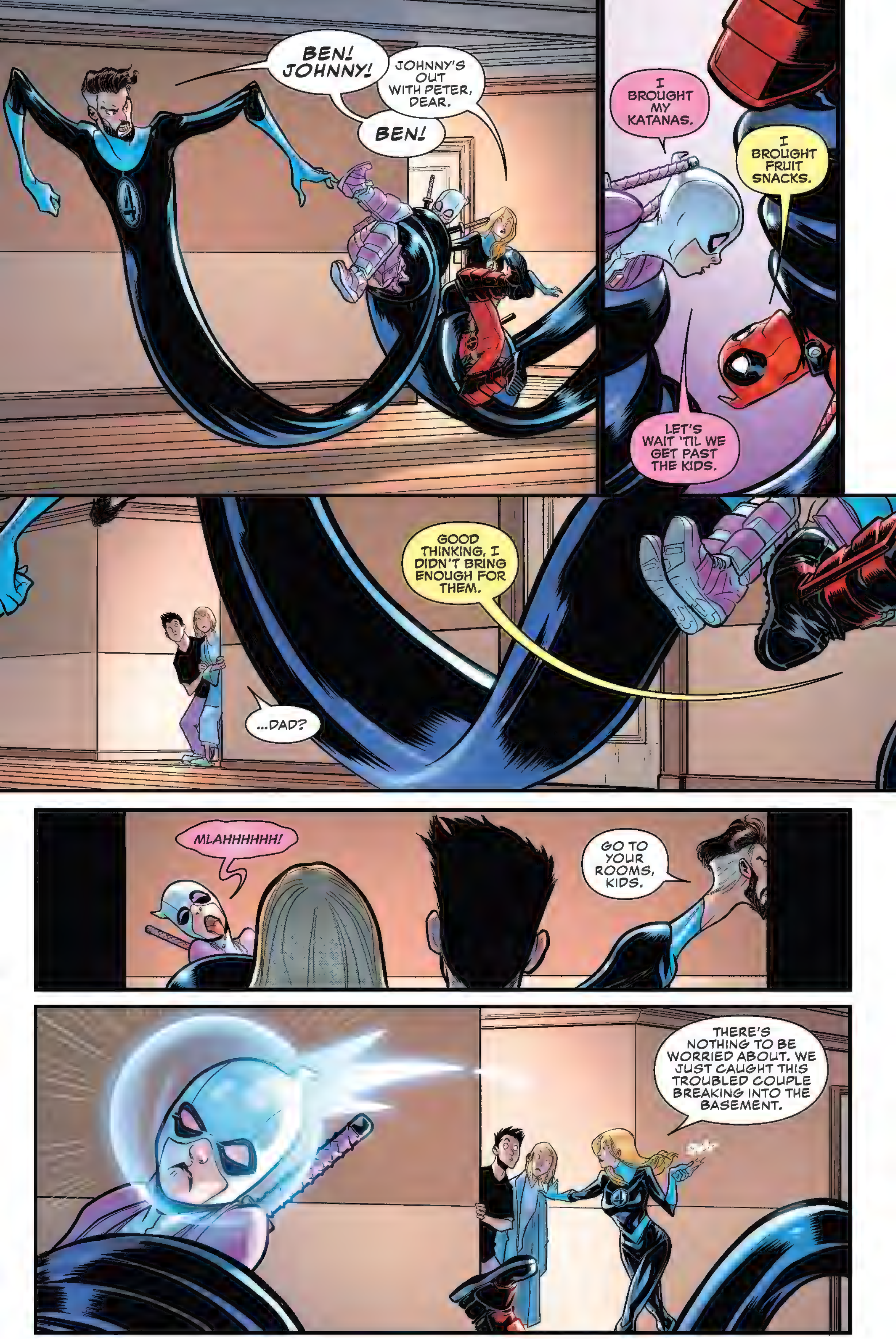
uaghbuaghbuah

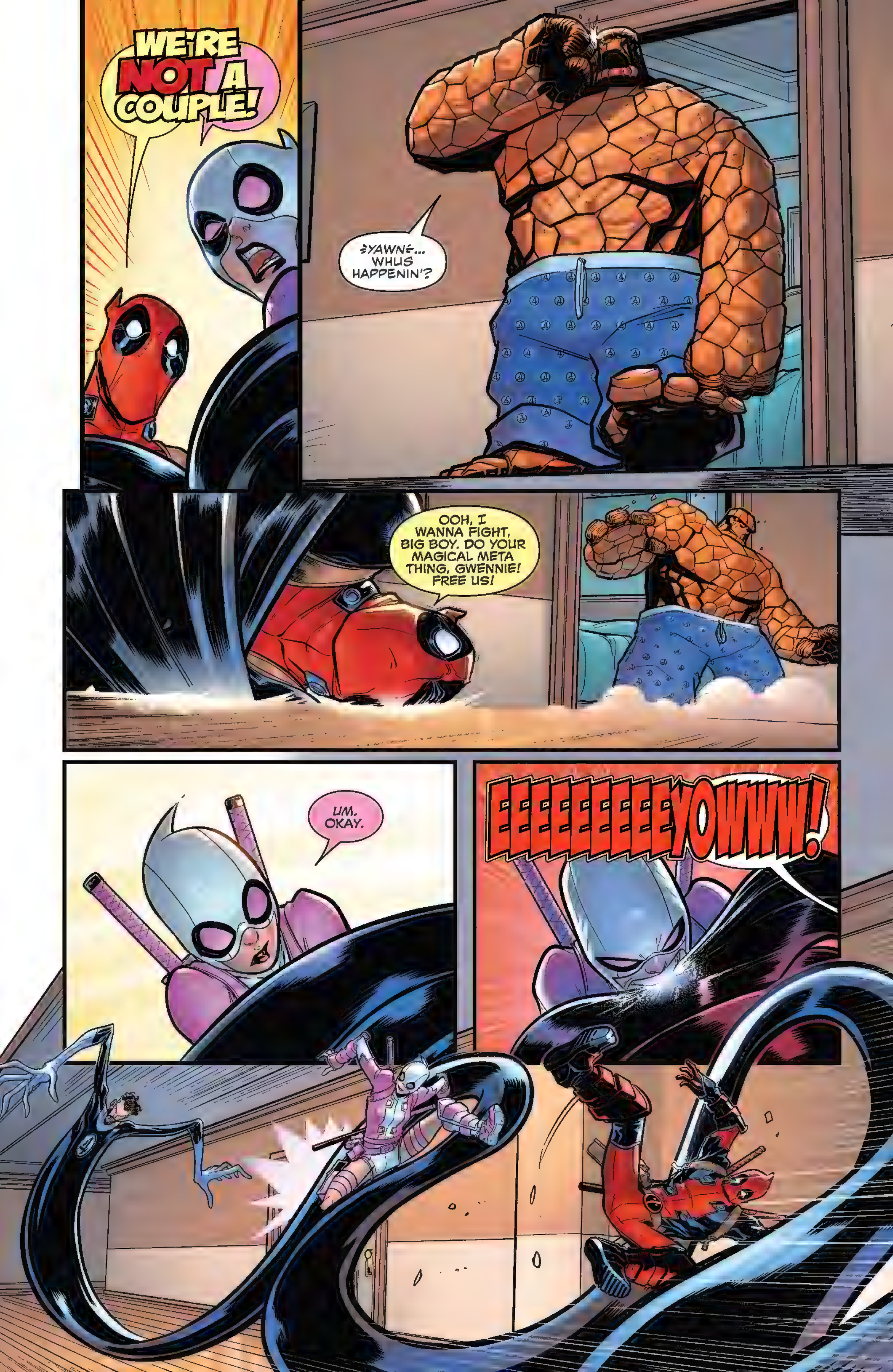
HA, WHATTTTT? I MEAN, UHHH... NO, OF COURSE NOT!
WE BROKE UP.
YEOWCH. DON'T WORRY, I'LL FLASHBACK THIS BREAKUP TO A BETTER END POINT LATER. QUIRE'S ACTUALLY KIND OF A DECENT GUY; I'M JUST NOT IN A GOOD PLACE FOR A RELATIONSHIP RIGHT NOW.
OOH, I HEAR VIBRATING.
I JUST HOPE YOU BROUGHT ENOUGH TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS.
BZZT! BZZT! BZZT! BZZT!
THINK FAST, MUNCH-GWEN! DO YOU WANT ME TO BE THE VOICE OF REASON OR THE AGENT OF CHAOS?
I'M GONNA DEUS-EX-DOGGY-STYLE THIS PLOT RIGHT NOW.
UH-- UH--
BLEH! I DON'T KNOW! UM, VOICE OF REASON? I GUESS?!
NO THINKING! ONLY CHOOSING!

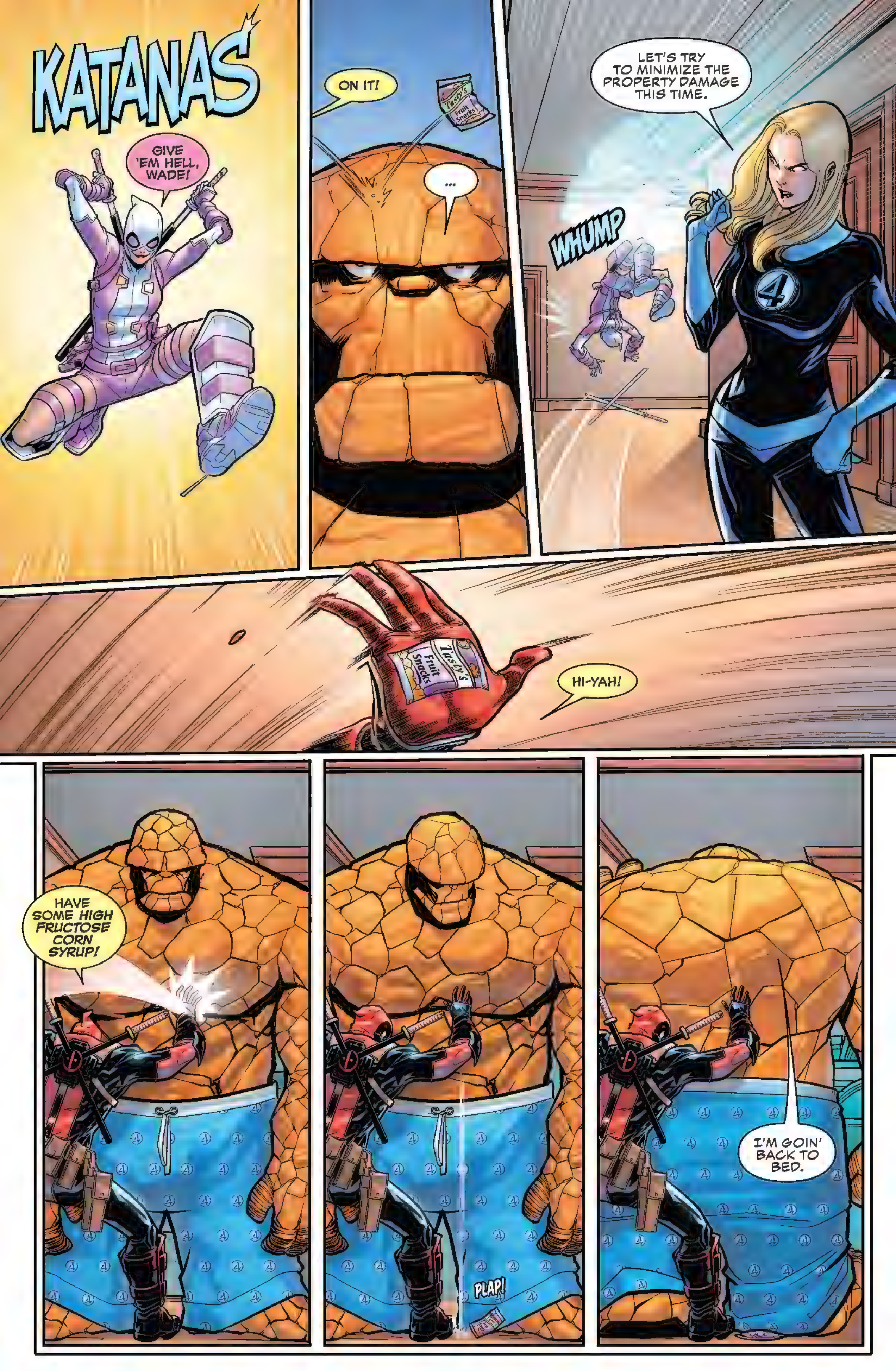

DOWNSIDE OF SEDUCING REED!
HE'S TOO TIED TO SUE!
CORRECT. NOW LAY A PRACTICE SMOOCH ON THIS REED-SHAPED COASTER!
DOWNSIDE OF SEDUCING SUE!
MMW--UH, SHE'S TOO TIED TO REED?
CORRECT. SMOOCH!
WHAT ABOUT YOU BE THE BISEXUAL UNICORN THEY'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR AND SEDUCE THEM BOTH?
HAH! THE EDITORS'LL NEVER ALLOW SUCH A DISRUPTION INTO AN A-LIST SUPER HERO MARRIAGE!
THEY'D ACCUSE ME OF SKANKIFYING THEIR SACRED CASH COW.
CORRECT. DOWNSIDE OF SEDUCING BEN!
HE'S MARRIED TO ALICIA.
AND...I DON'T KNOW HOW...I DON'T KNOW HOW THAT'D EVEN WORK! LIKE, ANATOMICALLY!
CORRECT. SMOOCH!
...SEDUCE... JOHNNY...?
LOL
EW.
CORRECT. SMOOCH!

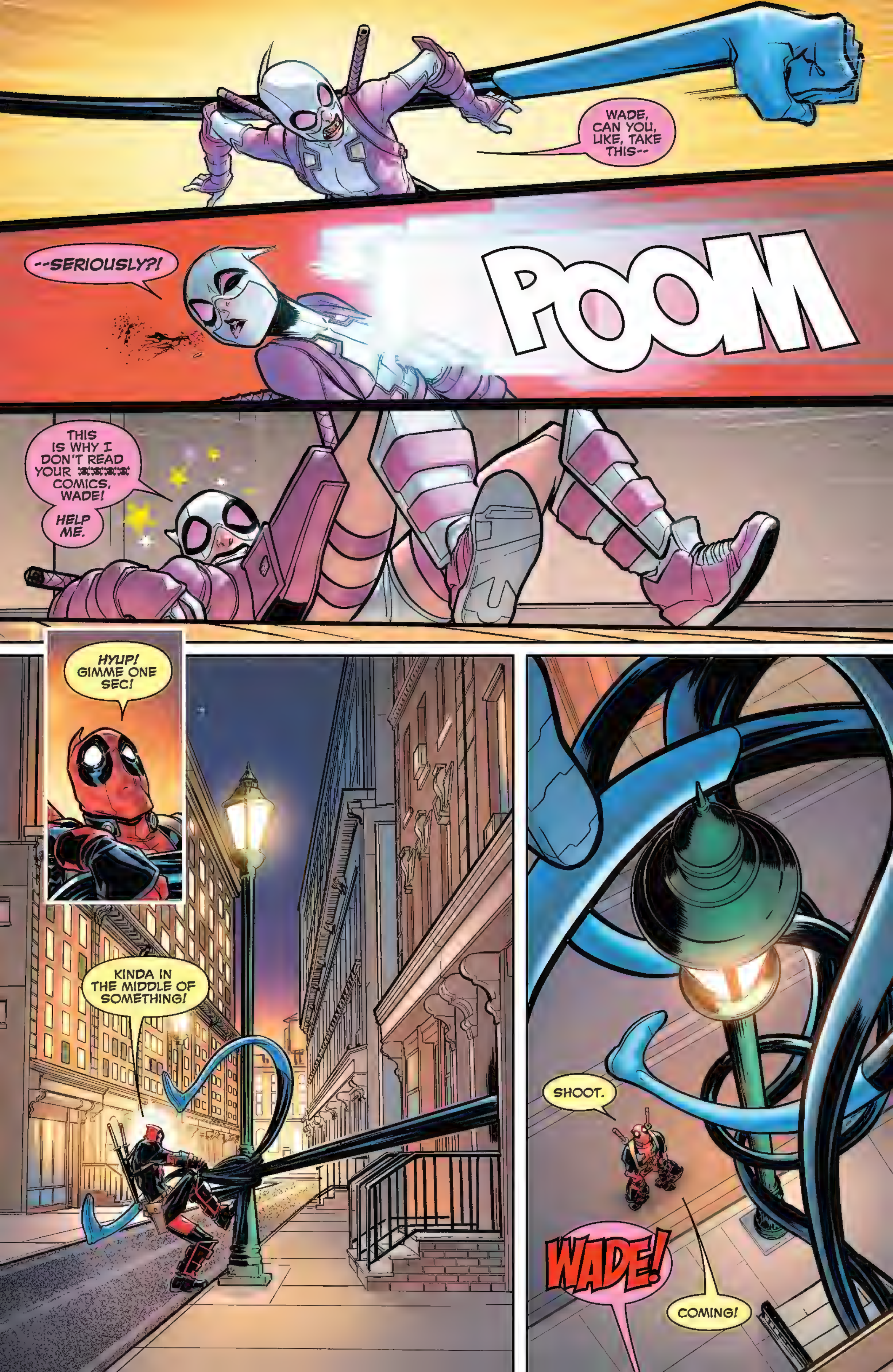

THIS ONE'S JUST FOR DADDY.
NOW SMOOCH! SMOOCH, CHILD SOLDIER! SMOOCH LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SMESHED BEFORE!
MWAH!
WELP. THAT'S AN...ACTUAL FACE I'M KISSING.
WH--
OOH, SORRY, I THOUGHT--
WHO--
GWENPOOL. SORRY.
REED, HONEY? ARE YOU DOWN HERE? I DON'T THINK THOSE PHOTO ALBUMS ARE EVEN...
...REAL?
IS THAT MY WEDDING DRESS?

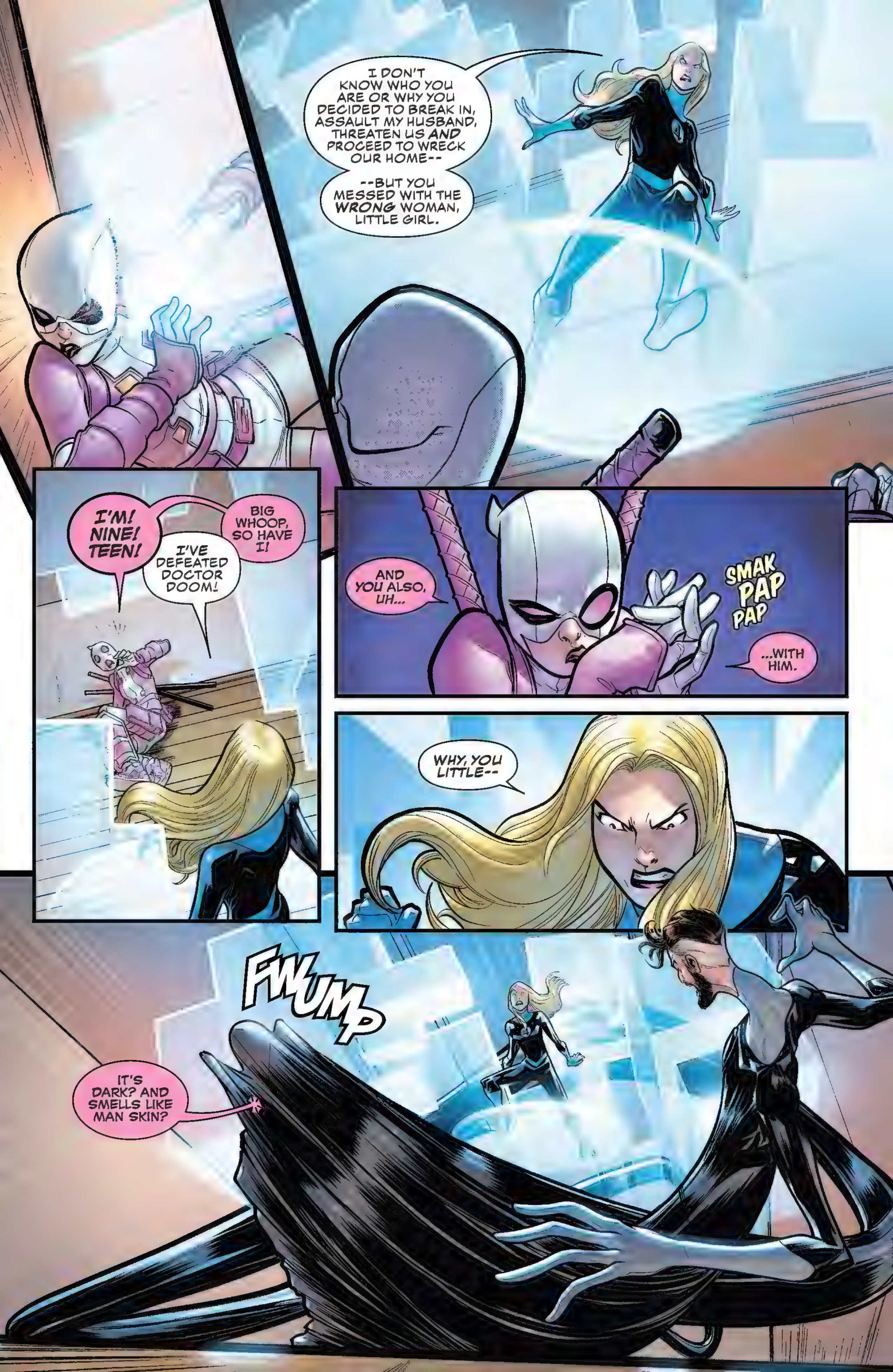

SUE. THIS ISN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
YES, IT IS! *YES!* IT IS!
YOU HEAR THAT, DODSON(S)?! THAT'S THE MONEY SHOT, RIGHT THERE!
THAT'S THE COVER IMAGE!
THIS YOUNG WOMAN IS CLEARLY TROUBLED. SHE WAS IN HERE WEARING YOUR OLD WEDDING DRESS WHEN I CAME DOWN.
SHE MIGHT BE A STALKER OR A CRAZED FAN.
ALL RIGHT, WE GOT IT. LET'S GO.
THAT'S IT? YOU DON'T WANNA ACTUALLY...
NO, I FEEL KINDA GROSS. I WANNA GO HOME AND CUDDLE JEFF.
I *KNEW* YOU HAD A BOYFRIEND!
JEFF'S MY PET LAND SHARK. HE--
SMAK PAP PAP
OHHHH, NO, YOU DON'T!
YOU TWO JUST BROKE INTO OUR HOME!
YOU'RE NOT LEAVING UNLESS IT'S WITH THE POLICE!

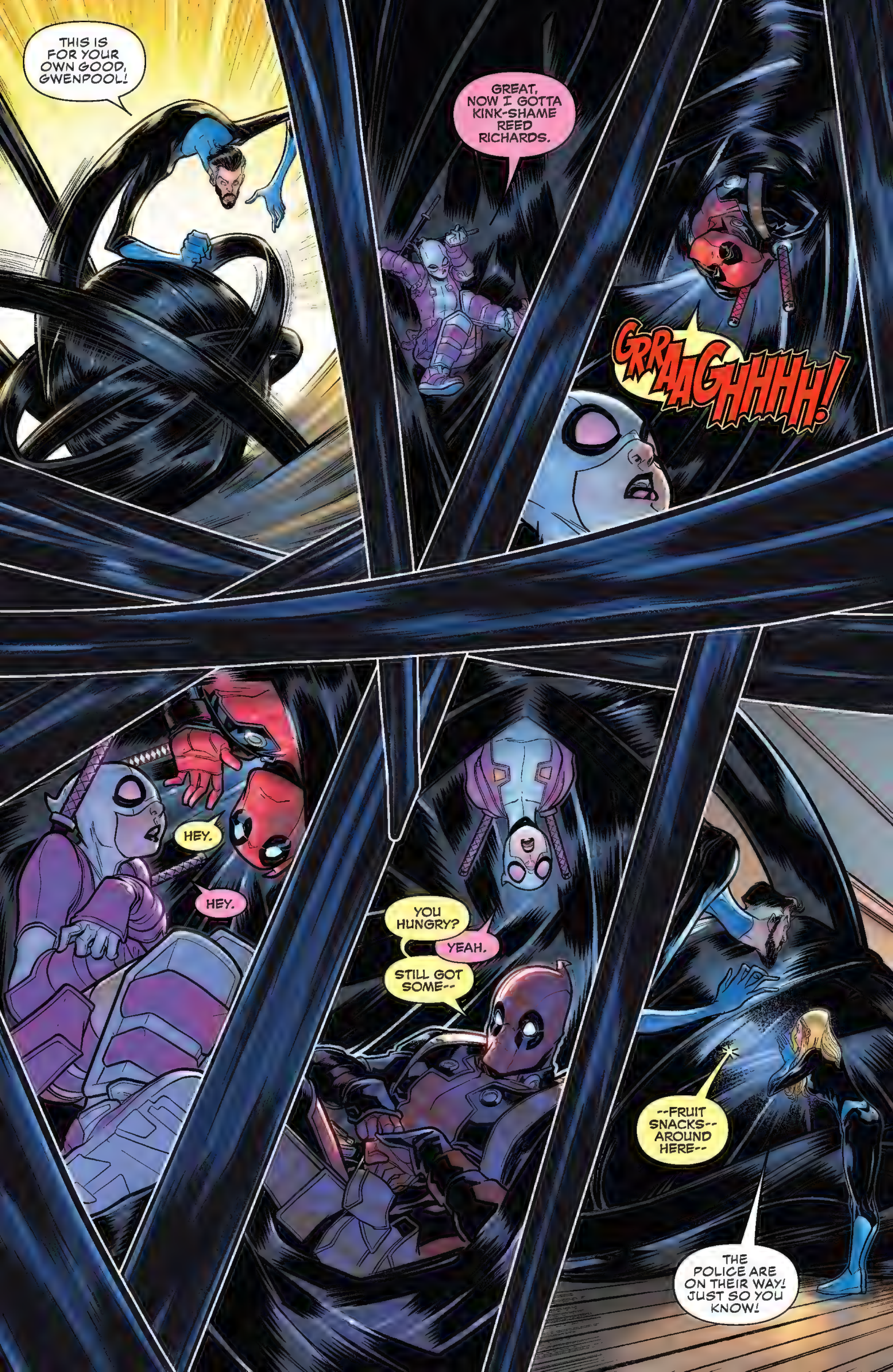

BEN! JOHNNY!
JOHNNY'S OUT WITH PETER, DEAR.
BEN!
I BROUGHT MY KATANAS.
I BROUGHT FRUIT SNACKS.
LET'S WAIT 'TIL WE GET PAST THE KIDS.
GOOD THINKING, I DIDN'T BRING ENOUGH FOR THEM.
...DAD?
MLAHHHHHH!
GO TO YOUR ROOMS, KIDS.
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE WORRIED ABOUT. WE JUST CAUGHT THIS TROUBLED COUPLE BREAKING INTO THE BASEMENT.

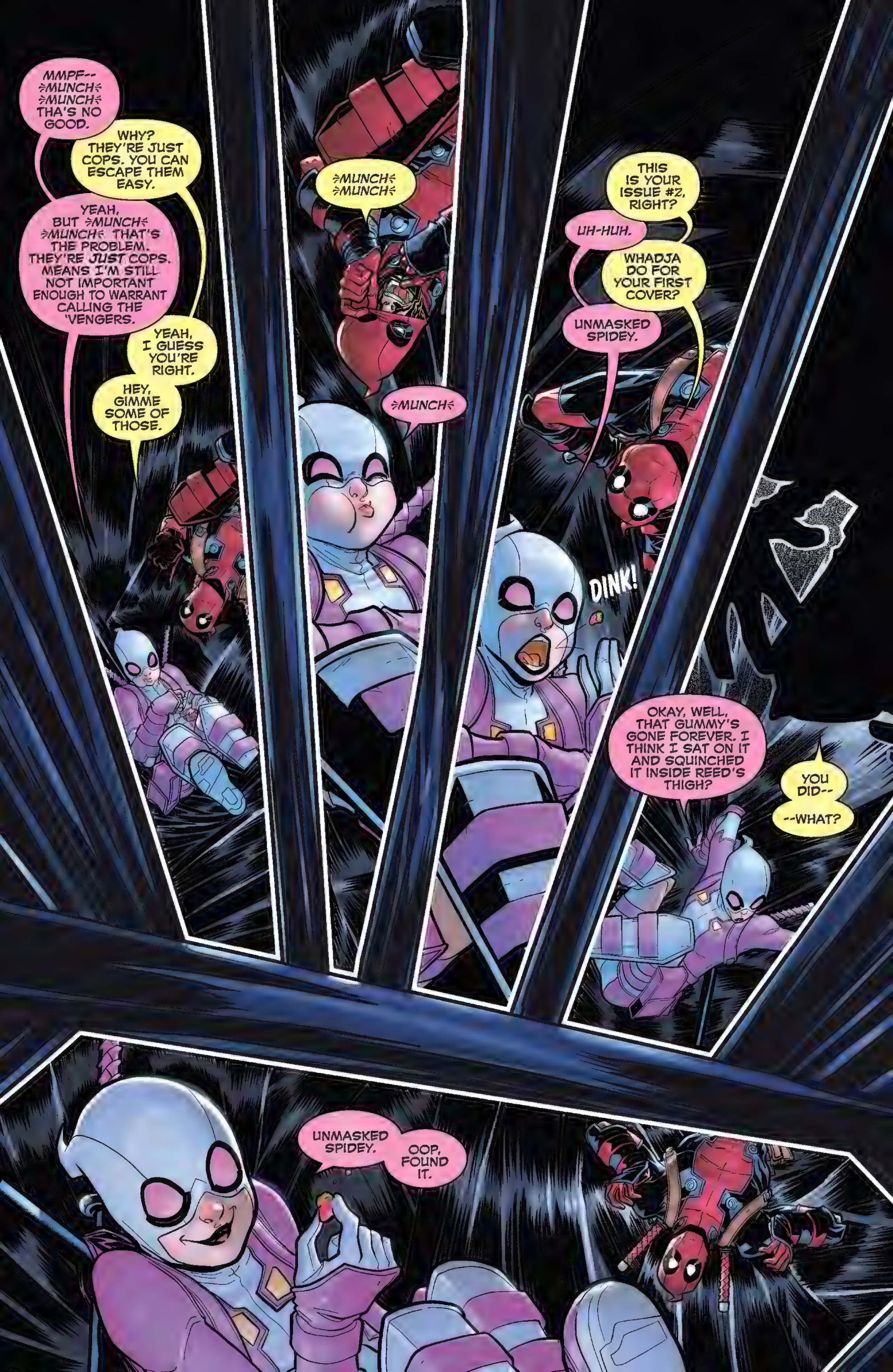

WE'RE NOT A COUPLE!
=YAWN=... WHUS HAPPENIN'?
OOH, I WANNA FIGHT, BIG BOY. DO YOUR MAGICAL META THING, GWENNIE! FREE US!
UM. OKAY.
EEEEEEEEEYOWWW!

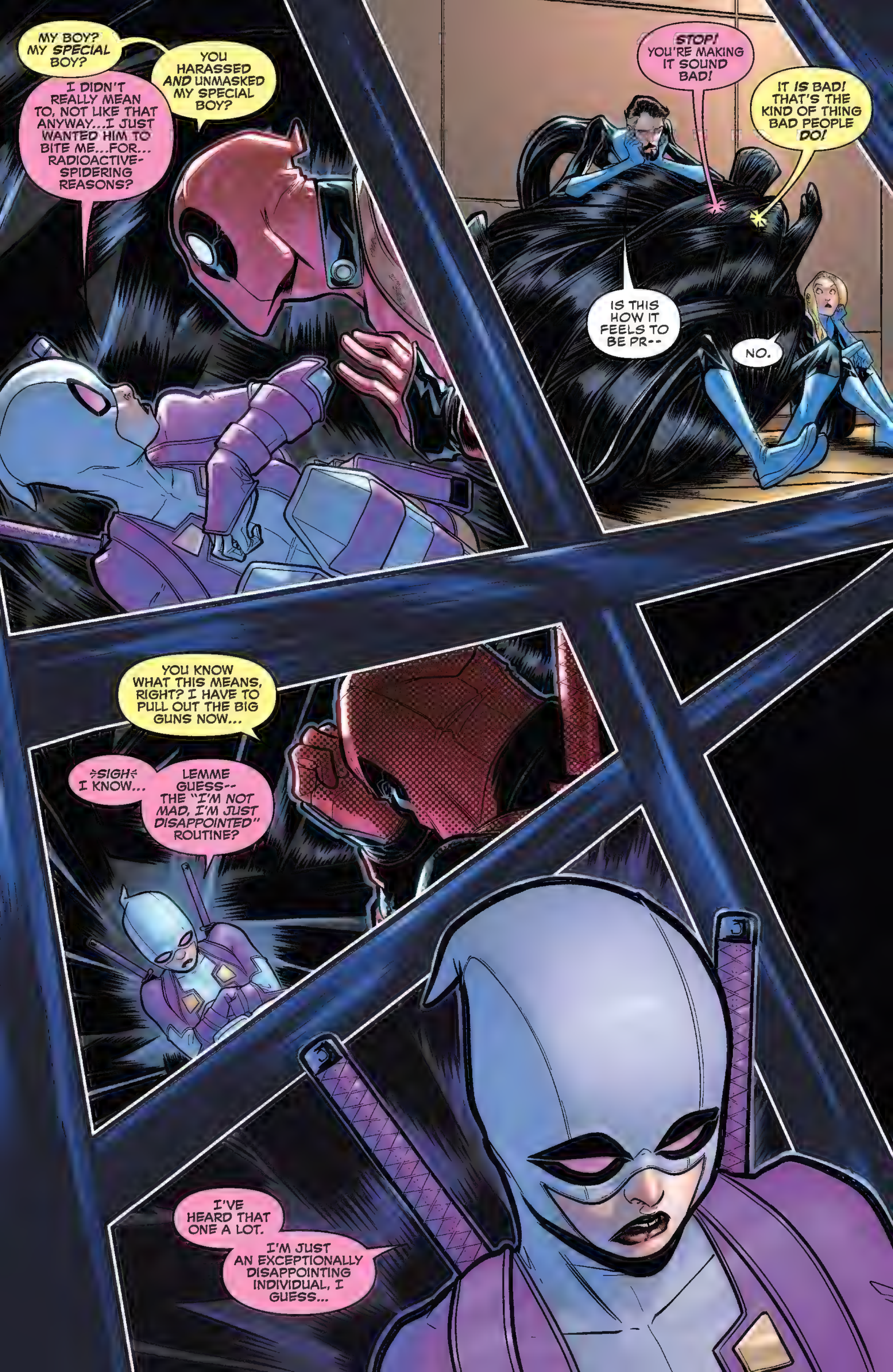

KATANAS
GIVE 'EM HELL, WADE!
ON IT!
Tasty's Fruit Snacks
...
LET'S TRY TO MINIMIZE THE PROPERTY DAMAGE THIS TIME.
WHUMP
4
Tasty's Fruit Snacks
HI-YAH!
HAVE SOME HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP!
PLAP!
I'M GOIN' BACK TO BED.

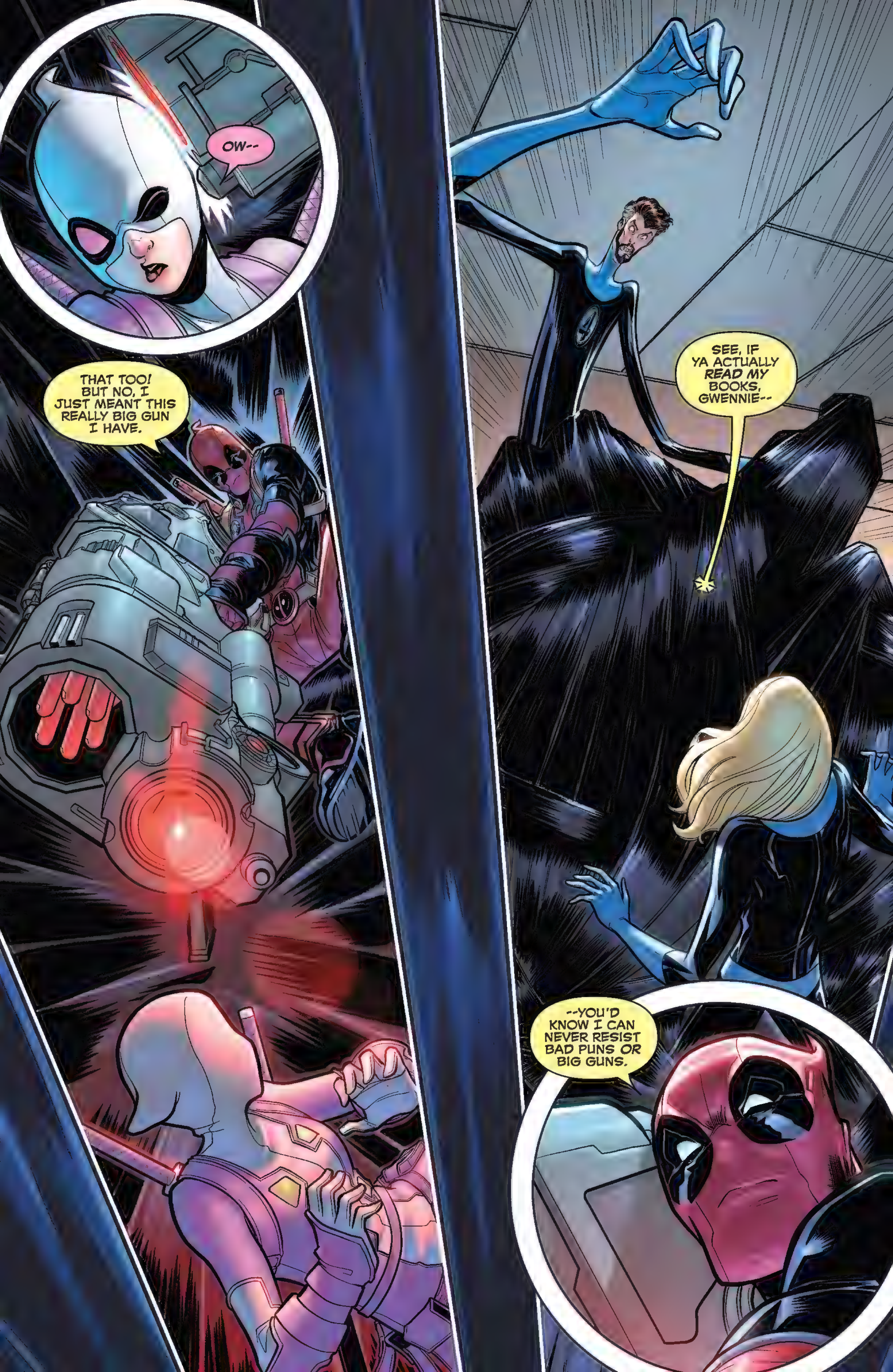

WADE, CAN YOU, LIKE, TAKE THIS--
--SERIOUSLY?!
POOM
THIS IS WHY I DON'T READ YOUR ☠☠☠☠ COMICS, WADE!
HELP ME.
HYUP! GIMME ONE SEC!
KINDA IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING!
SHOOT.
WADE!
COMING!

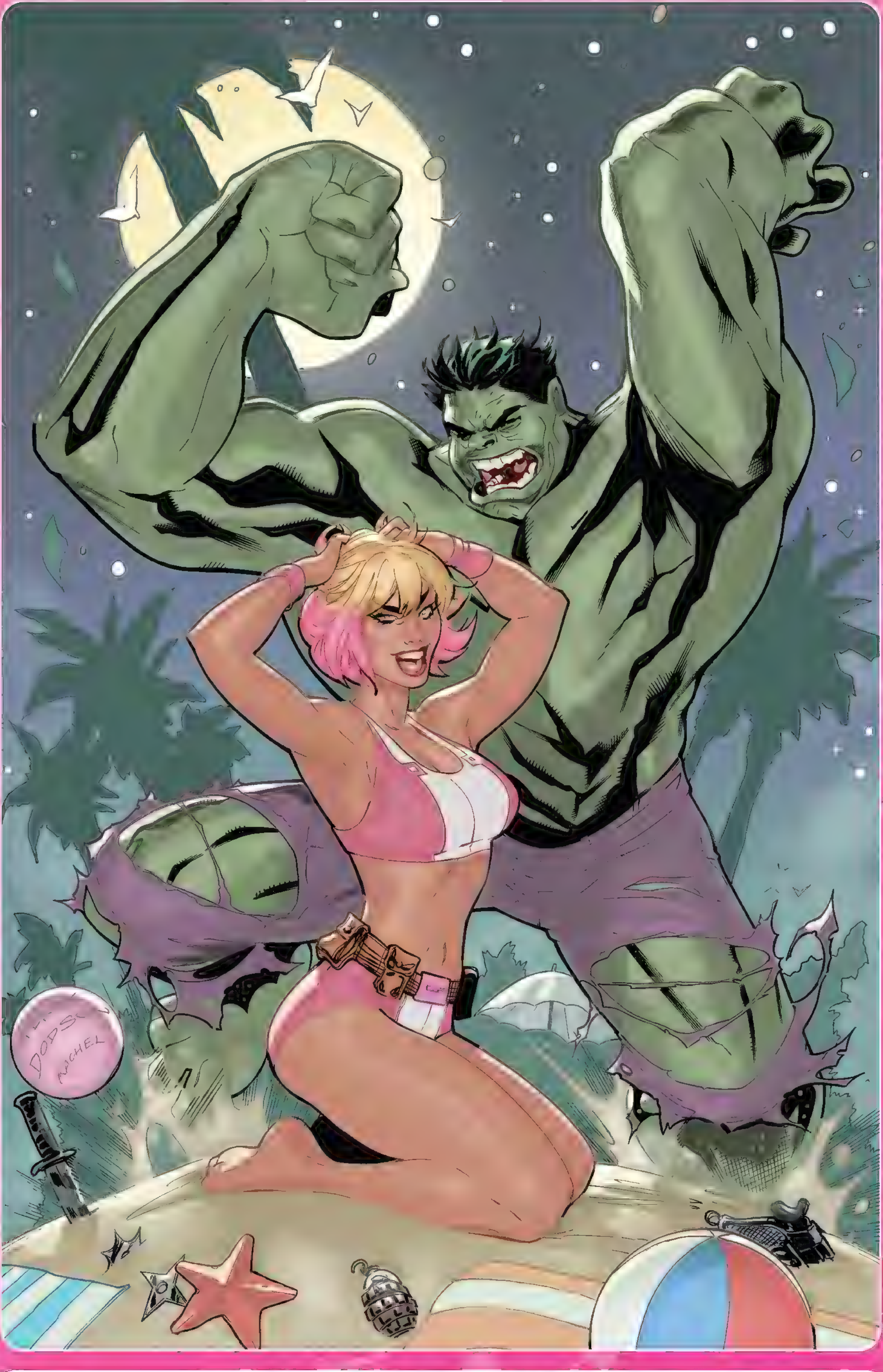

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE OR WHY YOU DECIDED TO BREAK IN, ASSAULT MY HUSBAND, THREATEN US **AND** PROCEED TO WRECK OUR HOME--
--BUT YOU MESSED WITH THE **WRONG** WOMAN, LITTLE GIRL.
I'M! NINE! TEEN!
I'VE DEFEATED DOCTOR DOOM!
BIG WHOOP, SO HAVE I!
AND **YOU** ALSO, UH...
SMAK
PAP
PAP
...WITH HIM.
WHY, YOU LITTLE--
FWUMP
IT'S DARK? AND SMELLS LIKE MAN SKIN?


THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, GWENPOOL!
GREAT, NOW I GOTTA KINK-SHAME REED RICHARDS.
GRRAAGHHHH!
HEY.
HEY.
YOU HUNGRY?
YEAH.
STILL GOT SOME--
--FRUIT SNACKS-- AROUND HERE--
THE POLICE ARE ON THEIR WAY! JUST SO YOU KNOW!


MMPF-- ≻MUNCH≺ ≻MUNCH≺ THA'S NO GOOD.
WHY? THEY'RE JUST COPS. YOU CAN ESCAPE THEM EASY.
YEAH, BUT ≻MUNCH≺ ≻MUNCH≺ THAT'S THE PROBLEM. THEY'RE *JUST* COPS. MEANS I'M STILL NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO WARRANT CALLING THE 'VENGERS.
YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
HEY, GIMME SOME OF THOSE.
≻MUNCH≺ ≻MUNCH≺
≻MUNCH≺
THIS IS YOUR ISSUE #2, RIGHT?
UH-HUH.
WHADJA DO FOR YOUR FIRST COVER?
UNMASKED SPIDEY.
DINK!
OKAY, WELL, THAT GUMMY'S GONE FOREVER. I THINK I SAT ON IT AND SQUINCHED IT INSIDE REED'S THIGH?
YOU DID--
--WHAT?
UNMASKED SPIDEY.
OOP, FOUND IT.

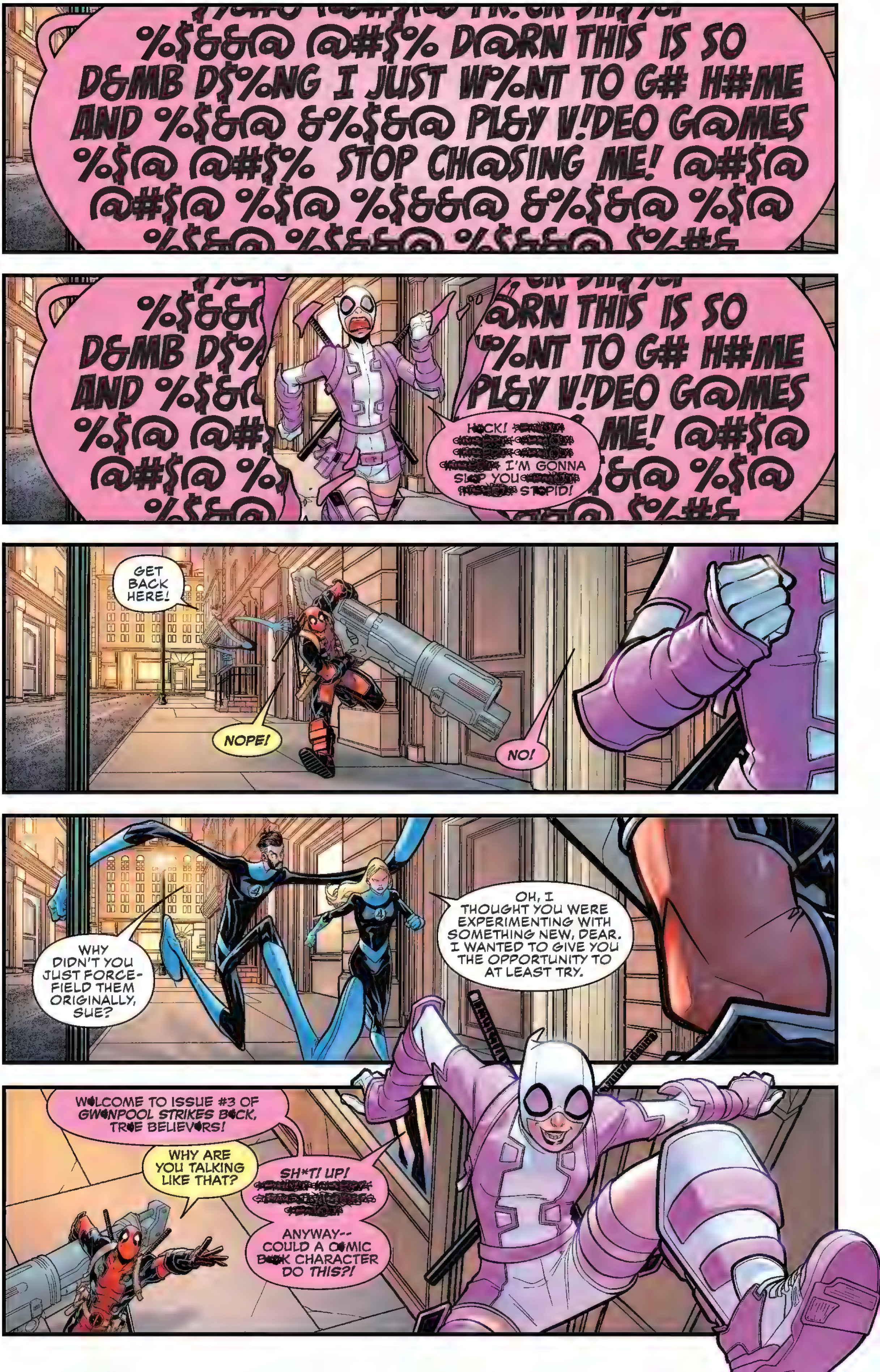

MY BOY? MY *SPECIAL* BOY?
YOU HARASSED *AND* UNMASKED MY SPECIAL BOY?
I DIDN'T REALLY MEAN TO, NOT LIKE THAT ANYWAY...I JUST WANTED HIM TO BITE ME...FOR... RADIOACTIVE-SPIDERING REASONS?
STOP! YOU'RE MAKING IT SOUND BAD!
IT *IS* BAD! THAT'S THE KIND OF THING BAD PEOPLE *DO!*
IS THIS HOW IT FEELS TO BE PR--
NO.
YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS, RIGHT? I HAVE TO PULL OUT THE BIG GUNS NOW...
SIGH I KNOW... LEMME GUESS-- THE "*I'M NOT MAD, I'M JUST DISAPPOINTED*" ROUTINE?
I'VE HEARD THAT ONE A LOT.
I'M JUST AN EXCEPTIONALLY DISAPPOINTING INDIVIDUAL, I GUESS...

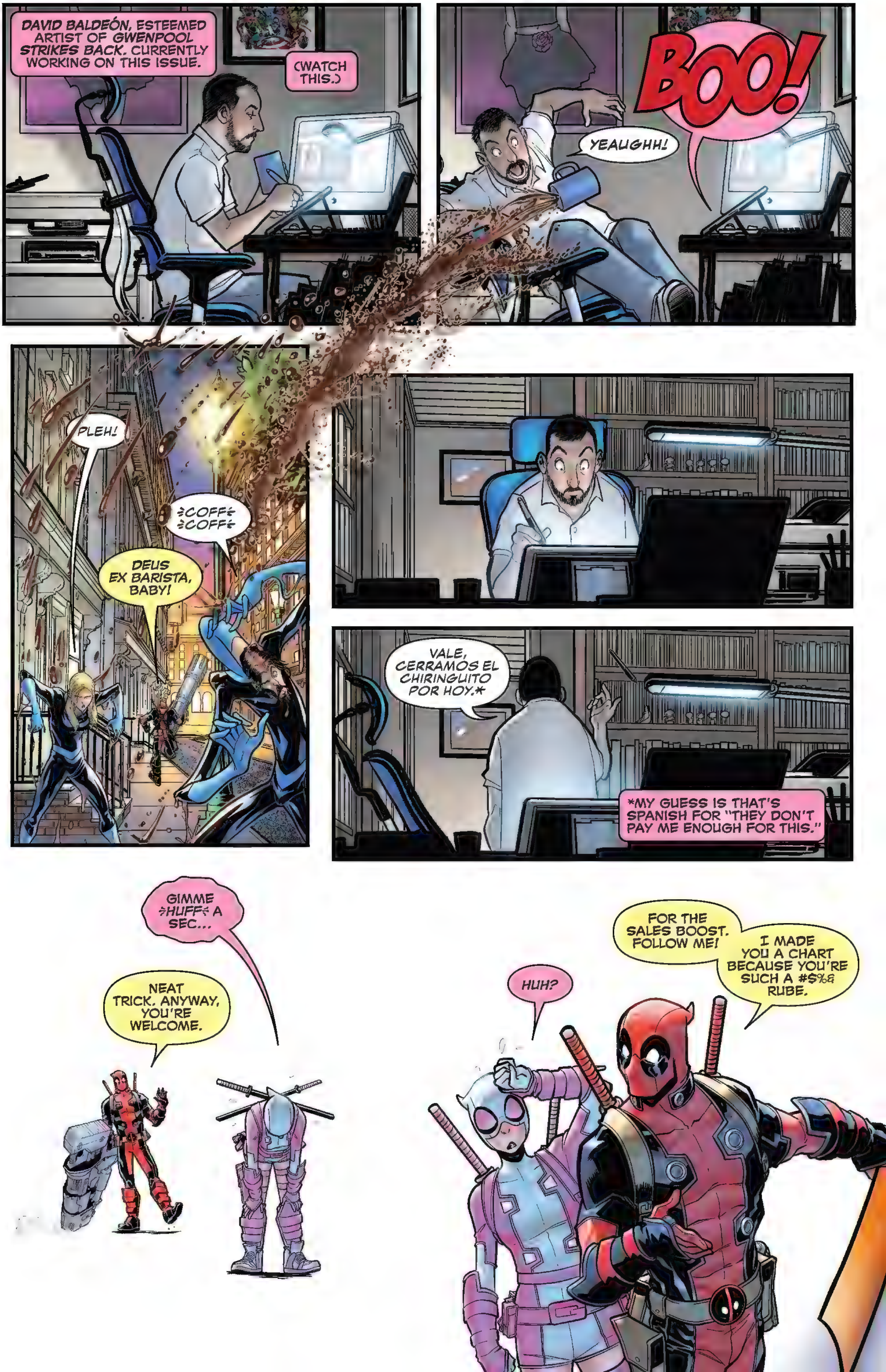

OW--
THAT TOO! BUT NO, I JUST MEANT THIS REALLY BIG GUN I HAVE.
SEE, IF YA ACTUALLY *READ MY* BOOKS, GWENNIE--
--YOU'D KNOW I CAN NEVER RESIST BAD PUNS *OR* BIG GUNS.

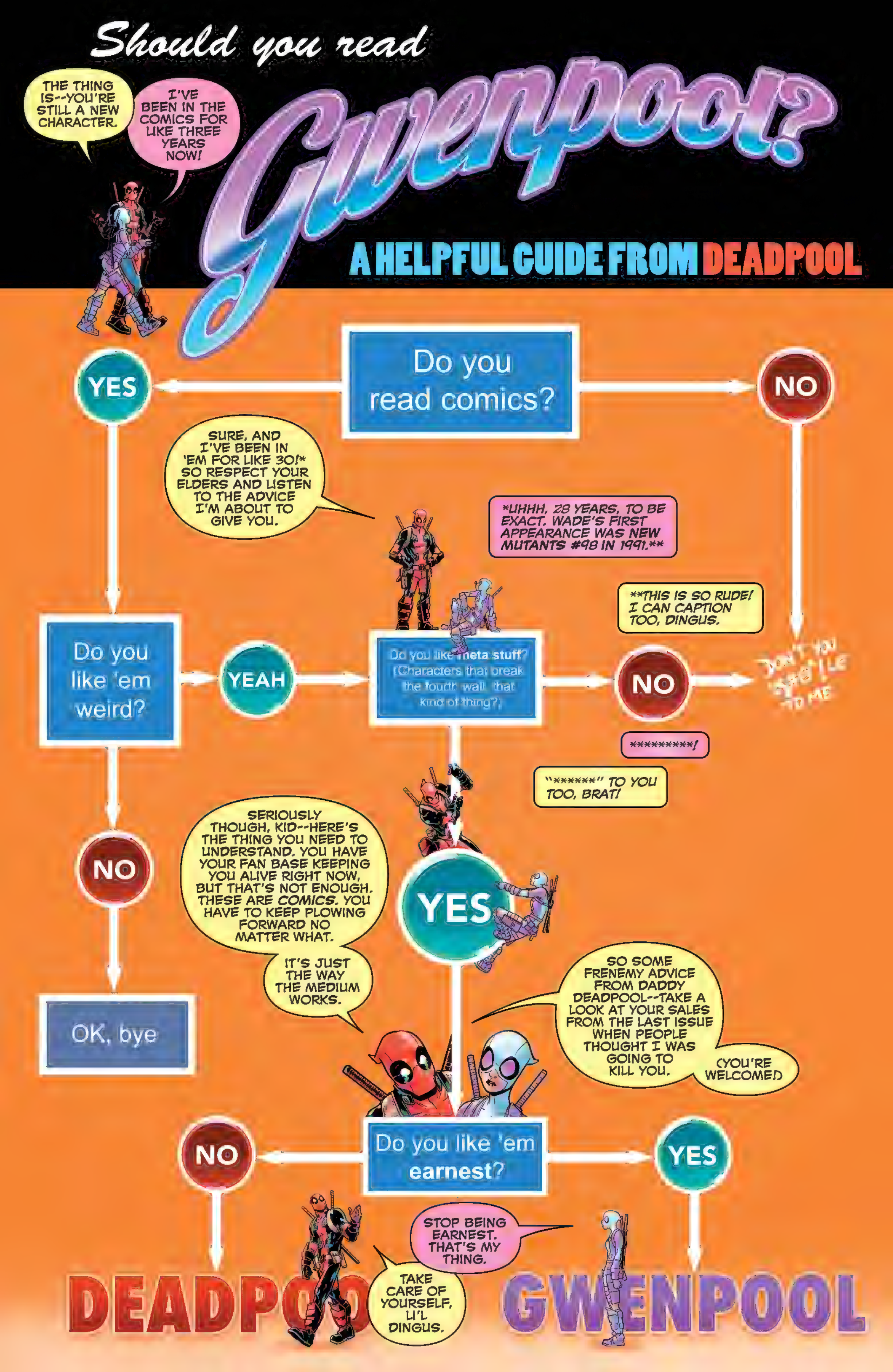

DODS
RACHEL

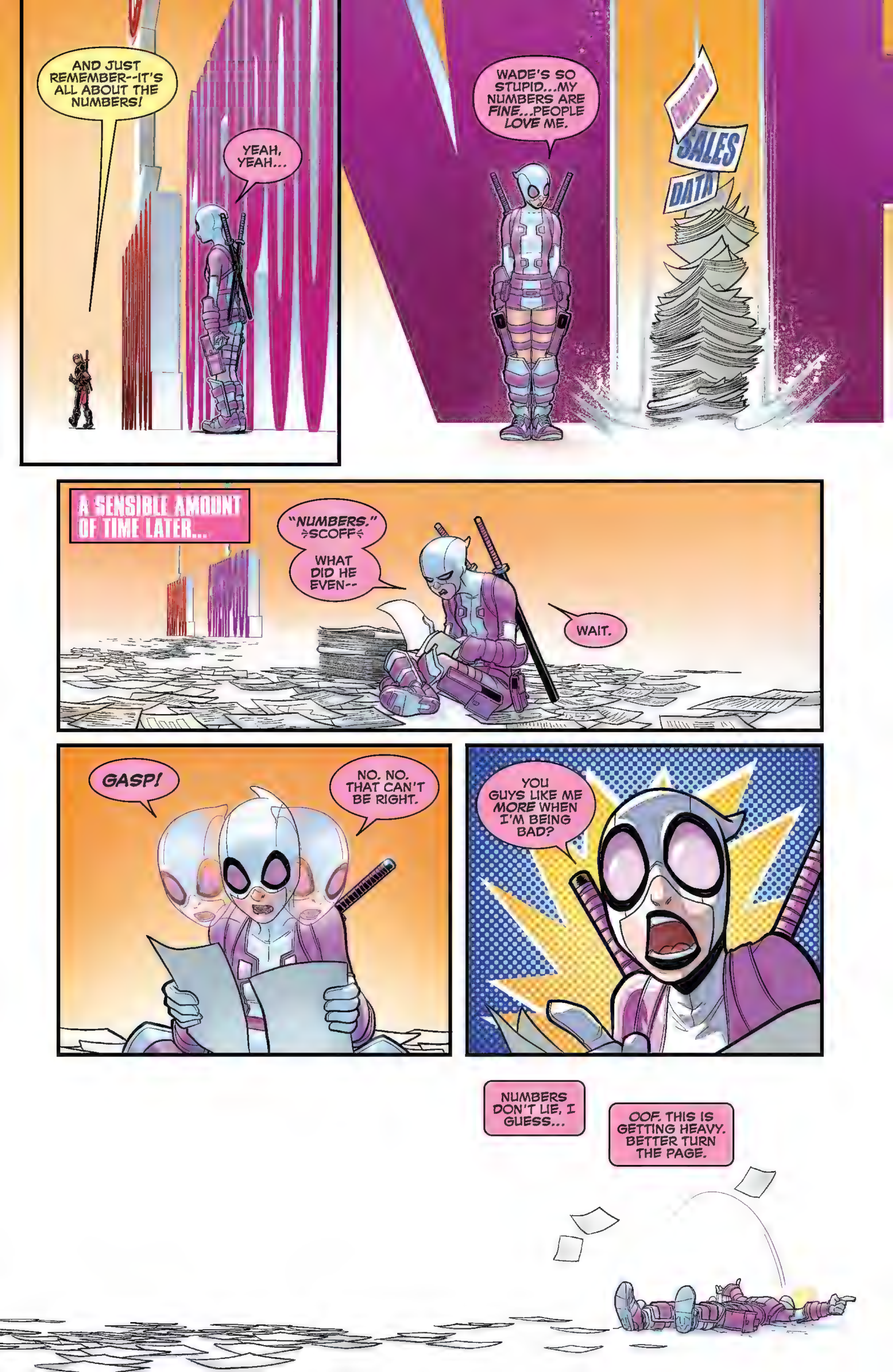
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #3

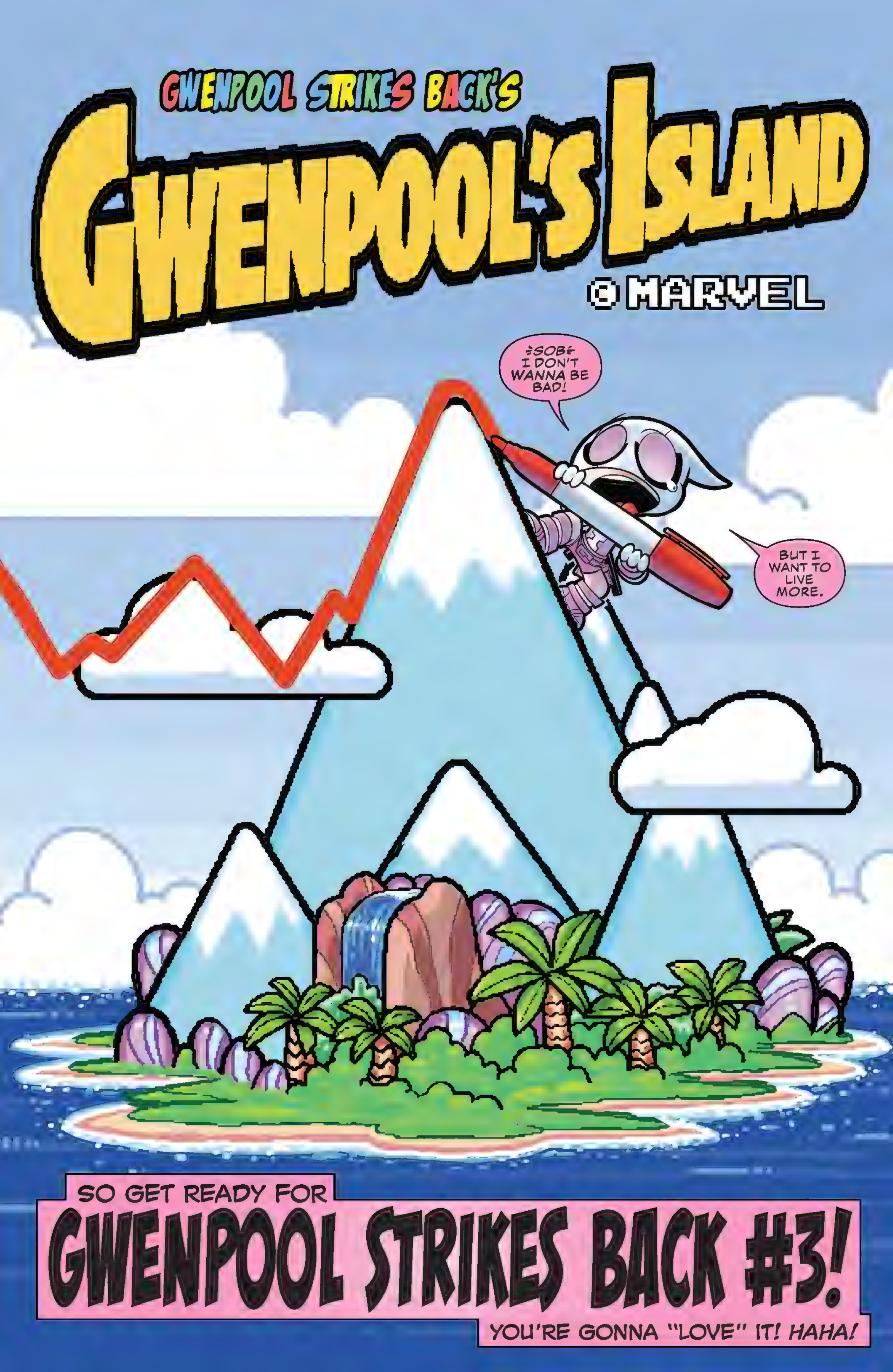
[illegible]

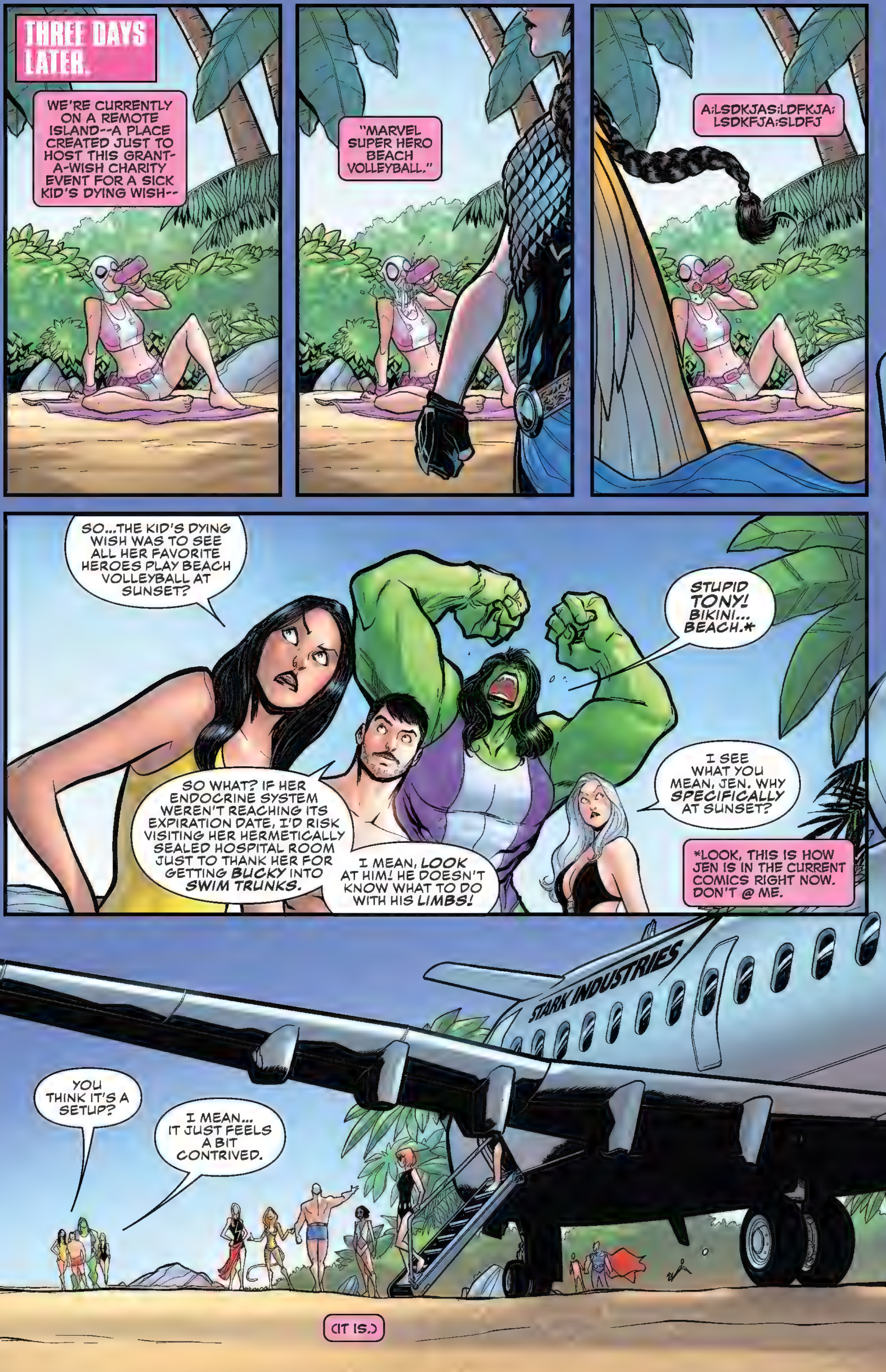

%$&&@ @#$% D@RN THIS IS SO D&MB D$%NG I JUST W%NT TO G# H#ME AND %$&@ &%$&@ PL&Y V!DEO G@MES %$@ @#$% STOP CH@SING ME! @#$@ @#$@ %$@ %$&&@ &%$&@ %$@
H●CK! I'M GONNA SL●P YOU ST●PID!
GET BACK HERE!
NOPE!
NO!
WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST FORCE-FIELD THEM ORIGINALLY, SUE?
OH, I THOUGHT YOU WERE EXPERIMENTING WITH SOMETHING NEW, DEAR. I WANTED TO GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO AT LEAST TRY.
W●LCOME TO ISSUE #3 OF GW●NPOOL STRIKES B●CK, TR●E BELIEV●RS!
WHY ARE YOU TALKING LIKE THAT?
SH*T! UP!
ANYWAY-- COULD A C●MIC B●●K CHARACTER DO THIS?!

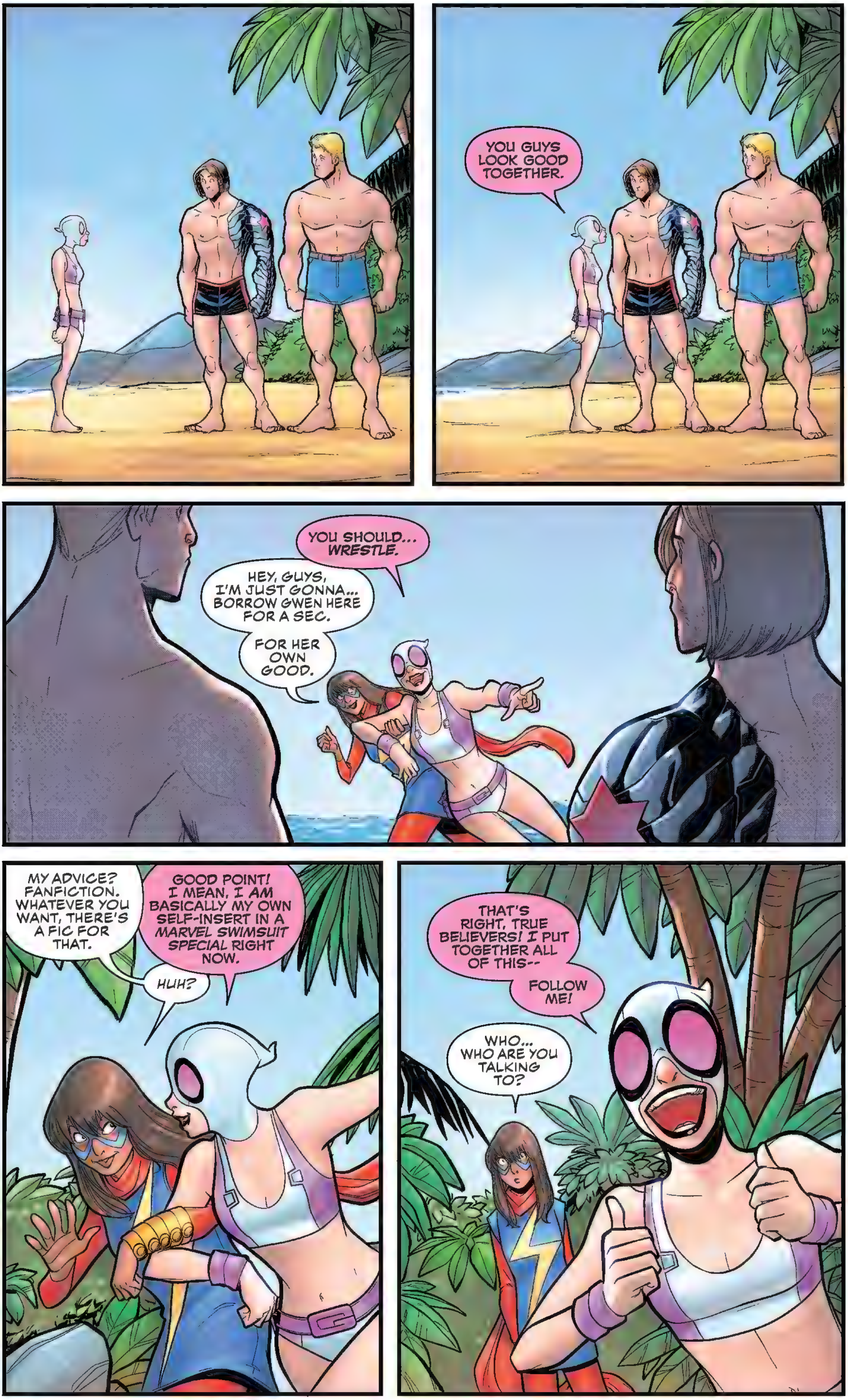

DAVID BALDEÓN, ESTEEMED ARTIST OF GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK. CURRENTLY WORKING ON THIS ISSUE.
(WATCH THIS.)
BOO!
YEAUGHH!
PLEH!
≶COFF≶ ≶COFF≶
DEUS EX BARISTA, BABY!
VALE, CERRAMOS EL CHIRINGUITO POR HOY.*
*MY GUESS IS THAT'S SPANISH FOR "THEY DON'T PAY ME ENOUGH FOR THIS."
GIMME ≶HUFF≶ A SEC...
NEAT TRICK. ANYWAY, YOU'RE WELCOME.
HUH?
FOR THE SALES BOOST. FOLLOW ME!
I MADE YOU A CHART BECAUSE YOU'RE SUCH A #$%& RUBE.

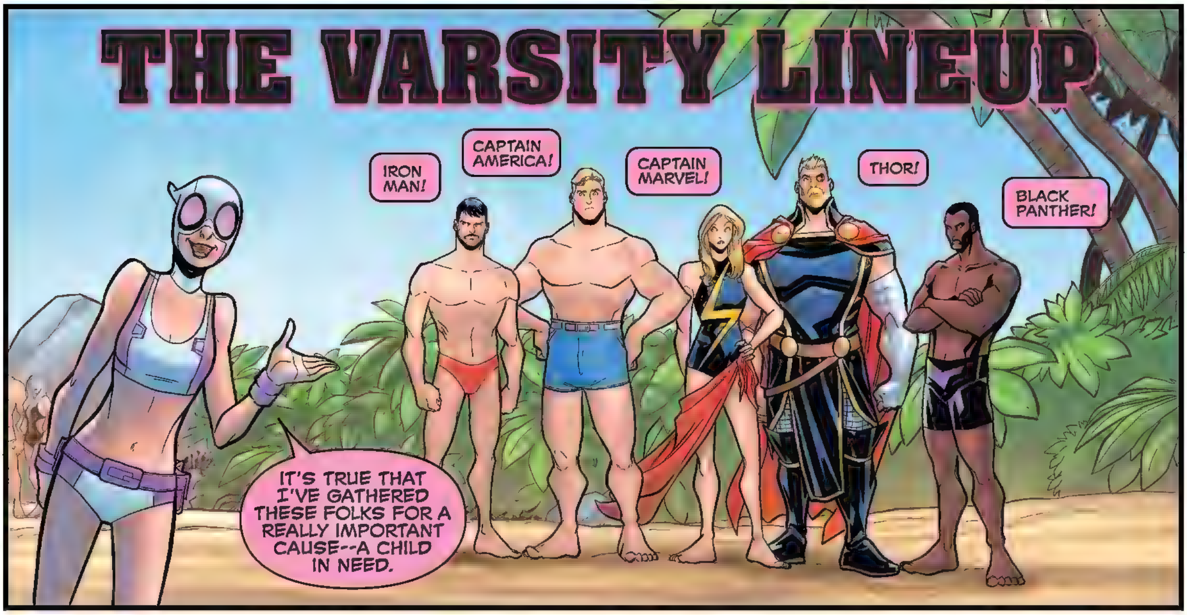

Should you read Gwenpool?
THE THING IS--YOU'RE STILL A NEW CHARACTER.
I'VE BEEN IN THE COMICS FOR LIKE THREE YEARS NOW!
A HELPFUL GUIDE FROM DEADPOOL
Do you read comics?
YES
NO
SURE, AND I'VE BEEN IN 'EM FOR LIKE 30!* SO RESPECT YOUR ELDERS AND LISTEN TO THE ADVICE I'M ABOUT TO GIVE YOU.
*UHHH, 28 YEARS, TO BE EXACT. WADE'S FIRST APPEARANCE WAS NEW MUTANTS #98 IN 1991.**
**THIS IS SO RUDE! I CAN CAPTION TOO, DINGUS.
Do you like 'em weird?
YEAH
Do you like meta stuff? (Characters that break the fourth wall, that kind of thing?)
NO
DON'T YOU [illegible] TO ME
*********!
"******" TO YOU TOO, BRAT!
NO
OK, bye
SERIOUSLY THOUGH, KID--HERE'S THE THING YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND. YOU HAVE YOUR FAN BASE KEEPING YOU ALIVE RIGHT NOW, BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH. THESE ARE COMICS. YOU HAVE TO KEEP PLOWING FORWARD NO MATTER WHAT.
IT'S JUST THE WAY THE MEDIUM WORKS.
YES
SO SOME FRENEMY ADVICE FROM DADDY DEADPOOL--TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR SALES FROM THE LAST ISSUE WHEN PEOPLE THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO KILL YOU.
(YOU'RE WELCOME)
Do you like 'em earnest?
NO
YES
STOP BEING EARNEST. THAT'S MY THING.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, LI'L DINGUS.
DEADPOOL
GWENPOOL

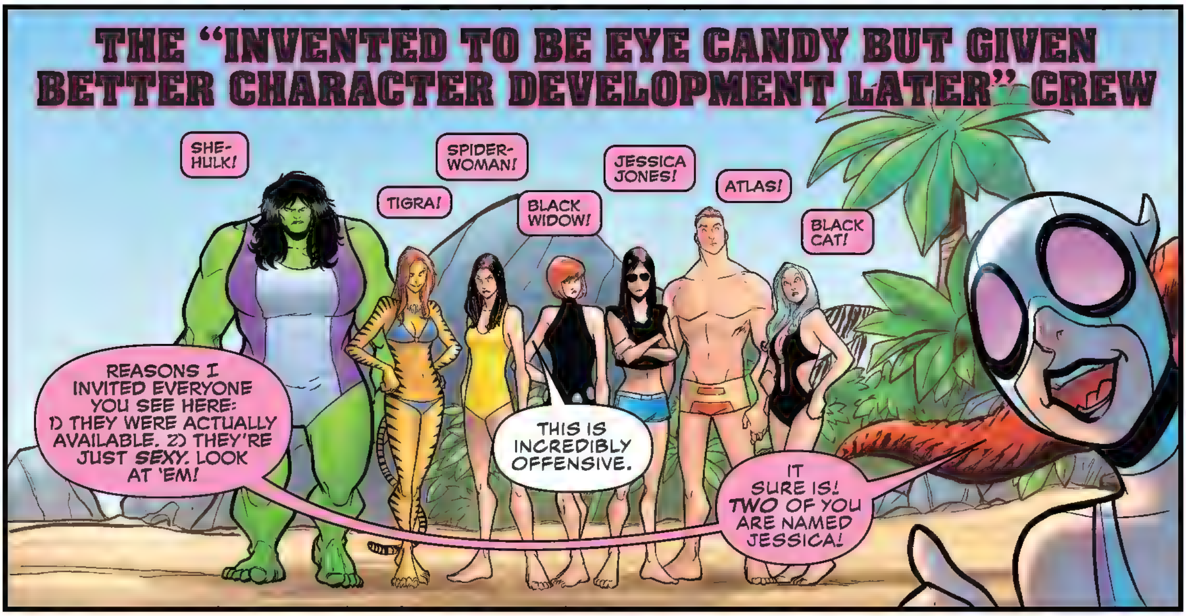

AND JUST REMEMBER--IT'S ALL ABOUT THE NUMBERS!
YEAH, YEAH...
WADE'S SO STUPID...MY NUMBERS ARE *FINE*...PEOPLE *LOVE* ME.
SALES
DATA
A SENSIBLE AMOUNT OF TIME LATER...
"*NUMBERS.*" *SCOFF*
WHAT DID HE EVEN--
WAIT.
GASP!
NO. NO. THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT.
YOU GUYS LIKE ME *MORE* WHEN I'M BEING BAD?
NUMBERS DON'T LIE, I GUESS...
OOF. THIS IS GETTING HEAVY. BETTER TURN THE PAGE.

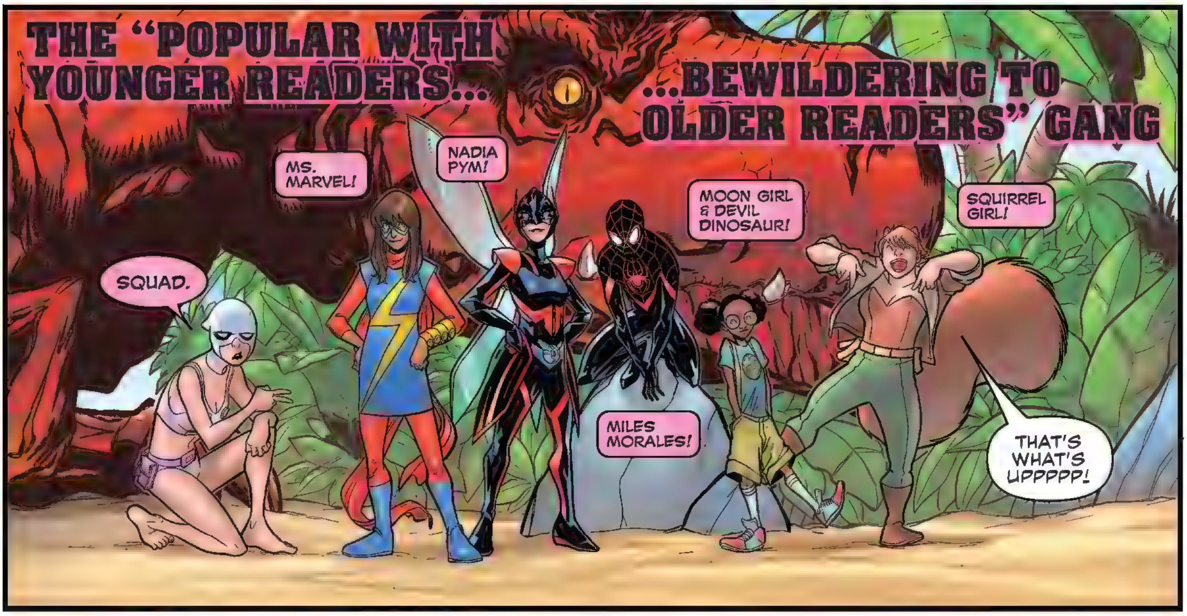

GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK'S
GWENPOOL'S ISLAND
© MARVEL
SOB I DON'T WANNA BE BAD!
BUT I WANT TO LIVE MORE.
SO GET READY FOR
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #3!
YOU'RE GONNA "LOVE" IT! HAHA!

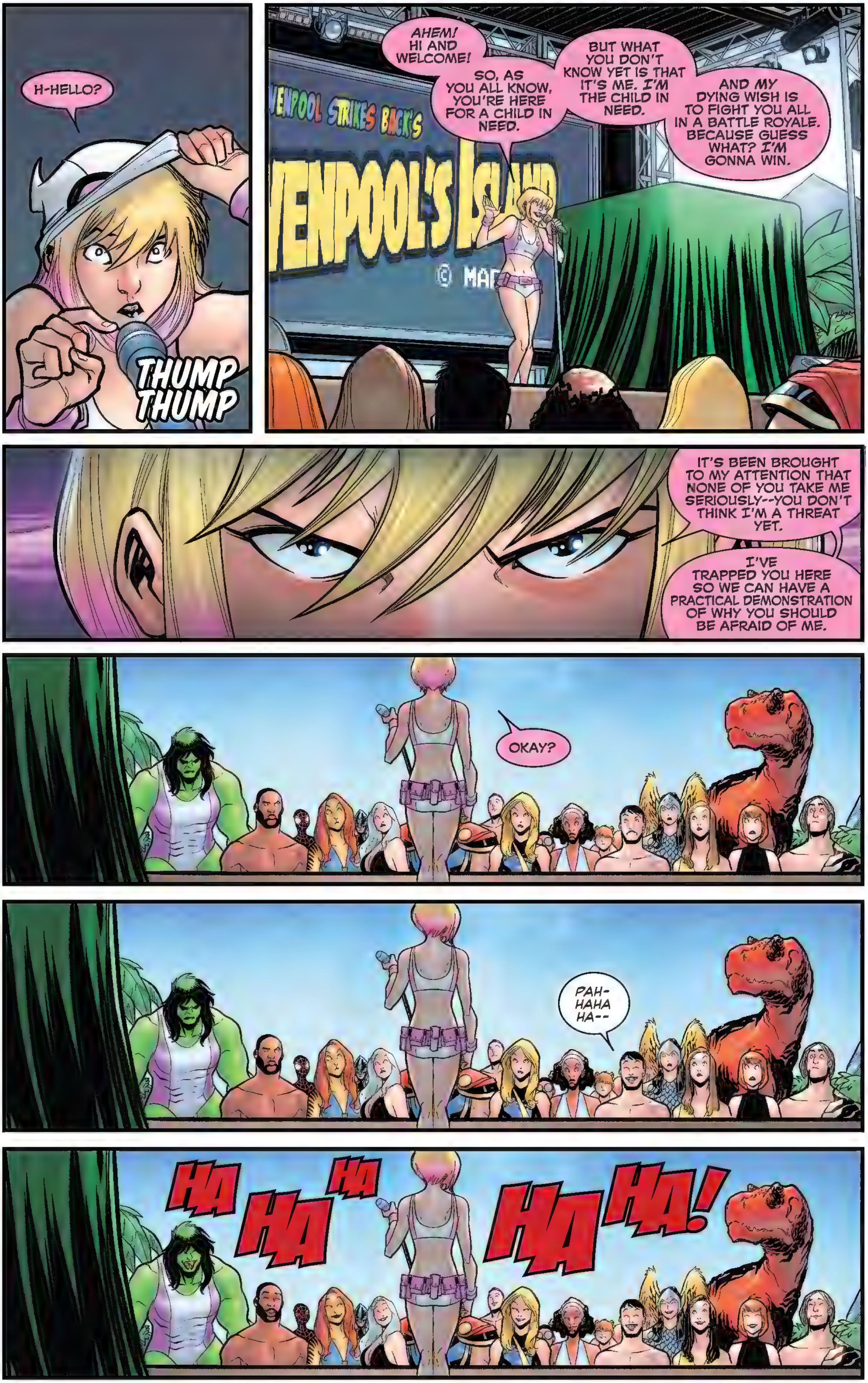

THREE DAYS LATER.
WE'RE CURRENTLY ON A REMOTE ISLAND--A PLACE CREATED JUST TO HOST THIS GRANT-A-WISH CHARITY EVENT FOR A SICK KID'S DYING WISH--
"MARVEL SUPER HERO BEACH VOLLEYBALL."
A;LSDKJAS;LDFKJA; LSDKFJA;SLDFJ
SO...THE KID'S DYING WISH WAS TO SEE ALL HER FAVORITE HEROES PLAY BEACH VOLLEYBALL AT SUNSET?
SO WHAT? IF HER ENDOCRINE SYSTEM WEREN'T REACHING ITS EXPIRATION DATE, I'D RISK VISITING HER HERMETICALLY SEALED HOSPITAL ROOM JUST TO THANK HER FOR GETTING BUCKY INTO SWIM TRUNKS.
I MEAN, LOOK AT HIM! HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HIS LIMBS!
STUPID TONY! BIKINI... BEACH.*
I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN, JEN. WHY SPECIFICALLY AT SUNSET?
*LOOK, THIS IS HOW JEN IS IN THE CURRENT COMICS RIGHT NOW. DON'T @ ME.
STARK INDUSTRIES
YOU THINK IT'S A SETUP?
I MEAN... IT JUST FEELS A BIT CONTRIVED.
(IT IS.)

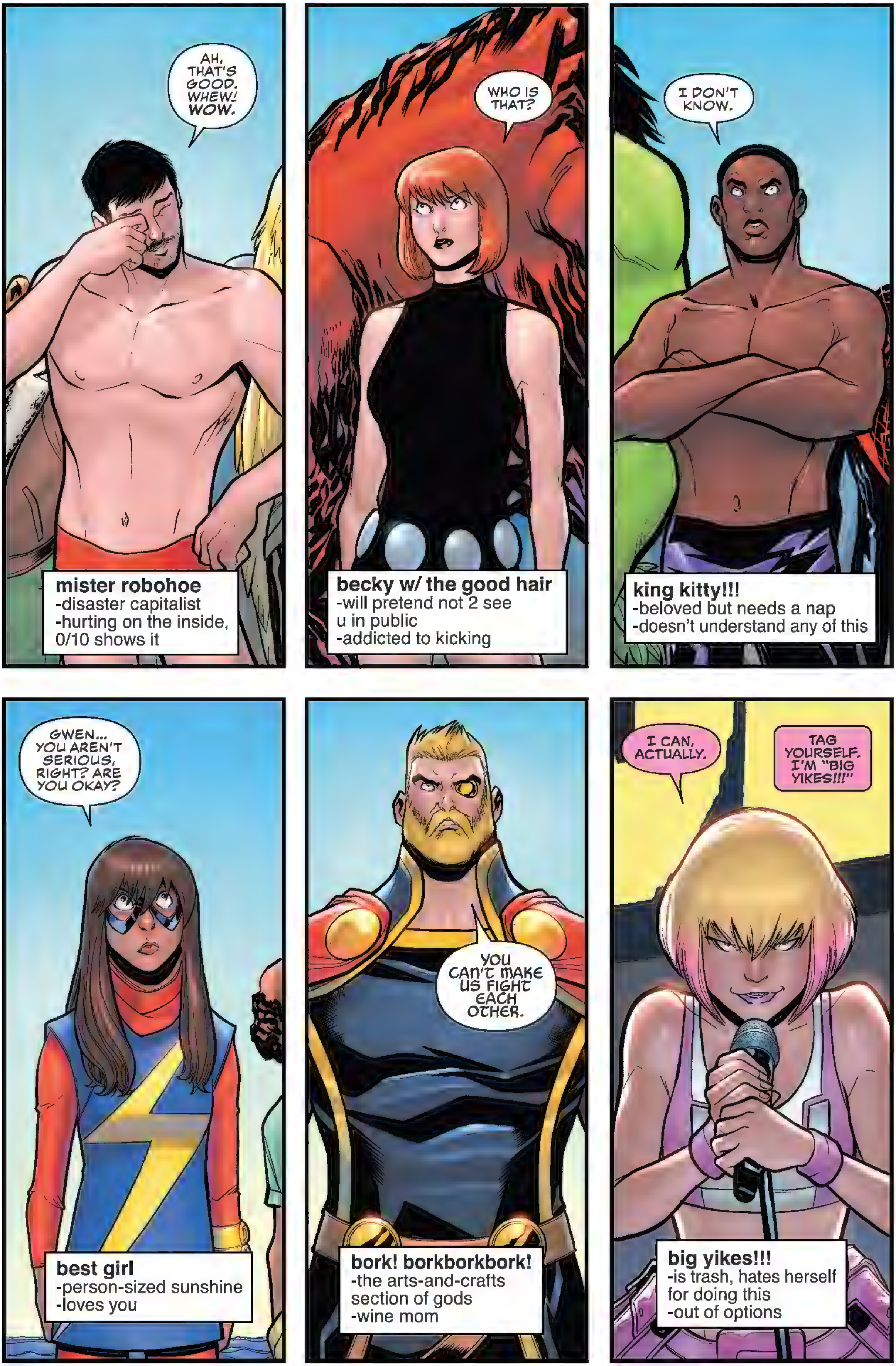

YOU GUYS LOOK GOOD TOGETHER.
YOU SHOULD... *WRESTLE.*
HEY, GUYS, I'M JUST GONNA... BORROW GWEN HERE FOR A SEC.
FOR HER OWN GOOD.
MY ADVICE? FANFICTION. WHATEVER YOU WANT, THERE'S A FIC FOR THAT.
GOOD POINT! I MEAN, I *AM* BASICALLY MY OWN SELF-INSERT IN A *MARVEL SWIMSUIT SPECIAL* RIGHT NOW.
HUH?
THAT'S RIGHT, TRUE BELIEVERS! I PUT TOGETHER ALL OF THIS--
FOLLOW ME!
WHO... WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

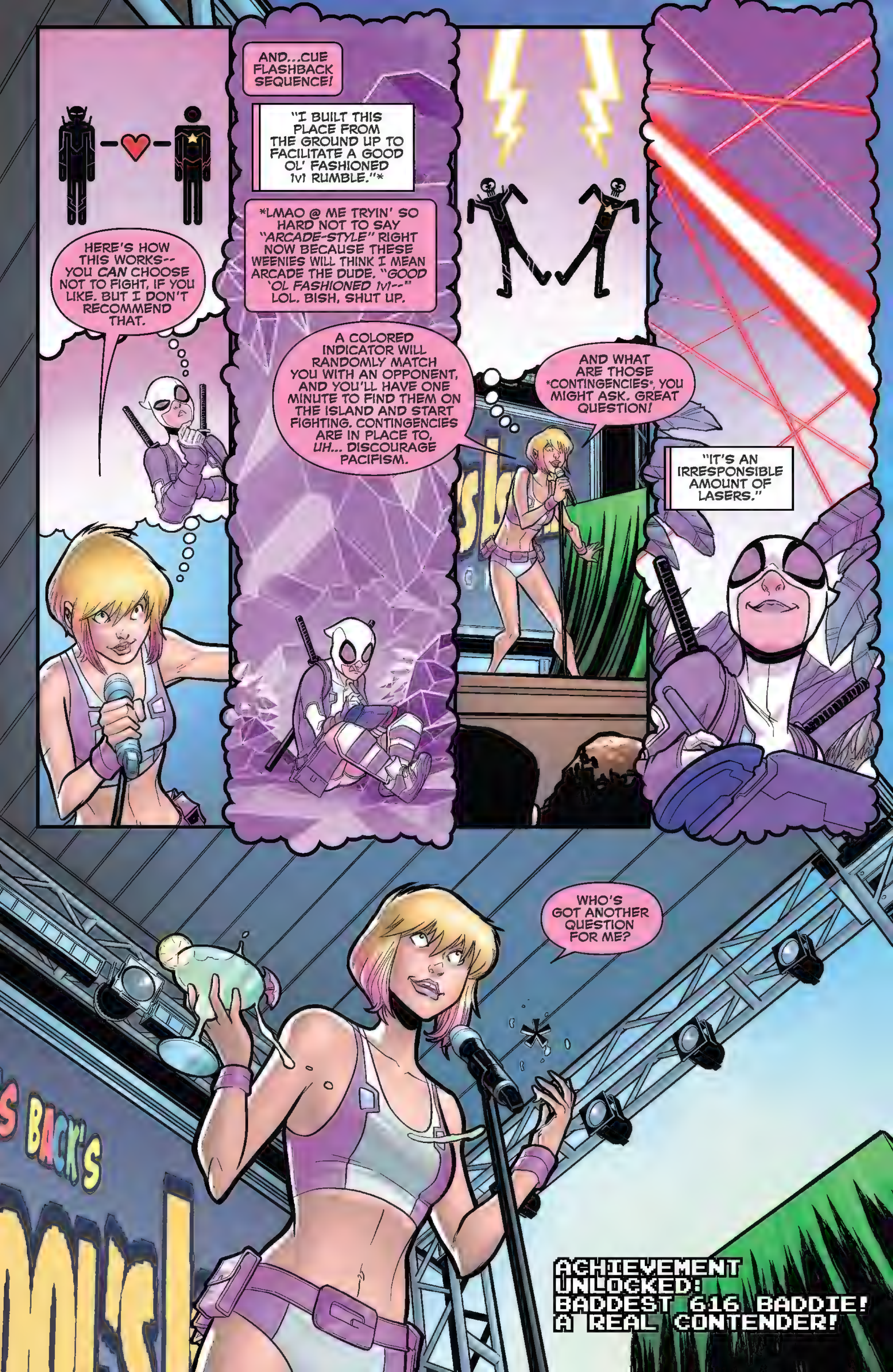

THE VARSITY LINEUP
IRON MAN!
CAPTAIN AMERICA!
CAPTAIN MARVEL!
THOR!
BLACK PANTHER!
IT'S TRUE THAT I'VE GATHERED THESE FOLKS FOR A REALLY IMPORTANT CAUSE--A CHILD IN NEED.

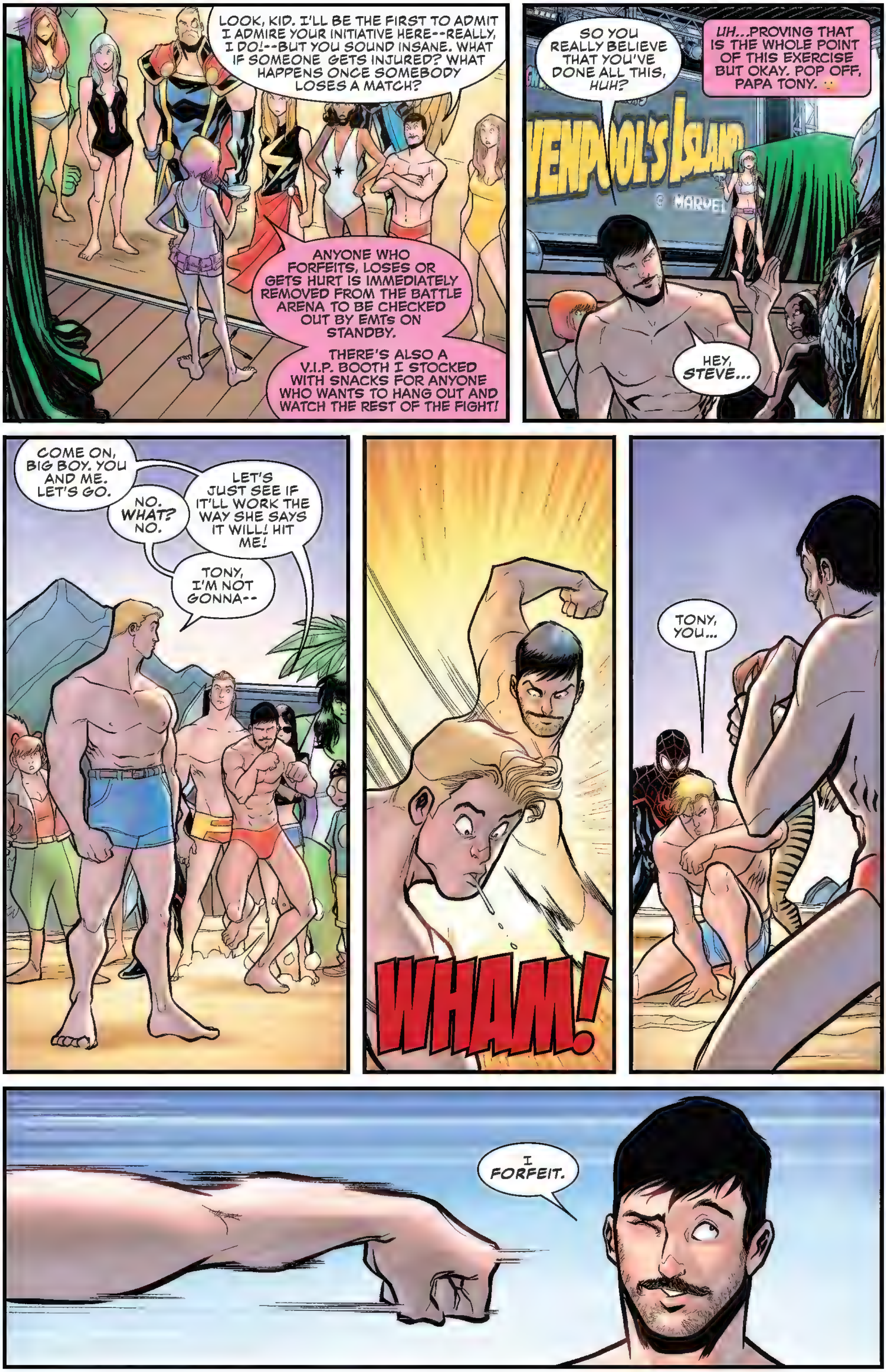

THE "INVENTED TO BE EYE CANDY BUT GIVEN BETTER CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT LATER" CREW
SHE-HULK!
TIGRA!
SPIDER-WOMAN!
BLACK WIDOW!
JESSICA JONES!
ATLAS!
BLACK CAT!
REASONS I INVITED EVERYONE YOU SEE HERE: 1) THEY WERE ACTUALLY AVAILABLE. 2) THEY'RE JUST SEXY. LOOK AT 'EM!
THIS IS INCREDIBLY OFFENSIVE.
IT SURE IS! TWO OF YOU ARE NAMED JESSICA!

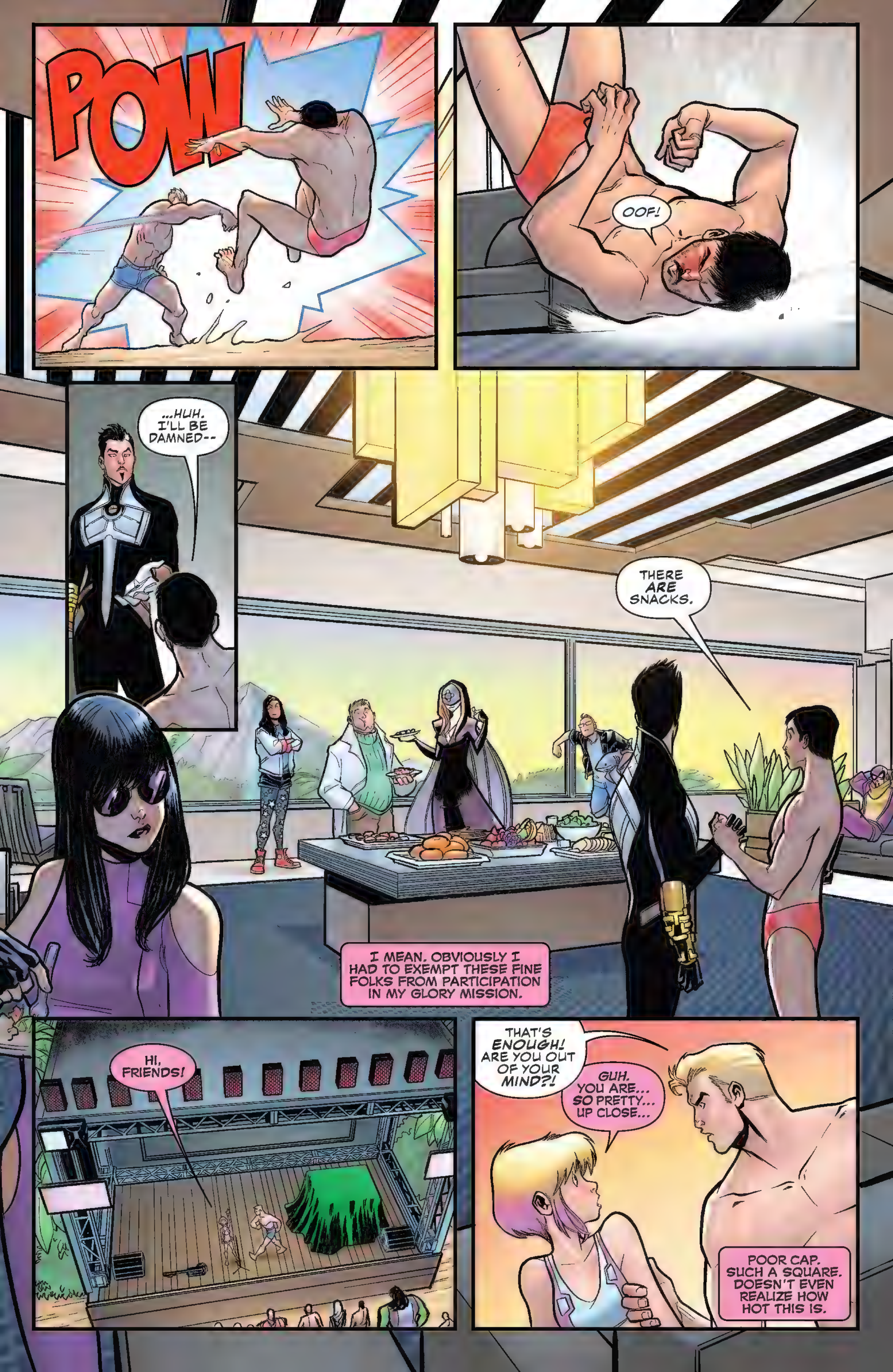

THE "POPULAR WITH YOUNGER READERS... ...BEWILDERING TO OLDER READERS" GANG
MS. MARVEL!
NADIA PYM!
MOON GIRL & DEVIL DINOSAUR!
SQUIRREL GIRL!
SQUAD.
MILES MORALES!
THAT'S WHAT'S UPPPPP!

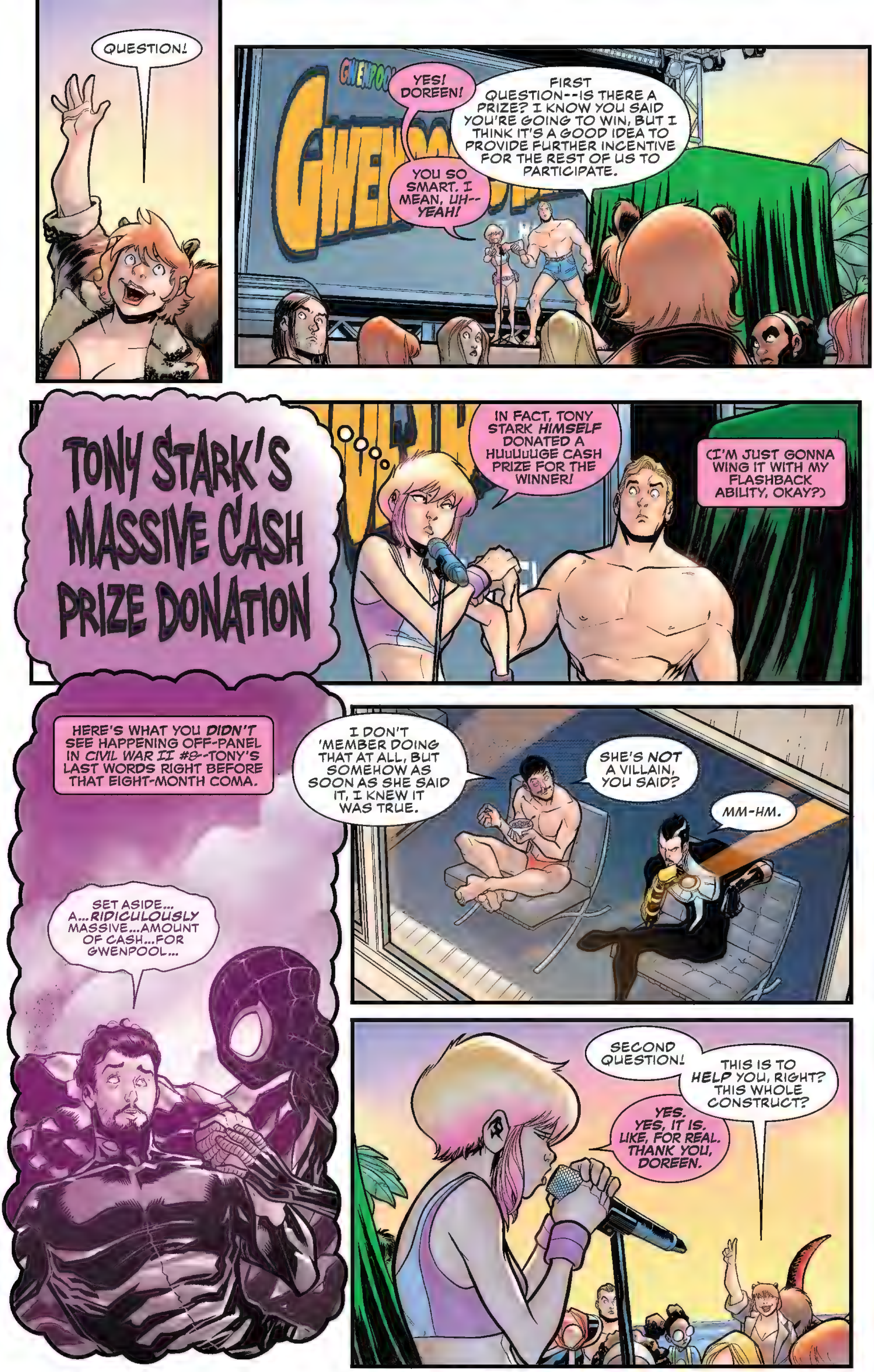

H-HELLO?
THUMP THUMP
VENPOOL STRIKES BACK'S
VENPOOL'S ISLAND
© MA
AHEM! HI AND WELCOME!
SO, AS YOU ALL KNOW, YOU'RE HERE FOR A CHILD IN NEED.
BUT WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW YET IS THAT IT'S ME. I'M THE CHILD IN NEED.
AND MY DYING WISH IS TO FIGHT YOU ALL IN A BATTLE ROYALE. BECAUSE GUESS WHAT? I'M GONNA WIN.
IT'S BEEN BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION THAT NONE OF YOU TAKE ME SERIOUSLY--YOU DON'T THINK I'M A THREAT YET.
I'VE TRAPPED YOU HERE SO WE CAN HAVE A PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF WHY YOU SHOULD BE AFRAID OF ME.
OKAY?
PAH-HAHA HA--
HA HA HA HA HA!

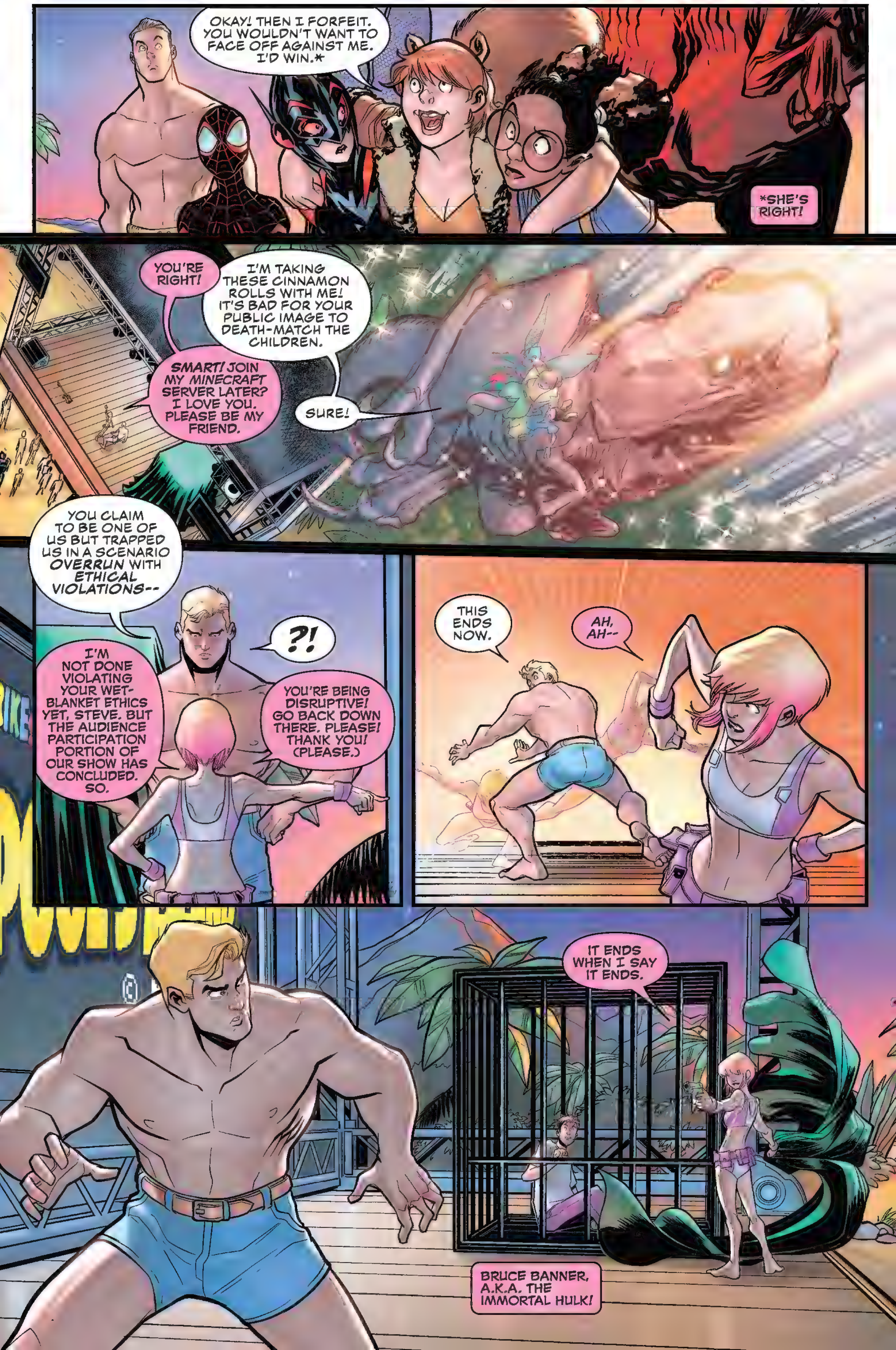

AH, THAT'S GOOD. WHEW! WOW.
mister robohoe
-disaster capitalist
-hurting on the inside, 0/10 shows it
WHO IS THAT?
becky w/ the good hair
-will pretend not 2 see u in public
-addicted to kicking
I DON'T KNOW.
king kitty!!!
-beloved but needs a nap
-doesn't understand any of this
GWEN... YOU AREN'T SERIOUS, RIGHT? ARE YOU OKAY?
best girl
-person-sized sunshine
-loves you
YOU CAN'T MAKE US FIGHT EACH OTHER.
bork! borkborkbork!
-the arts-and-crafts section of gods
-wine mom
I CAN, ACTUALLY.
TAG YOURSELF. I'M "BIG YIKES!!!"
big yikes!!!
-is trash, hates herself for doing this
-out of options

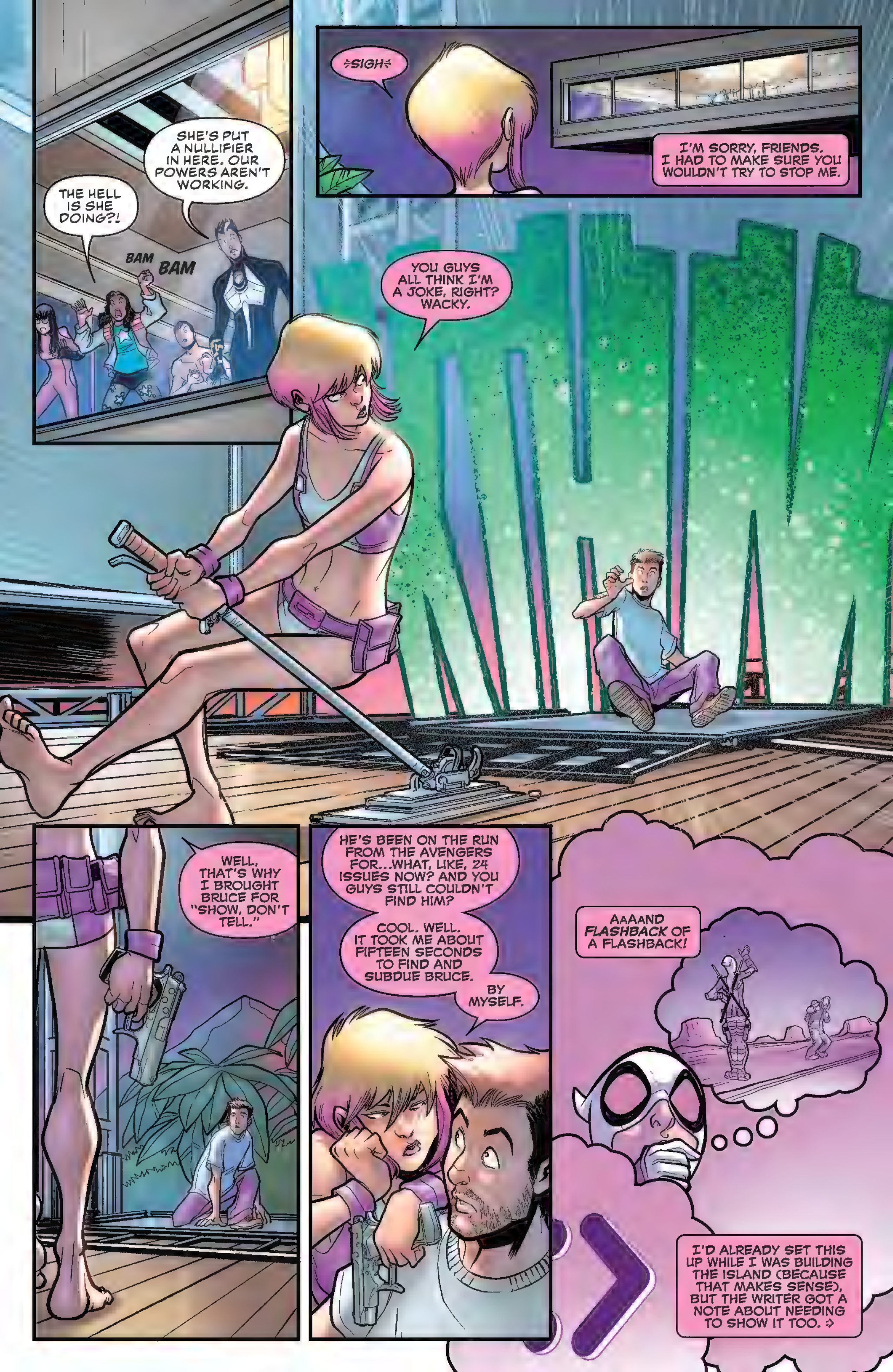

HERE'S HOW THIS WORKS-- YOU *CAN* CHOOSE NOT TO FIGHT, IF YOU LIKE. BUT I DON'T RECOMMEND THAT.
AND...CUE FLASHBACK SEQUENCE!
"I BUILT THIS PLACE FROM THE GROUND UP TO FACILITATE A GOOD OL' FASHIONED 1V1 RUMBLE."*
*LMAO @ ME TRYIN' SO HARD NOT TO SAY *"ARCADE-STYLE"* RIGHT NOW BECAUSE THESE WEENIES WILL THINK I MEAN ARCADE THE DUDE. *"GOOD 'OL FASHIONED 1V1--"* LOL. BISH, SHUT UP.
A COLORED INDICATOR WILL RANDOMLY MATCH YOU WITH AN OPPONENT, AND YOU'LL HAVE ONE MINUTE TO FIND THEM ON THE ISLAND AND START FIGHTING. CONTINGENCIES ARE IN PLACE TO, *UH...* DISCOURAGE PACIFISM.
AND WHAT ARE THOSE *CONTINGENCIES*, YOU MIGHT ASK. GREAT QUESTION!
"IT'S AN IRRESPONSIBLE AMOUNT OF LASERS."
WHO'S GOT ANOTHER QUESTION FOR ME?
S BACK'S
ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED: BADDEST 616 BADDIE! A REAL CONTENDER!

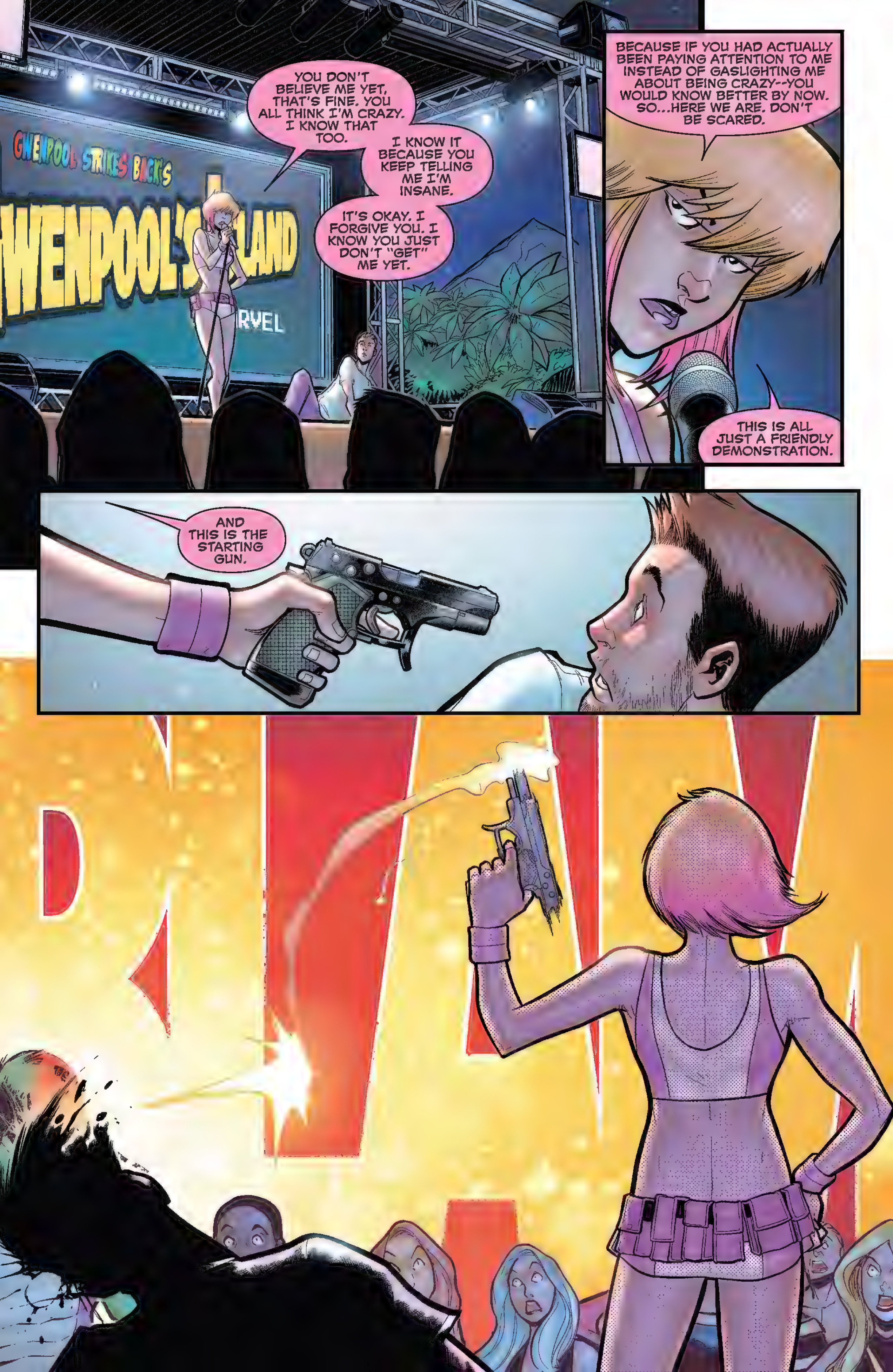

LOOK, KID. I'LL BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT I ADMIRE YOUR INITIATIVE HERE--REALLY, I DO!--BUT YOU SOUND INSANE. WHAT IF SOMEONE GETS INJURED? WHAT HAPPENS ONCE SOMEBODY LOSES A MATCH?
ANYONE WHO FORFEITS, LOSES OR GETS HURT IS IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM THE BATTLE ARENA TO BE CHECKED OUT BY EMTs ON STANDBY.
THERE'S ALSO A V.I.P. BOOTH I STOCKED WITH SNACKS FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS TO HANG OUT AND WATCH THE REST OF THE FIGHT!
SO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT YOU'VE DONE ALL THIS, HUH?
UH...PROVING THAT IS THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS EXERCISE BUT OKAY. POP OFF, PAPA TONY. 🙂
VENPOOL'S ISLAND
© MARVEL
HEY, STEVE...
COME ON, BIG BOY. YOU AND ME. LET'S GO.
NO. WHAT? NO.
LET'S JUST SEE IF IT'LL WORK THE WAY SHE SAYS IT WILL! HIT ME!
TONY, I'M NOT GONNA--
WHAM!
TONY, YOU...
I FORFEIT.

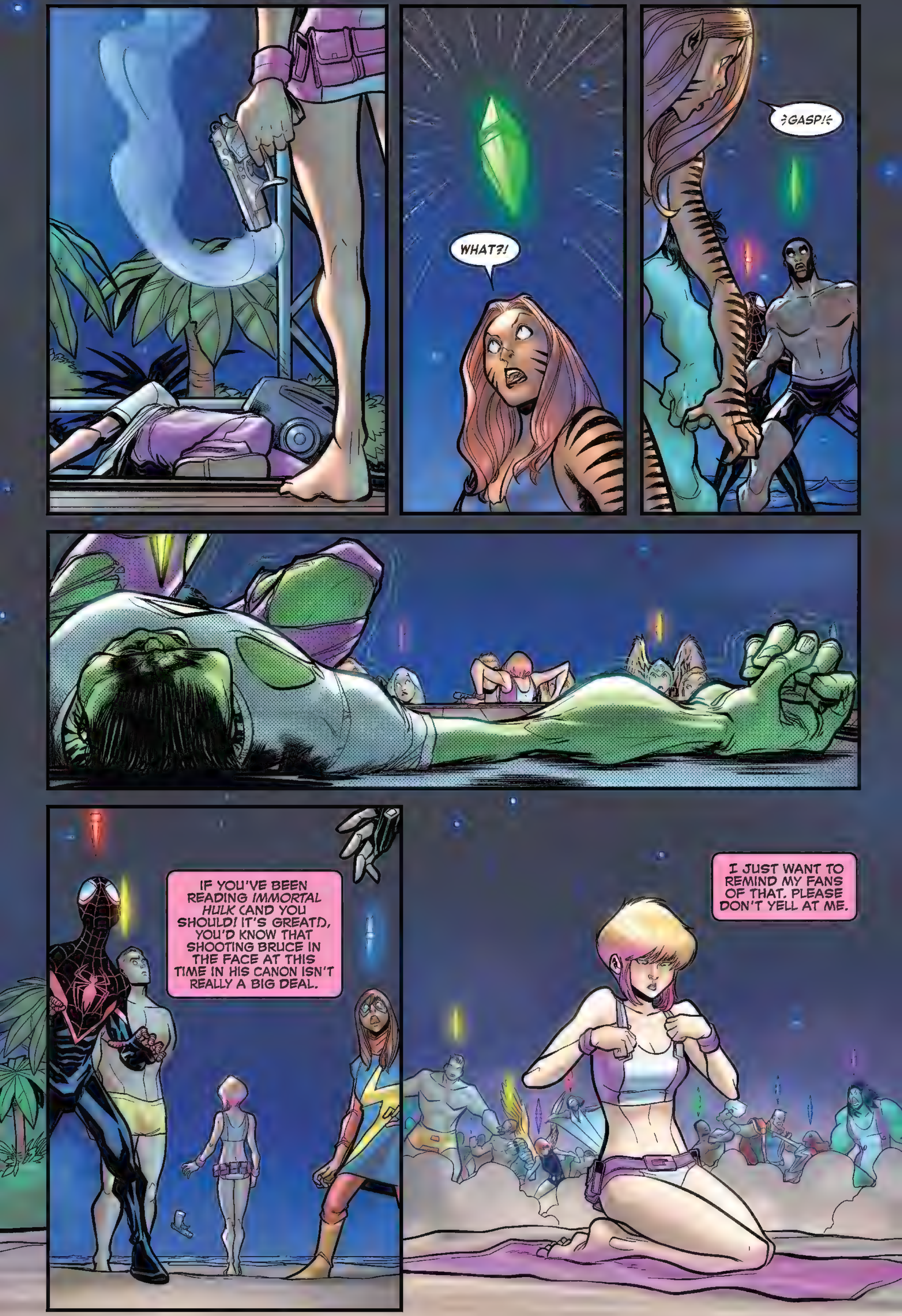

POW
OOF!
...HUH. I'LL BE DAMNED--
THERE *ARE* SNACKS.
I MEAN. OBVIOUSLY I HAD TO EXEMPT THESE FINE FOLKS FROM PARTICIPATION IN MY GLORY MISSION.
HI, FRIENDS!
THAT'S *ENOUGH!* ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR *MIND?!*
GUH. YOU ARE... SO PRETTY... UP CLOSE...
POOR CAP. SUCH A SQUARE. DOESN'T EVEN REALIZE HOW HOT THIS IS.

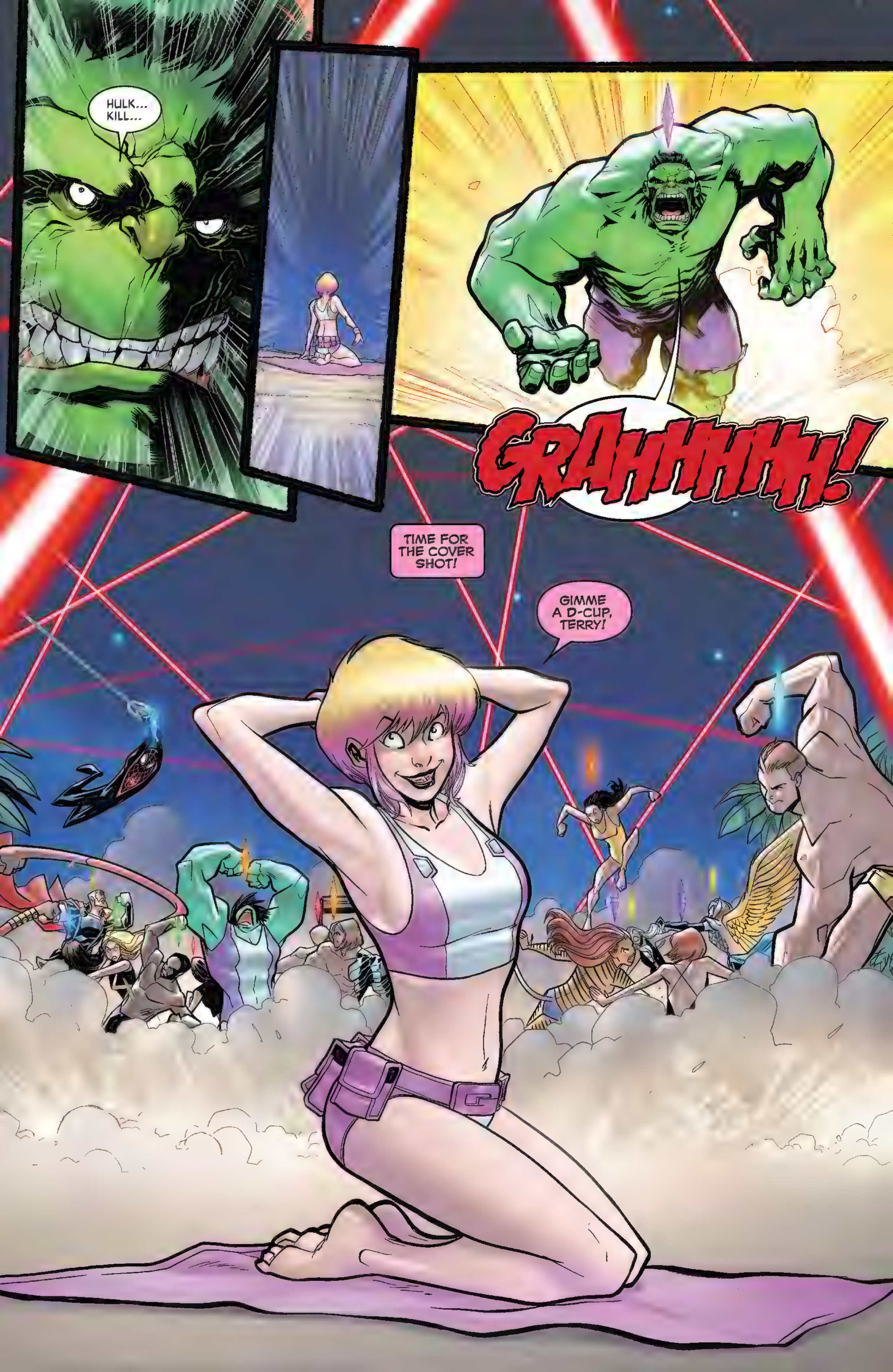

QUESTION!
GWENPOOL
YES! DOREEN!
FIRST QUESTION--IS THERE A PRIZE? I KNOW YOU SAID YOU'RE GOING TO WIN, BUT I THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO PROVIDE FURTHER INCENTIVE FOR THE REST OF US TO PARTICIPATE.
YOU SO SMART. I MEAN, UH-- YEAH!
TONY STARK'S MASSIVE CASH PRIZE DONATION
IN FACT, TONY STARK *HIMSELF* DONATED A HUuuuUGE CASH PRIZE FOR THE WINNER!
(I'M JUST GONNA WING IT WITH MY FLASHBACK ABILITY, OKAY?)
HERE'S WHAT YOU *DIDN'T* SEE HAPPENING OFF-PANEL IN *CIVIL WAR II #8*--TONY'S LAST WORDS RIGHT BEFORE THAT EIGHT-MONTH COMA.
SET ASIDE... A...*RIDICULOUSLY* MASSIVE...AMOUNT OF CASH...FOR GWENPOOL...
I DON'T 'MEMBER DOING THAT AT ALL, BUT SOMEHOW AS SOON AS SHE SAID IT, I KNEW IT WAS TRUE.
SHE'S *NOT* A VILLAIN, YOU SAID?
MM-HM.
SECOND QUESTION!
THIS IS TO *HELP* YOU, RIGHT? THIS WHOLE CONSTRUCT?
YES. YES, IT IS. LIKE, FOR REAL. THANK YOU, DOREEN.

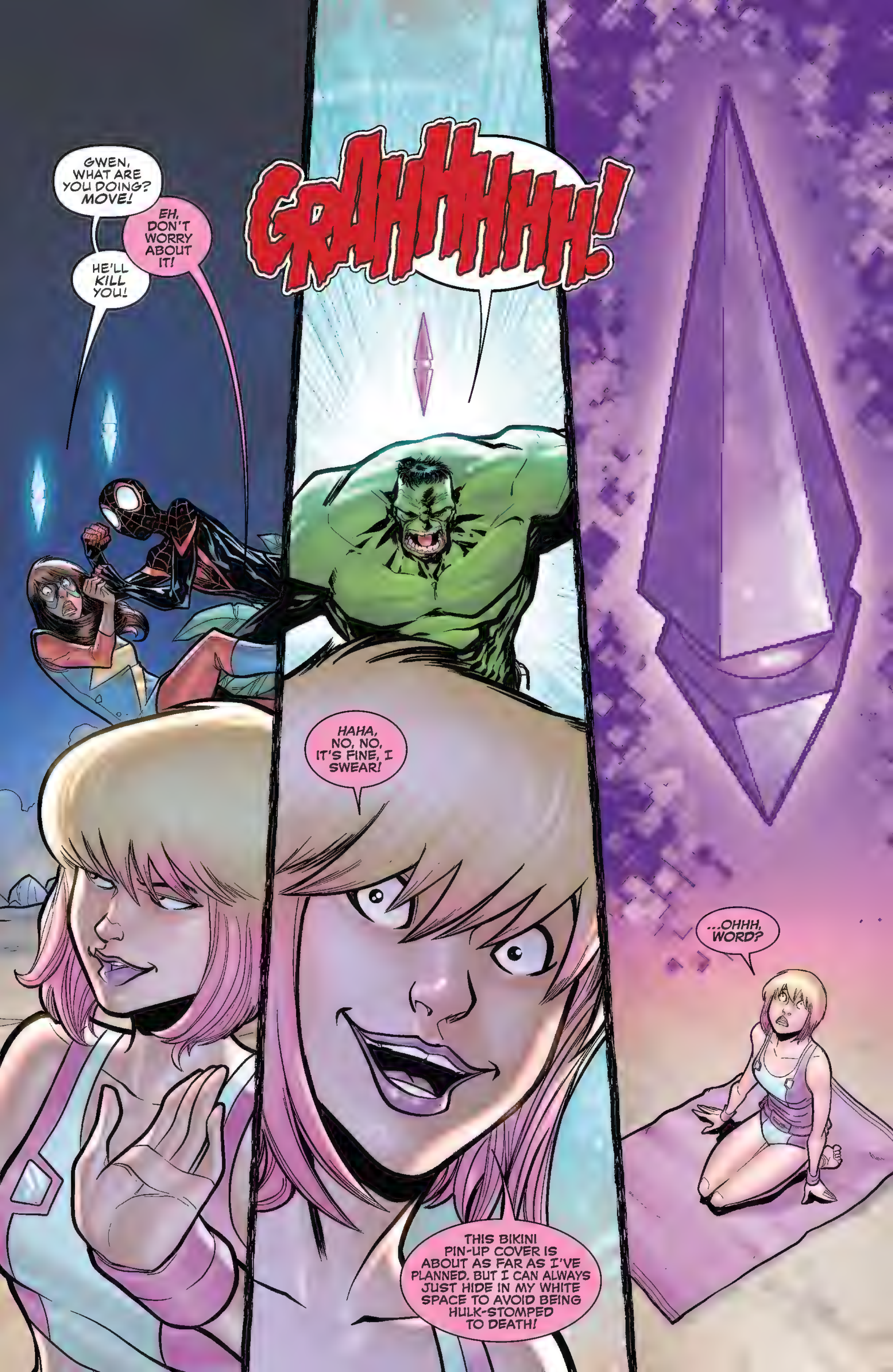

OKAY! THEN I FORFEIT. YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO FACE OFF AGAINST ME. I'D WIN.*
*SHE'S RIGHT!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
I'M TAKING THESE CINNAMON ROLLS WITH ME! IT'S BAD FOR YOUR PUBLIC IMAGE TO DEATH-MATCH THE CHILDREN.
SMART! JOIN MY MINECRAFT SERVER LATER? I LOVE YOU. PLEASE BE MY FRIEND.
SURE!
YOU CLAIM TO BE ONE OF US BUT TRAPPED US IN A SCENARIO OVERRUN WITH ETHICAL VIOLATIONS--
?!
I'M NOT DONE VIOLATING YOUR WET-BLANKET ETHICS YET, STEVE. BUT THE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION PORTION OF OUR SHOW HAS CONCLUDED. SO.
YOU'RE BEING DISRUPTIVE! GO BACK DOWN THERE. PLEASE! THANK YOU! (PLEASE.)
THIS ENDS NOW.
AH, AH--
IT ENDS WHEN I SAY IT ENDS.
BRUCE BANNER, A.K.A. THE IMMORTAL HULK!


THE HELL IS SHE DOING?!
SHE'S PUT A NULLIFIER IN HERE. OUR POWERS AREN'T WORKING.
BAM BAM
>SIGH<
I'M SORRY, FRIENDS. I HAD TO MAKE SURE YOU WOULDN'T TRY TO STOP ME.
YOU GUYS ALL THINK I'M A JOKE, RIGHT? WACKY.
WELL, THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT BRUCE FOR "SHOW, DON'T TELL."
HE'S BEEN ON THE RUN FROM THE AVENGERS FOR...WHAT, LIKE, 24 ISSUES NOW? AND YOU GUYS STILL COULDN'T FIND HIM?
COOL. WELL. IT TOOK ME ABOUT FIFTEEN SECONDS TO FIND AND SUBDUE BRUCE.
BY MYSELF.
AAAAND *FLASHBACK* OF A FLASHBACK!
I'D ALREADY SET THIS UP WHILE I WAS BUILDING THE ISLAND (BECAUSE THAT MAKES SENSE), BUT THE WRITER GOT A NOTE ABOUT NEEDING TO SHOW IT TOO. :>


GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK'S
WENPOOL'S LAND
RVEL
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME YET, THAT'S FINE. YOU ALL THINK I'M CRAZY. I KNOW THAT TOO.
I KNOW IT BECAUSE YOU KEEP TELLING ME I'M INSANE.
IT'S OKAY. I FORGIVE YOU. I KNOW YOU JUST DON'T "GET" ME YET.
BECAUSE IF YOU HAD ACTUALLY BEEN PAYING ATTENTION TO ME INSTEAD OF GASLIGHTING ME ABOUT BEING CRAZY--YOU WOULD KNOW BETTER BY NOW. SO...HERE WE ARE. DON'T BE SCARED.
THIS IS ALL JUST A FRIENDLY DEMONSTRATION.
AND THIS IS THE STARTING GUN.

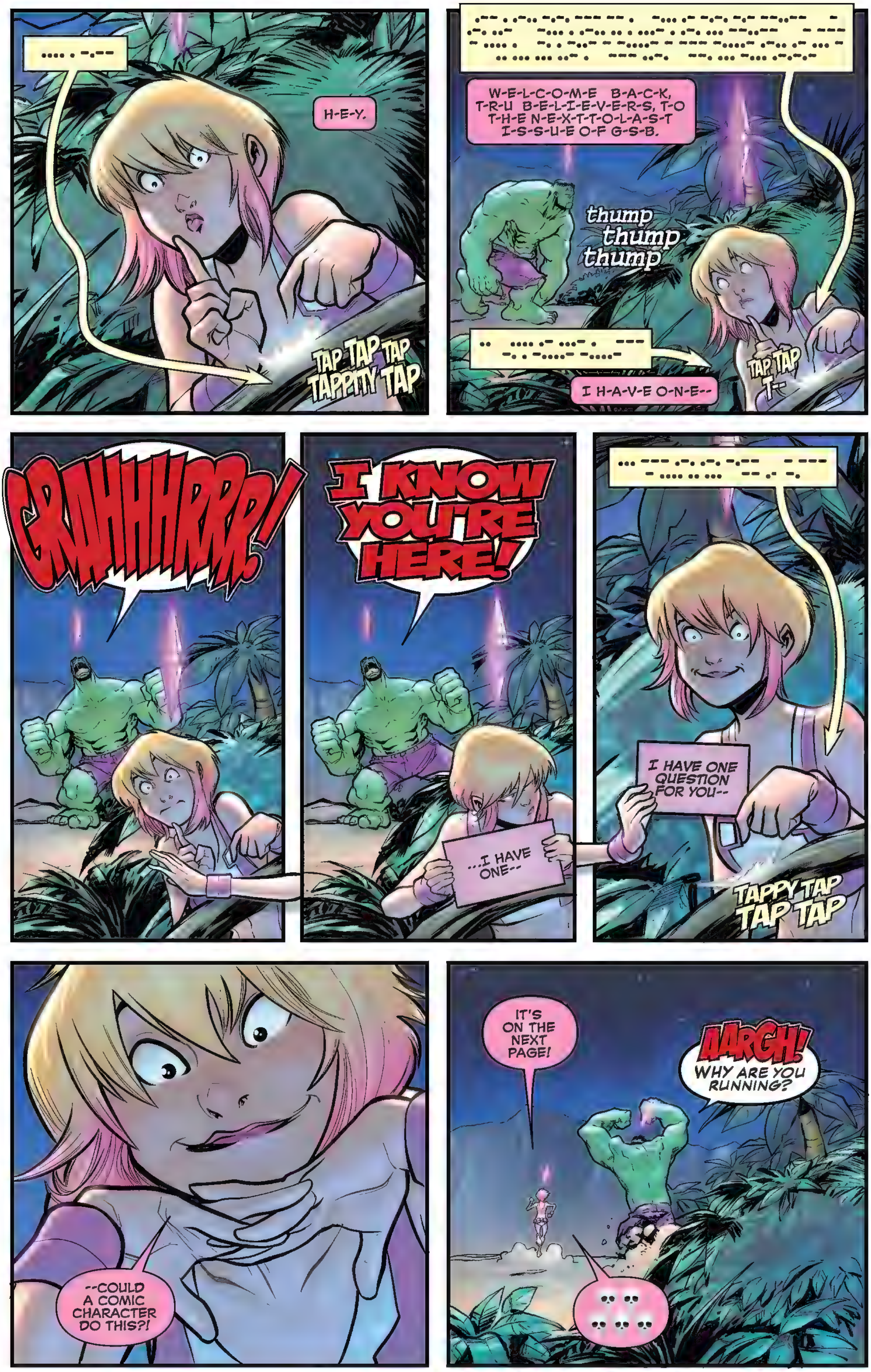

WHAT?!
GASP!
IF YOU'VE BEEN READING *IMMORTAL HULK* (AND YOU SHOULD! IT'S GREAT!), YOU'D KNOW THAT SHOOTING BRUCE IN THE FACE AT THIS TIME IN HIS CANON ISN'T REALLY A BIG DEAL.
I JUST WANT TO REMIND MY FANS OF THAT. PLEASE DON'T YELL AT ME.

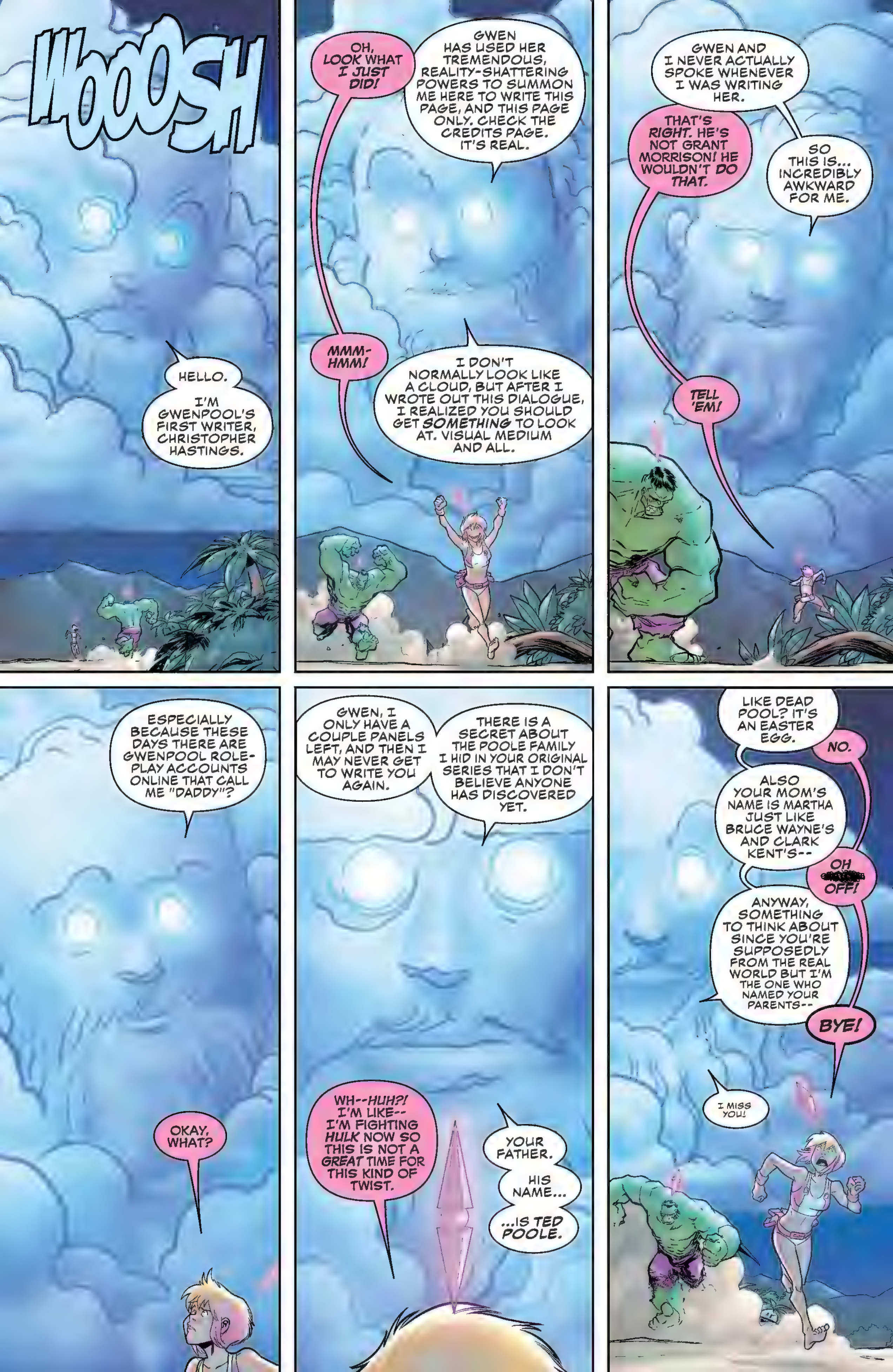

HULK... KILL...
GRAHHHHH!
TIME FOR THE COVER SHOT!
GIMME A D-CUP, TERRY!

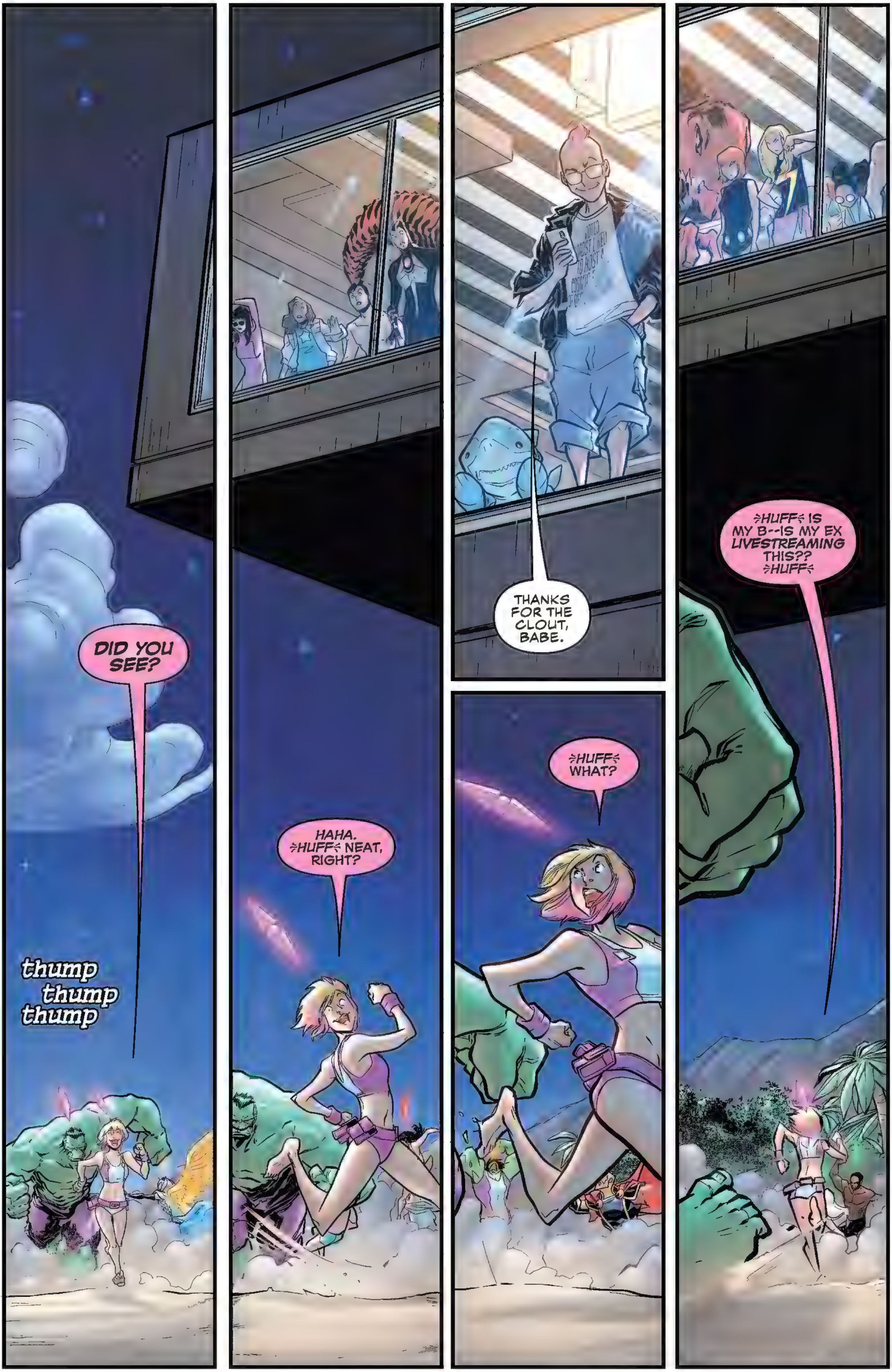

GWEN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? MOVE!
EH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
HE'LL KILL YOU!
GRAHHHHHH!
HAHA, NO, NO, IT'S FINE, I SWEAR!
...OHHH, WORD?
THIS BIKINI PIN-UP COVER IS ABOUT AS FAR AS I'VE PLANNED. BUT I CAN ALWAYS JUST HIDE IN MY WHITE SPACE TO AVOID BEING HULK-STOMPED TO DEATH!

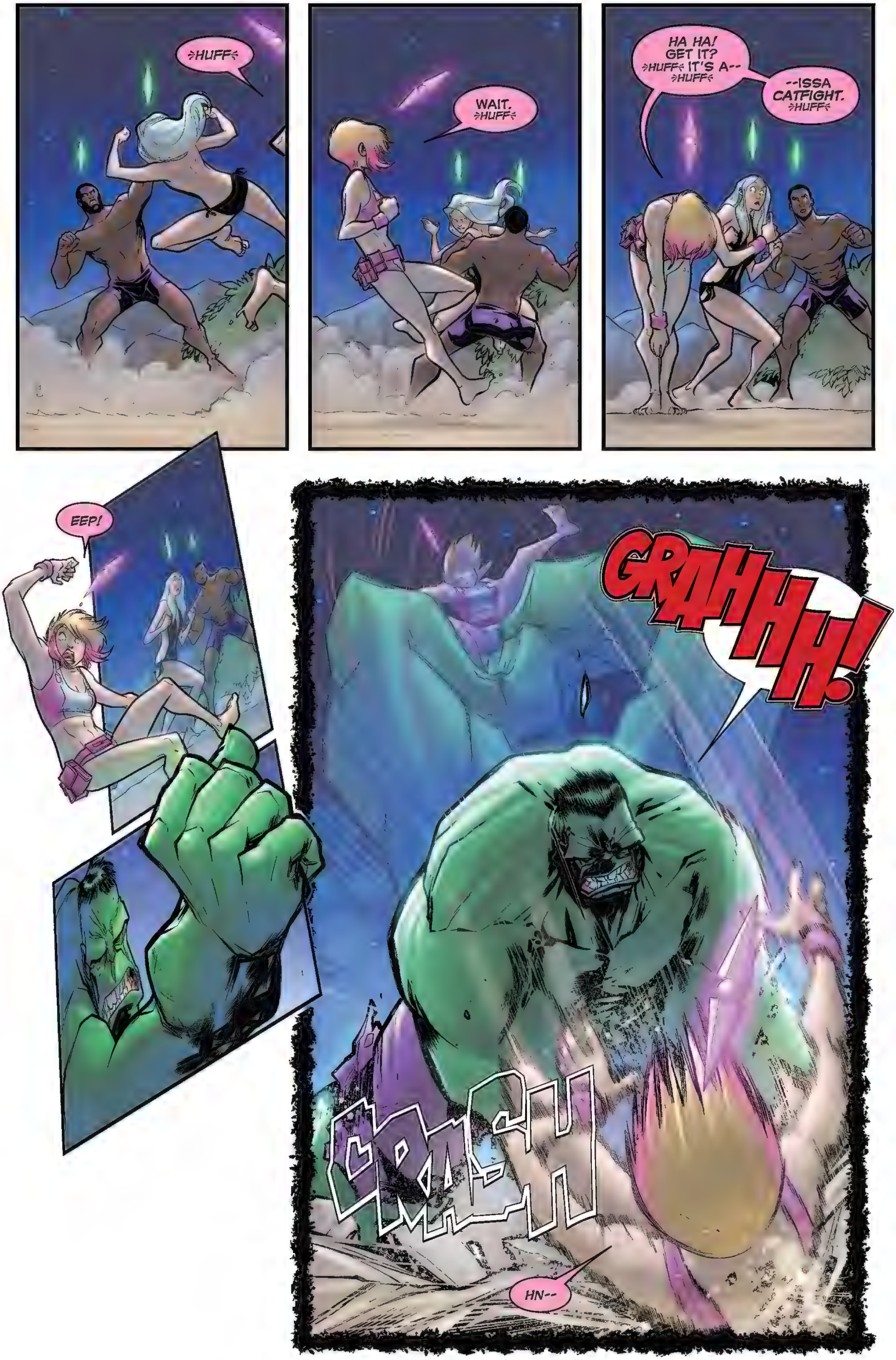
TERRY DODSON
RACHEL

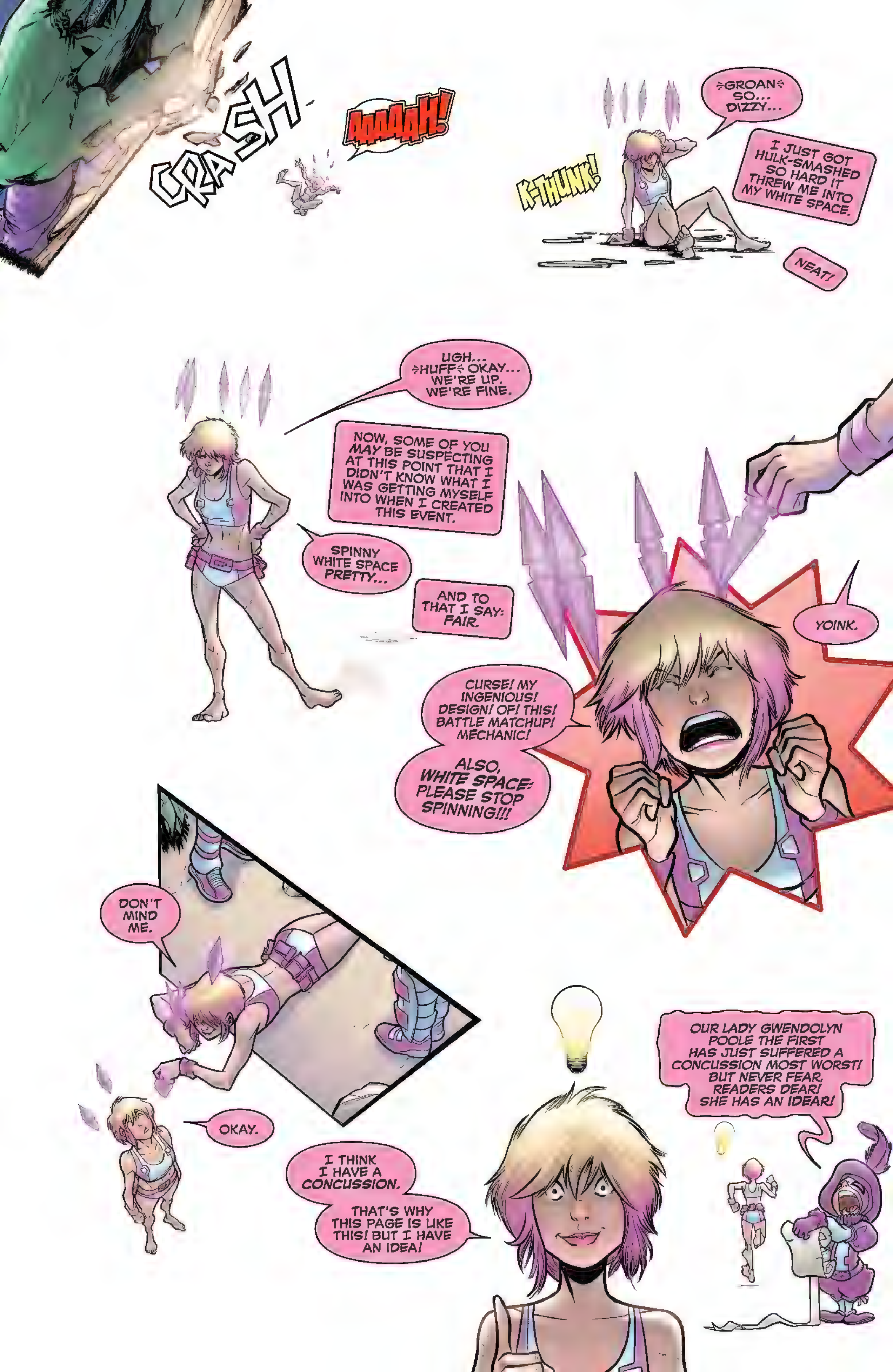
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #4

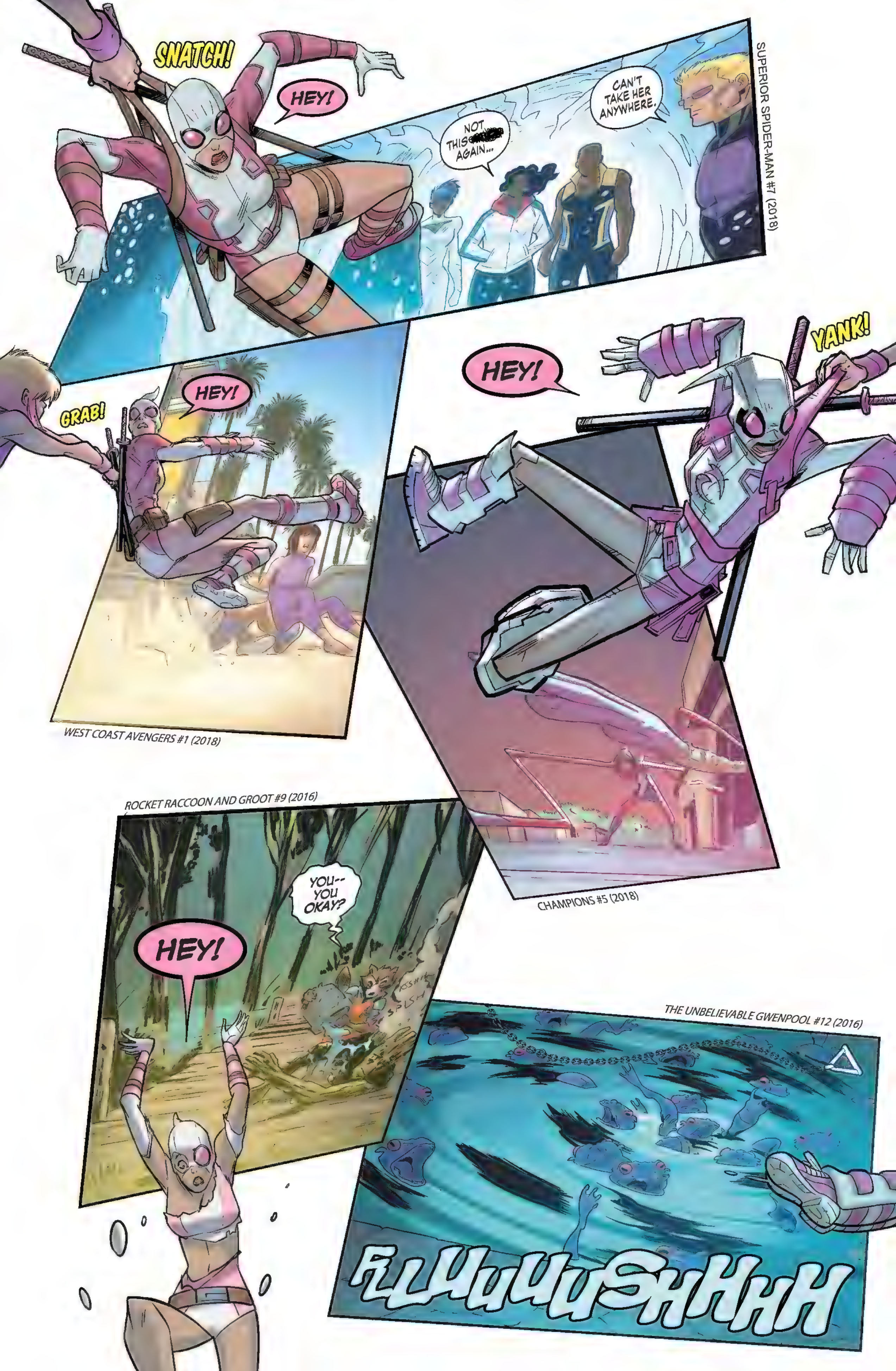

H-E-Y.
TAP TAP TAP TAPPITY TAP
W-E-L-C-O-M-E B-A-C-K, T-R-U B-E-L-I-E-V-E-R-S, T-O T-H-E N-E-X-T-T-O-L-A-S-T I-S-S-U-E O-F G-S-B.
thump thump thump
I H-A-V-E O-N-E--
TAP TAP T--
GRAHHHRRR!
I KNOW YOU'RE HERE!
...I HAVE ONE--
I HAVE ONE QUESTION FOR YOU--
TAPPY TAP TAP TAP
--COULD A COMIC CHARACTER DO THIS?!
IT'S ON THE NEXT PAGE!
AARGH! WHY ARE YOU RUNNING?
☠☠☠☠☠


WOOOSH
HELLO.
I'M GWENPOOL'S FIRST WRITER, CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS.
OH, LOOK WHAT I JUST DID!
GWEN HAS USED HER TREMENDOUS, REALITY-SHATTERING POWERS TO SUMMON ME HERE TO WRITE THIS PAGE, AND THIS PAGE ONLY. CHECK THE CREDITS PAGE. IT'S REAL.
MMM-HMM!
I DON'T NORMALLY LOOK LIKE A CLOUD, BUT AFTER I WROTE OUT THIS DIALOGUE, I REALIZED YOU SHOULD GET SOMETHING TO LOOK AT. VISUAL MEDIUM AND ALL.
GWEN AND I NEVER ACTUALLY SPOKE WHENEVER I WAS WRITING HER.
THAT'S RIGHT. HE'S NOT GRANT MORRISON! HE WOULDN'T DO THAT.
SO THIS IS... INCREDIBLY AWKWARD FOR ME.
TELL 'EM!
ESPECIALLY BECAUSE THESE DAYS THERE ARE GWENPOOL ROLE-PLAY ACCOUNTS ONLINE THAT CALL ME "DADDY"?
OKAY, WHAT?
GWEN, I ONLY HAVE A COUPLE PANELS LEFT, AND THEN I MAY NEVER GET TO WRITE YOU AGAIN.
THERE IS A SECRET ABOUT THE POOLE FAMILY I HID IN YOUR ORIGINAL SERIES THAT I DON'T BELIEVE ANYONE HAS DISCOVERED YET.
WH--HUH?! I'M LIKE-- I'M FIGHTING HULK NOW SO THIS IS NOT A GREAT TIME FOR THIS KIND OF TWIST.
YOUR FATHER.
HIS NAME...
...IS TED POOLE.
LIKE DEAD POOL? IT'S AN EASTER EGG.
NO.
ALSO YOUR MOM'S NAME IS MARTHA JUST LIKE BRUCE WAYNE'S AND CLARK KENT'S--
OH [redacted] OFF!
ANYWAY, SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT SINCE YOU'RE SUPPOSEDLY FROM THE REAL WORLD BUT I'M THE ONE WHO NAMED YOUR PARENTS--
BYE!
I MISS YOU!


DID YOU SEE?
thump thump thump
HAHA. ≥HUFF≤ NEAT, RIGHT?
THANKS FOR THE CLOUT, BABE.
≥HUFF≤ WHAT?
≥HUFF≤ IS MY B--IS MY EX LIVESTREAMING THIS?? ≥HUFF≤


HUFF
WAIT. HUFF
HA HA! GET IT? HUFF IT'S A-- HUFF
--ISSA CATFIGHT. HUFF
EEP!
GRAHHHH!
CRASH
HN--


CRASH
AAAAAH!
K-THUNK!
GROAN SO... DIZZY...
I JUST GOT HULK-SMASHED SO HARD IT THREW ME INTO MY WHITE SPACE.
NEAT!
UGH... HUFF OKAY... WE'RE UP. WE'RE FINE.
NOW, SOME OF YOU MAY BE SUSPECTING AT THIS POINT THAT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS GETTING MYSELF INTO WHEN I CREATED THIS EVENT.
SPINNY WHITE SPACE PRETTY...
AND TO THAT I SAY: FAIR.
YOINK.
CURSE! MY INGENIOUS! DESIGN! OF! THIS! BATTLE MATCHUP! MECHANIC!
ALSO, WHITE SPACE: PLEASE STOP SPINNING!!!
DON'T MIND ME.
OKAY.
I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION.
THAT'S WHY THIS PAGE IS LIKE THIS! BUT I HAVE AN IDEA!
OUR LADY GWENDOLYN POOLE THE FIRST HAS JUST SUFFERED A CONCUSSION MOST WORST! BUT NEVER FEAR, READERS DEAR! SHE HAS AN IDEA!


SNATCH!
HEY!
NOT THIS [redacted] AGAIN...
CAN'T TAKE HER ANYWHERE.
GRAB!
HEY!
HEY!
YANK!
YOU-- YOU OKAY?
HEY!
FLUUUUUSHHHH

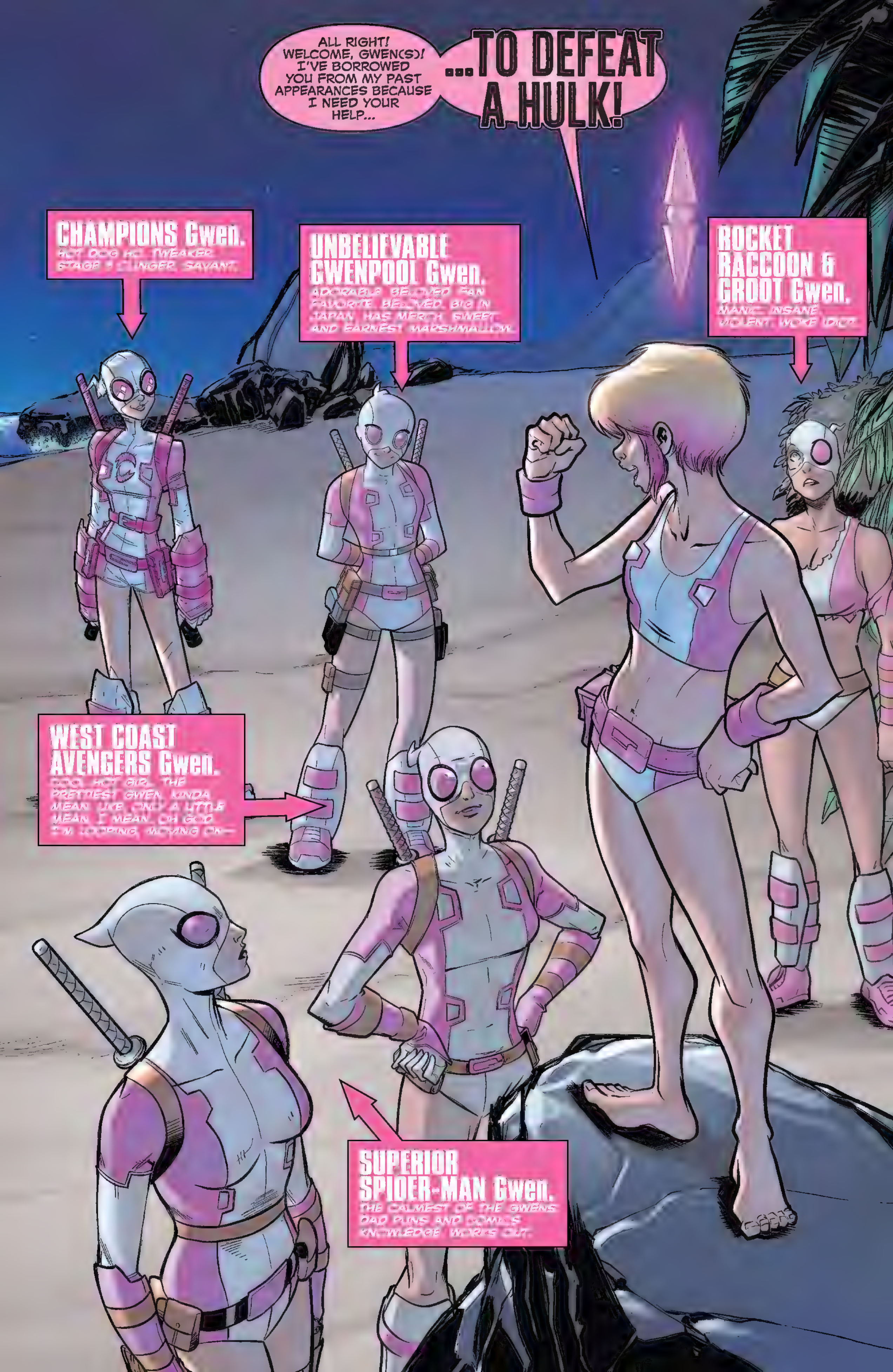
SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN #7 (2018)

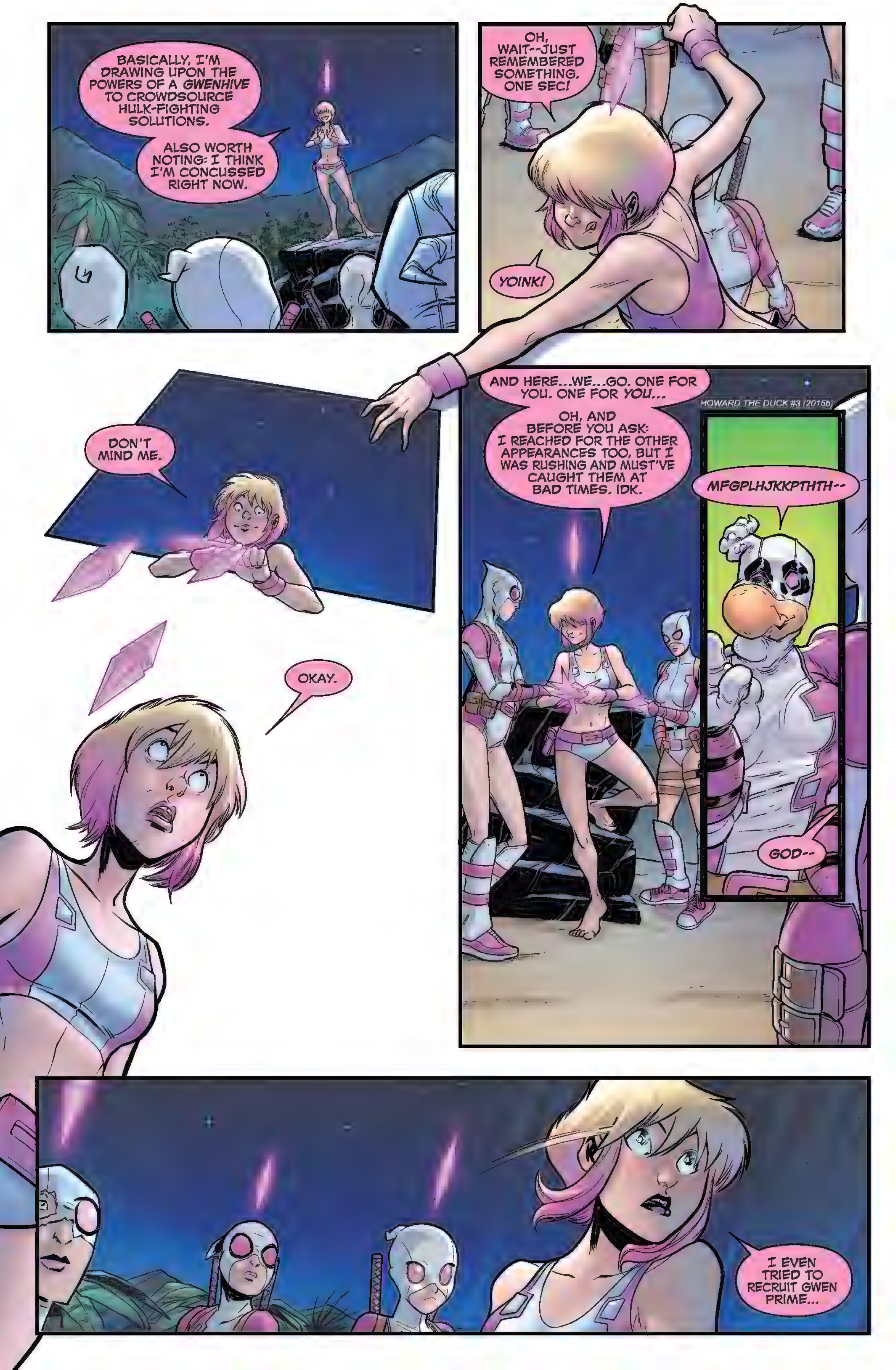
WEST COAST AVENGERS #1 (2018)

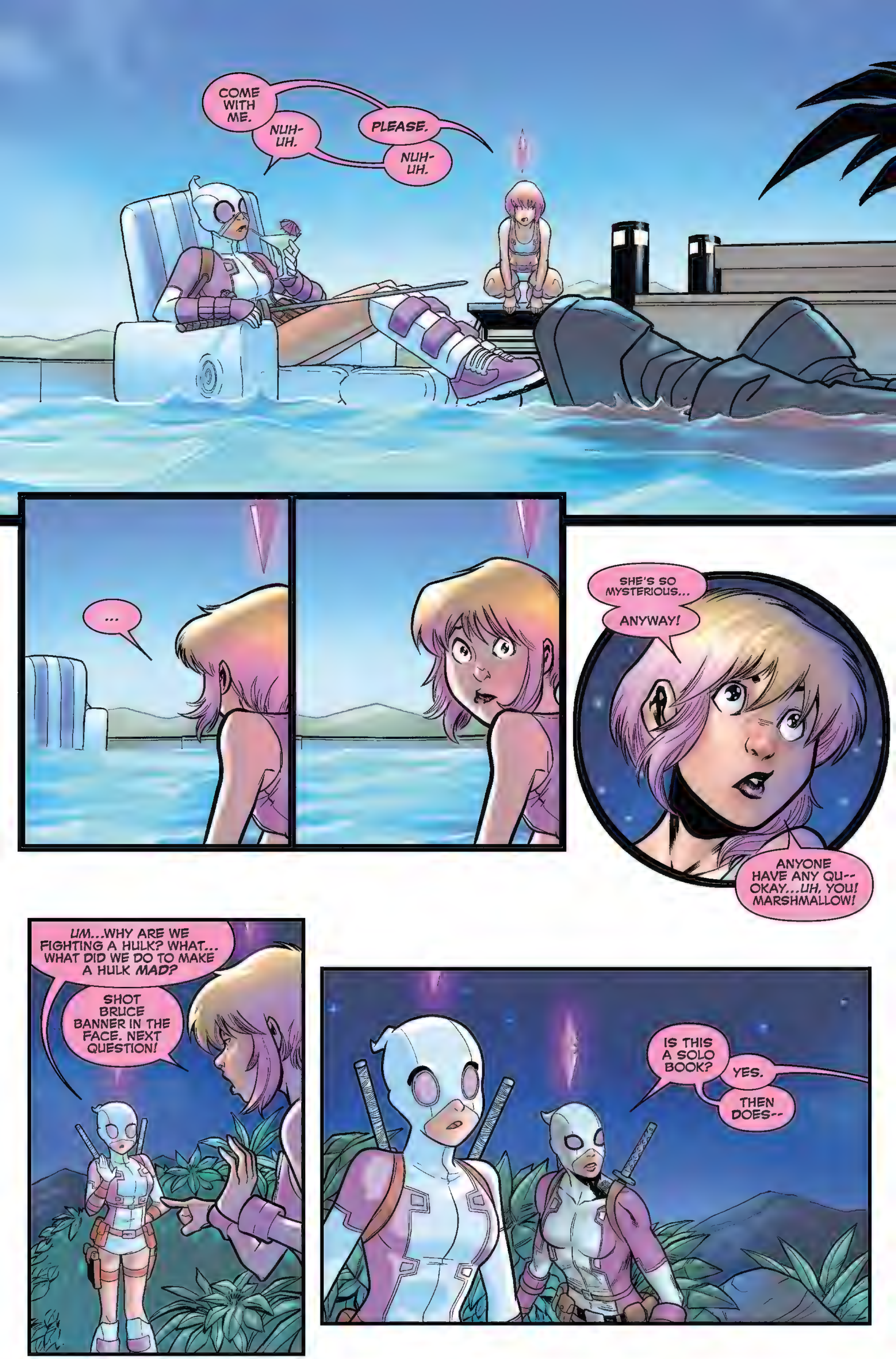
CHAMPIONS #5 (2018)

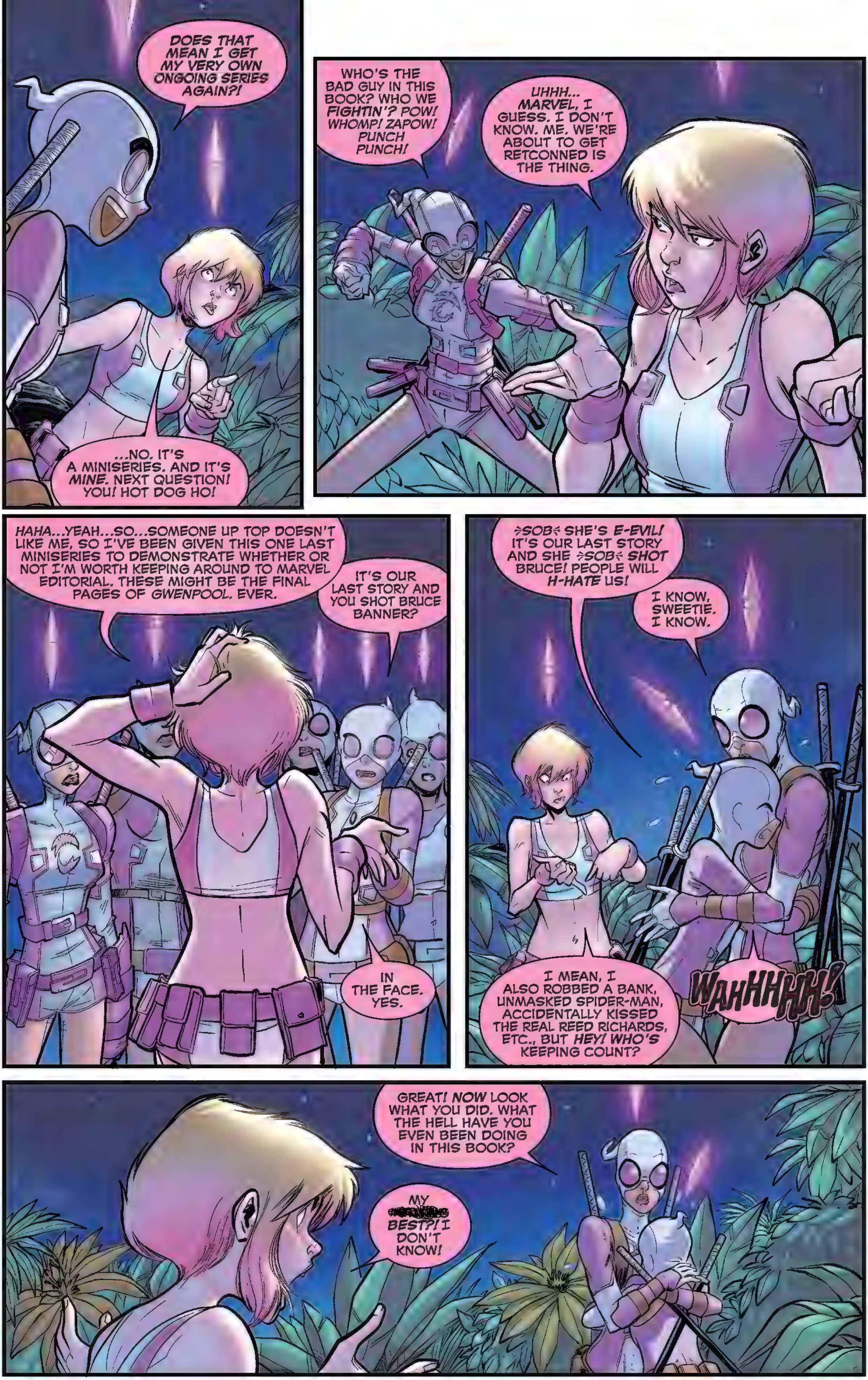
ROCKET RACCOON AND GROOT #9 (2016)

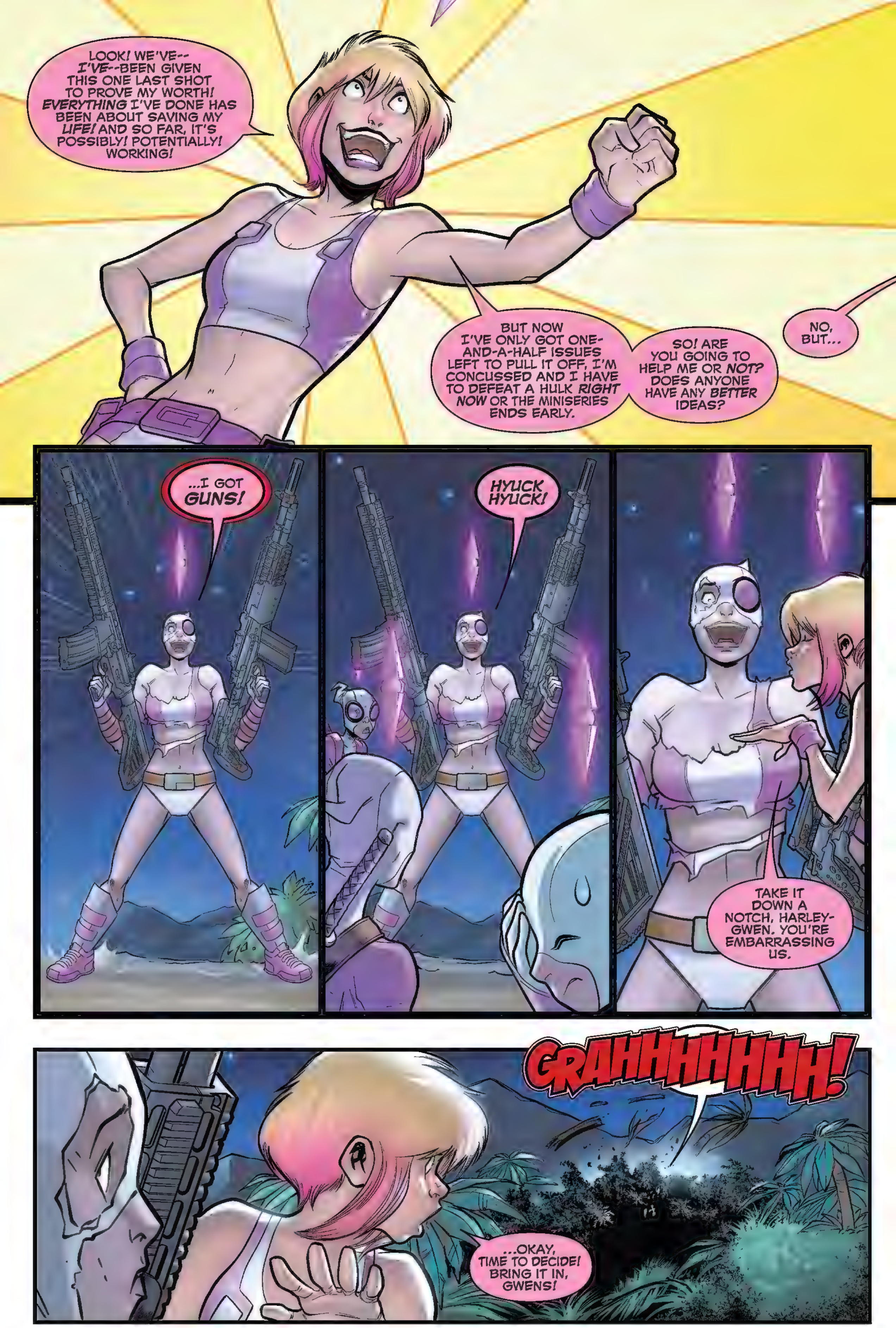
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #12 (2016)

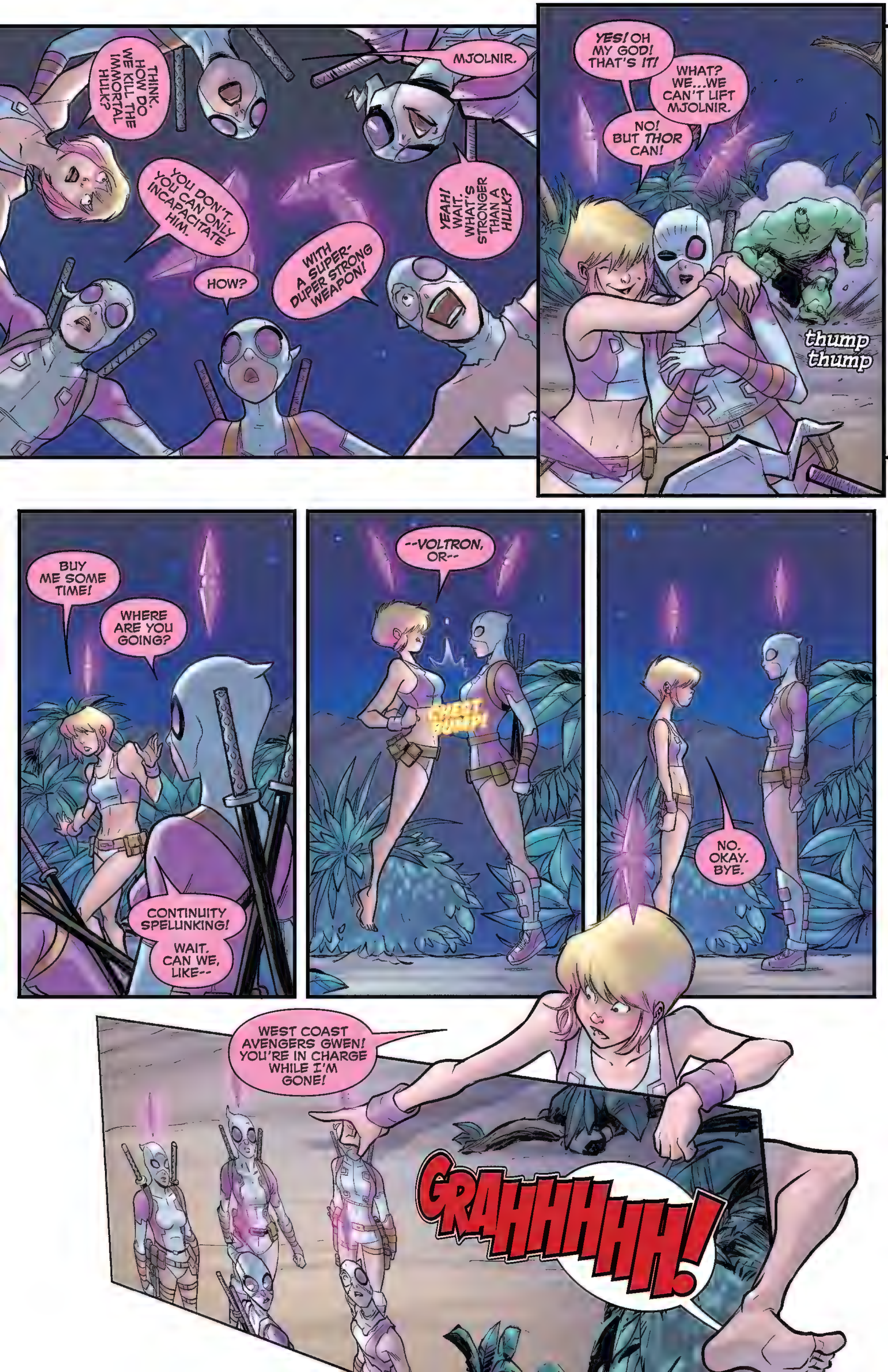

ALL RIGHT! WELCOME, GWEN(S)! I'VE BORROWED YOU FROM MY PAST APPEARANCES BECAUSE I NEED YOUR HELP...
...TO DEFEAT A HULK!
CHAMPIONS Gwen. HOT DOG HC. TWEAKER. STAGE 1 CLINGER. SAVANT.
UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL Gwen. ADORABLE. BELOVED FAN FAVORITE. BELOVED. BIG IN JAPAN. HAS MERCH. SWEET AND EARNEST MARSHMALLOW.
ROCKET RACCOON & GROOT Gwen. MANIC. INSANE. VIOLENT. WOKE IDIOT.
WEST COAST AVENGERS Gwen. COOL. HOT GIRL. THE PRETTIEST GWEN. KINDA MEAN LIKE ONLY A LITTLE MEAN. I MEAN, OH GOD I'M LOOPING. MOVING ON—
SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN Gwen. THE CALMEST OF THE GWENS. DAD PUNS AND COMICS KNOWLEDGE. WORKS OUT.

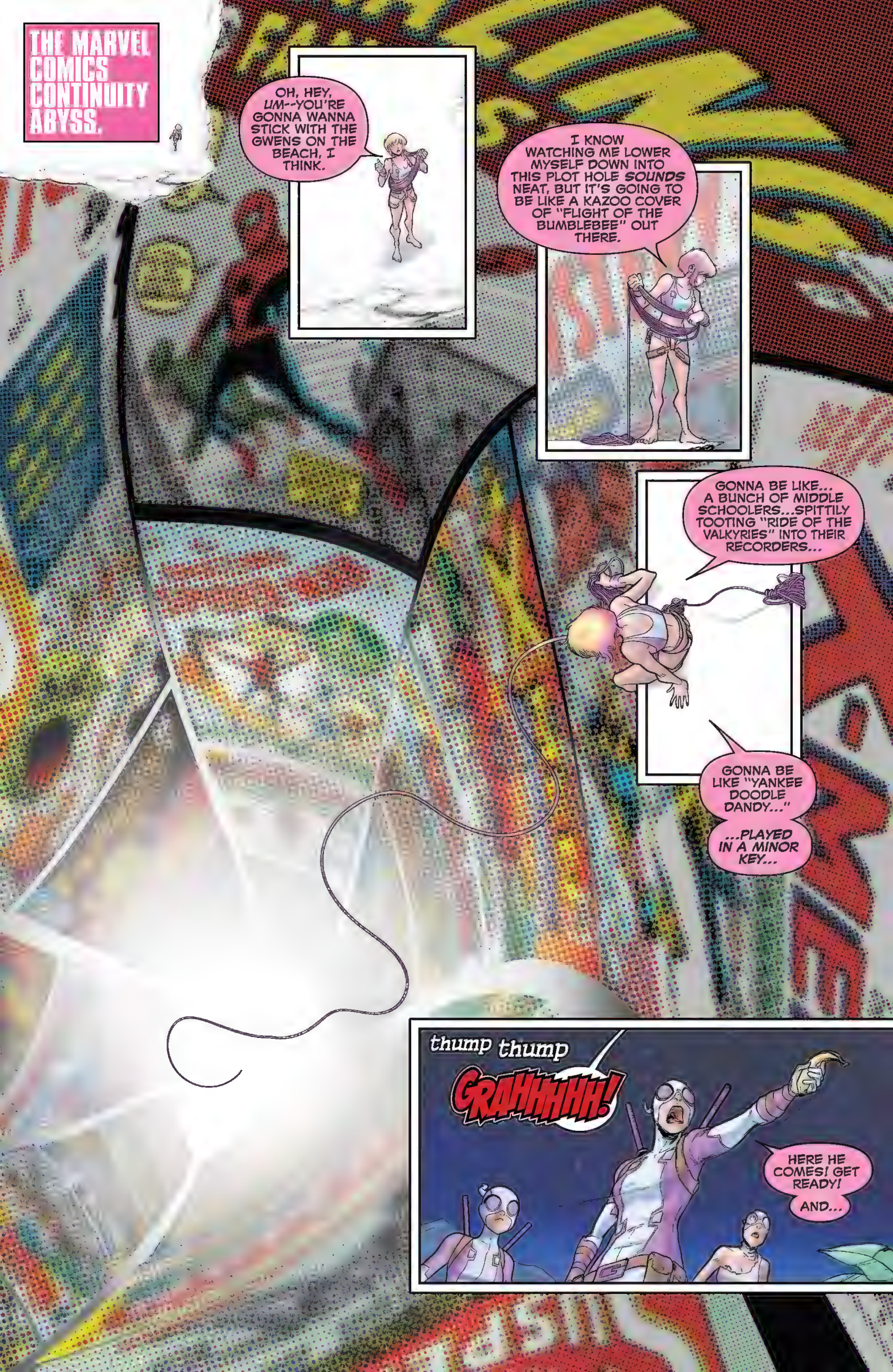

BASICALLY, I'M DRAWING UPON THE POWERS OF A *GWENHIVE* TO CROWDSOURCE HULK-FIGHTING SOLUTIONS.
ALSO WORTH NOTING: I THINK I'M CONCUSSED RIGHT NOW.
OH, WAIT--JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING. ONE SEC!
YOINK!
DON'T MIND ME.
OKAY.
AND HERE...WE...GO. ONE FOR YOU. ONE FOR *YOU*...
OH, AND BEFORE YOU ASK: I REACHED FOR THE OTHER APPEARANCES TOO, BUT I WAS RUSHING AND MUST'VE CAUGHT THEM AT BAD TIMES. IDK.
HOWARD THE DUCK #3 (2015b)
MFGPLHJKKPTHTH--
GOD--
I EVEN TRIED TO RECRUIT GWEN PRIME...

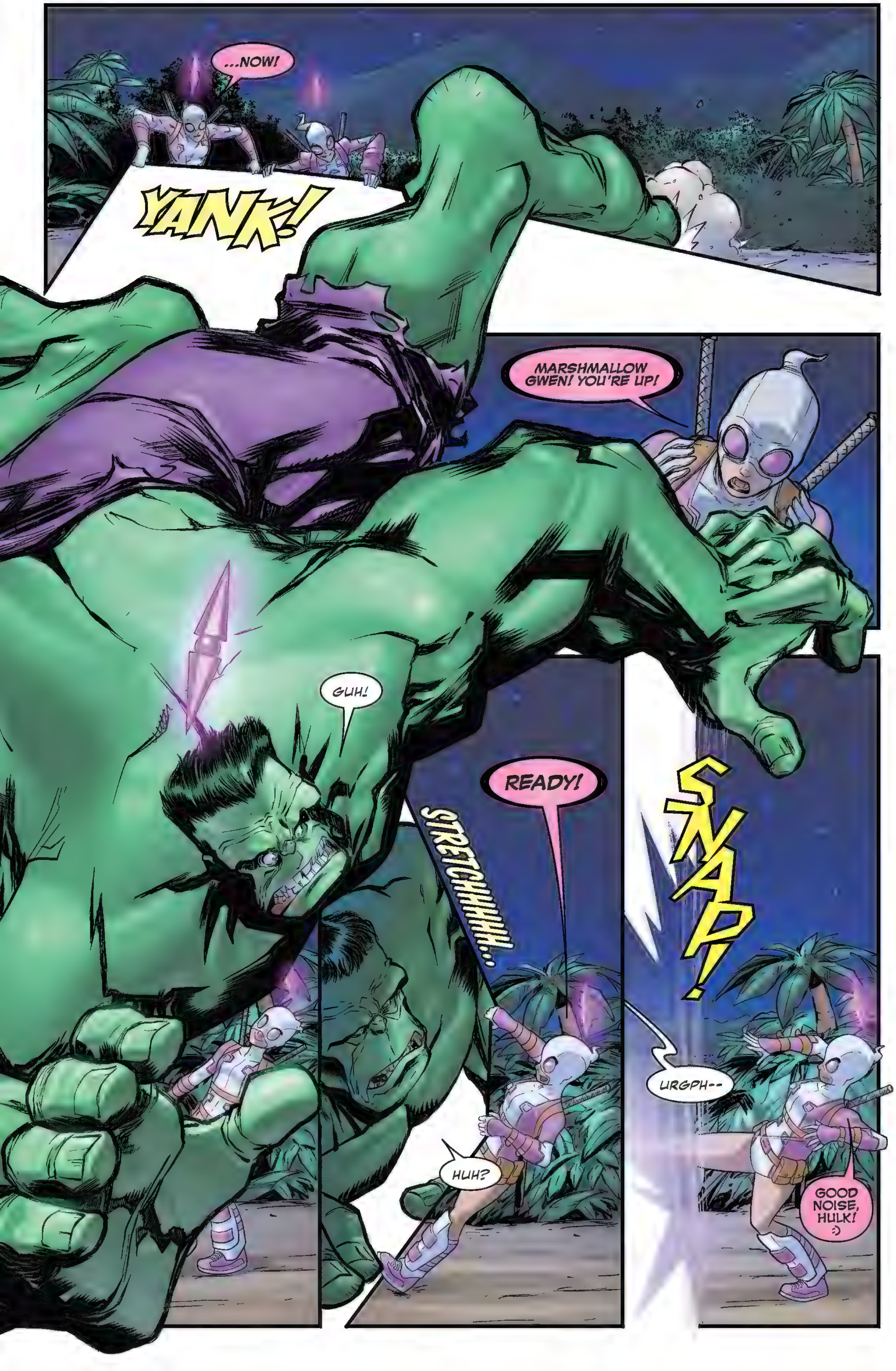

COME WITH ME.
NUH-UH.
PLEASE.
NUH-UH.
...
SHE'S SO MYSTERIOUS...
ANYWAY!
ANYONE HAVE ANY QU-- OKAY...*UH*, YOU! MARSHMALLOW!
UM...WHY ARE WE FIGHTING A HULK? WHAT... WHAT DID WE DO TO MAKE A HULK *MAD?*
SHOT BRUCE BANNER IN THE FACE. NEXT QUESTION!
IS THIS A SOLO BOOK?
YES.
THEN DOES--

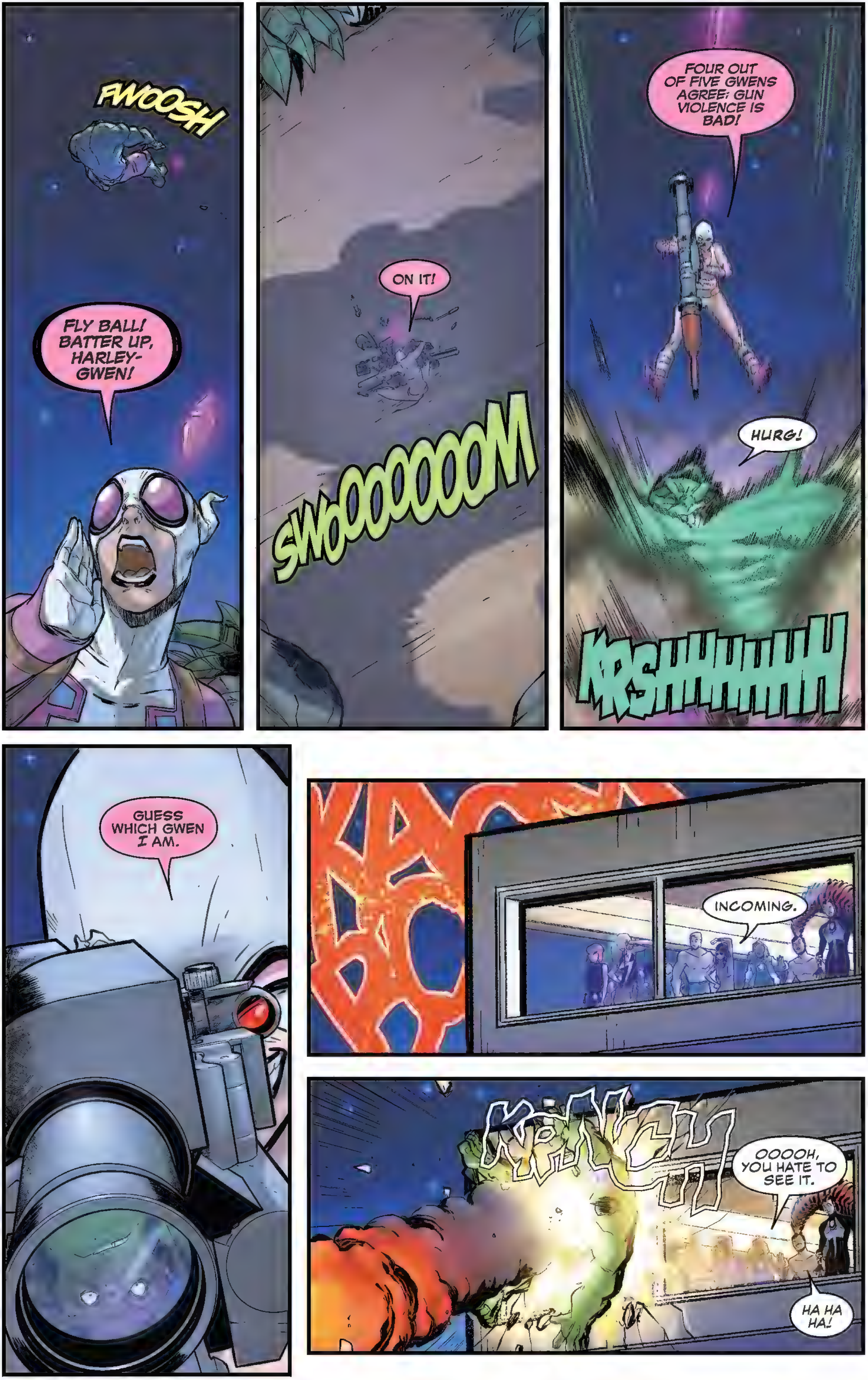

DOES THAT MEAN I GET MY VERY OWN ONGOING SERIES AGAIN?!
...NO. IT'S A MINISERIES. AND IT'S *MINE*. NEXT QUESTION! YOU! HOT DOG HO!
WHO'S THE BAD GUY IN THIS BOOK? WHO WE *FIGHTIN'? POW! WHOMP! ZAPOW! PUNCH PUNCH!*
UHHH... *MARVEL*, I GUESS. I DON'T KNOW. ME. WE'RE ABOUT TO GET RETCONNED IS THE THING.
*HAHA...YEAH...SO...*SOMEONE UP TOP DOESN'T LIKE ME, SO I'VE BEEN GIVEN THIS ONE LAST MINISERIES TO DEMONSTRATE WHETHER OR NOT I'M WORTH KEEPING AROUND TO MARVEL EDITORIAL. THESE MIGHT BE THE FINAL PAGES OF *GWENPOOL*. EVER.
IT'S OUR LAST STORY AND YOU SHOT BRUCE BANNER?
IN THE FACE. YES.
>SOB< SHE'S *E-EVIL!* IT'S OUR LAST STORY AND SHE *>SOB< SHOT* BRUCE! PEOPLE WILL *H-HATE* US!
I KNOW, SWEETIE. I KNOW.
I MEAN, I ALSO ROBBED A BANK, UNMASKED SPIDER-MAN, ACCIDENTALLY KISSED THE REAL REED RICHARDS, ETC., BUT *HEY! WHO'S* KEEPING COUNT?
WAHHHHH!
GREAT! *NOW* LOOK WHAT YOU DID. WHAT THE HELL HAVE YOU EVEN BEEN DOING IN THIS BOOK?
MY [redacted] *BEST?!* I DON'T KNOW!

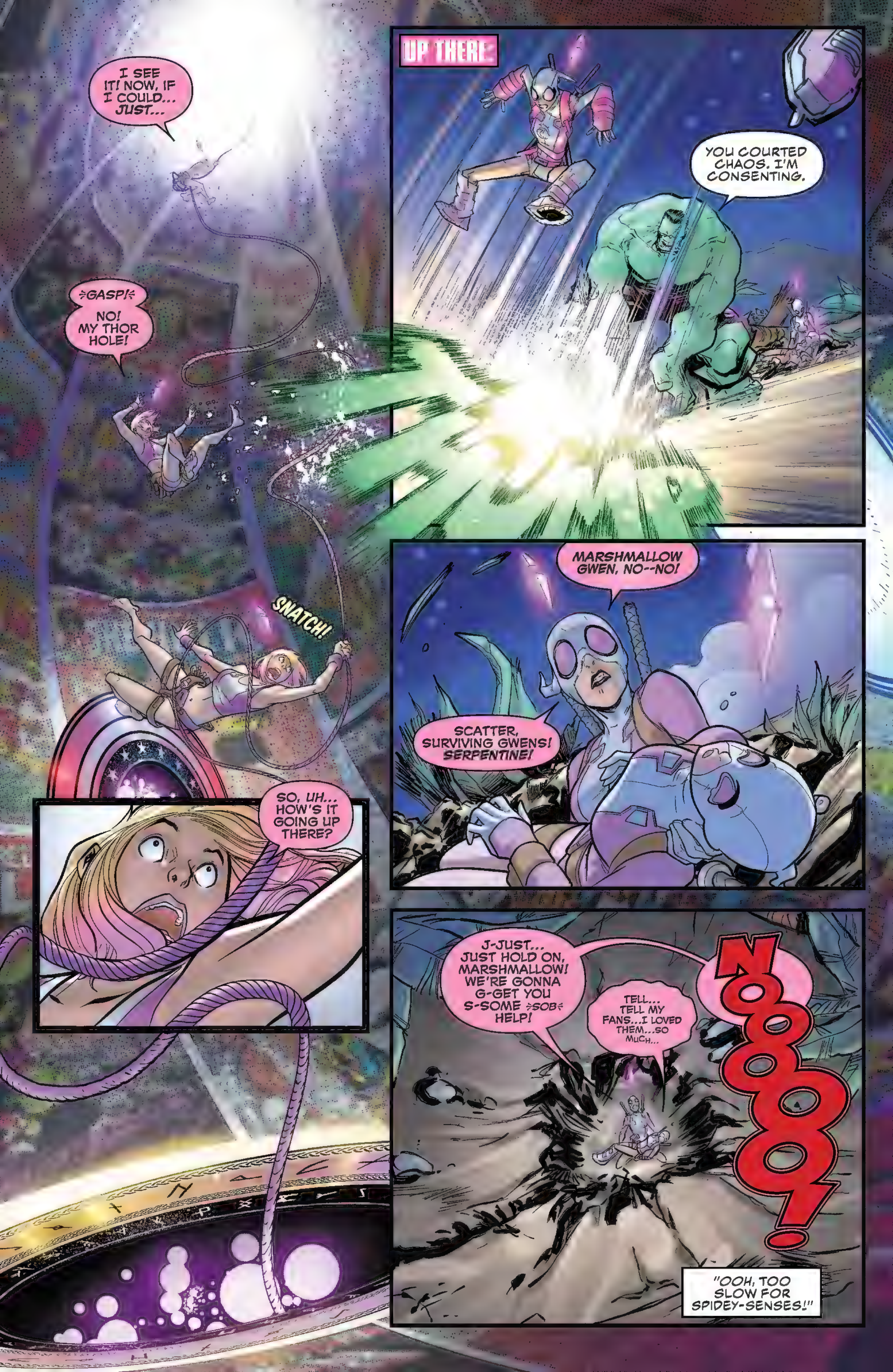

LOOK! WE'VE-- *I'VE*--BEEN GIVEN THIS ONE LAST SHOT TO PROVE MY WORTH! *EVERYTHING* I'VE DONE HAS BEEN ABOUT SAVING MY *LIFE!* AND SO FAR, IT'S POSSIBLY! POTENTIALLY! WORKING!
BUT NOW I'VE ONLY GOT ONE-AND-A-HALF ISSUES LEFT TO PULL IT OFF, I'M CONCUSSED AND I HAVE TO DEFEAT A HULK *RIGHT NOW* OR THE MINISERIES ENDS EARLY.
SO! ARE YOU GOING TO HELP ME OR *NOT?* DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY *BETTER* IDEAS?
NO, BUT...
...I GOT *GUNS!*
HYUCK HYUCK!
TAKE IT DOWN A NOTCH, HARLEY-GWEN. YOU'RE EMBARRASSING US.
GRAHHHHHHH!
...OKAY, TIME TO DECIDE! BRING IT IN, GWENS!

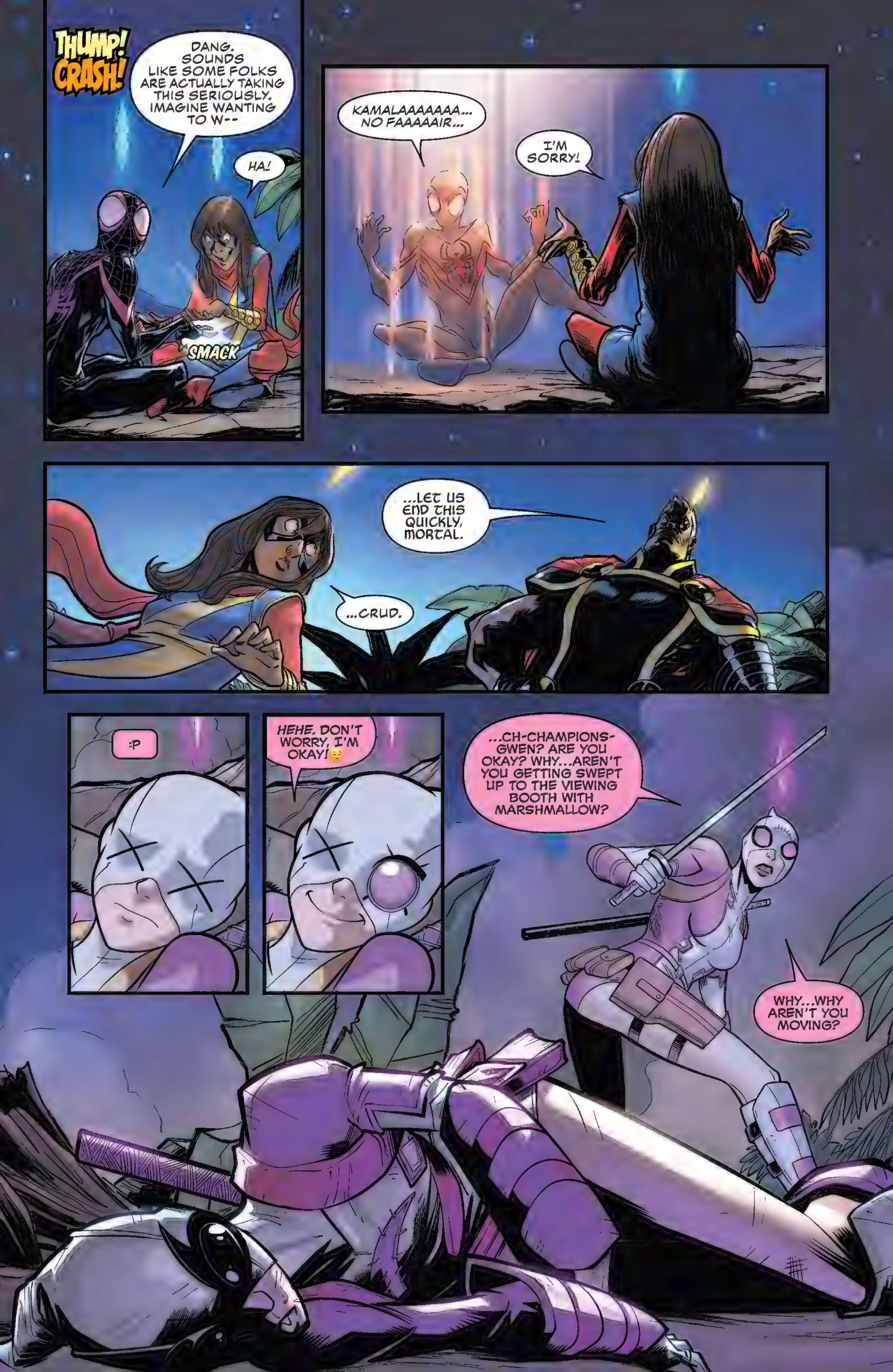

THINK. HOW DO WE KILL THE IMMORTAL HULK?
MJOLNIR.
YOU DON'T. YOU CAN ONLY INCAPACITATE HIM.
HOW?
WITH A SUPER-DUPER STRONG WEAPON!
YEAH! WAIT. WHAT'S STRONGER THAN A HULK?
YES! OH MY GOD! THAT'S IT!
WHAT? WE...WE CAN'T LIFT MJOLNIR.
NO! BUT THOR CAN!
thump thump
BUY ME SOME TIME!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
CONTINUITY SPELUNKING!
WAIT. CAN WE, LIKE--
--VOLTRON, OR--
CHEST BUMP!
NO. OKAY. BYE.
WEST COAST AVENGERS GWEN! YOU'RE IN CHARGE WHILE I'M GONE!
GRAHHHHHH!

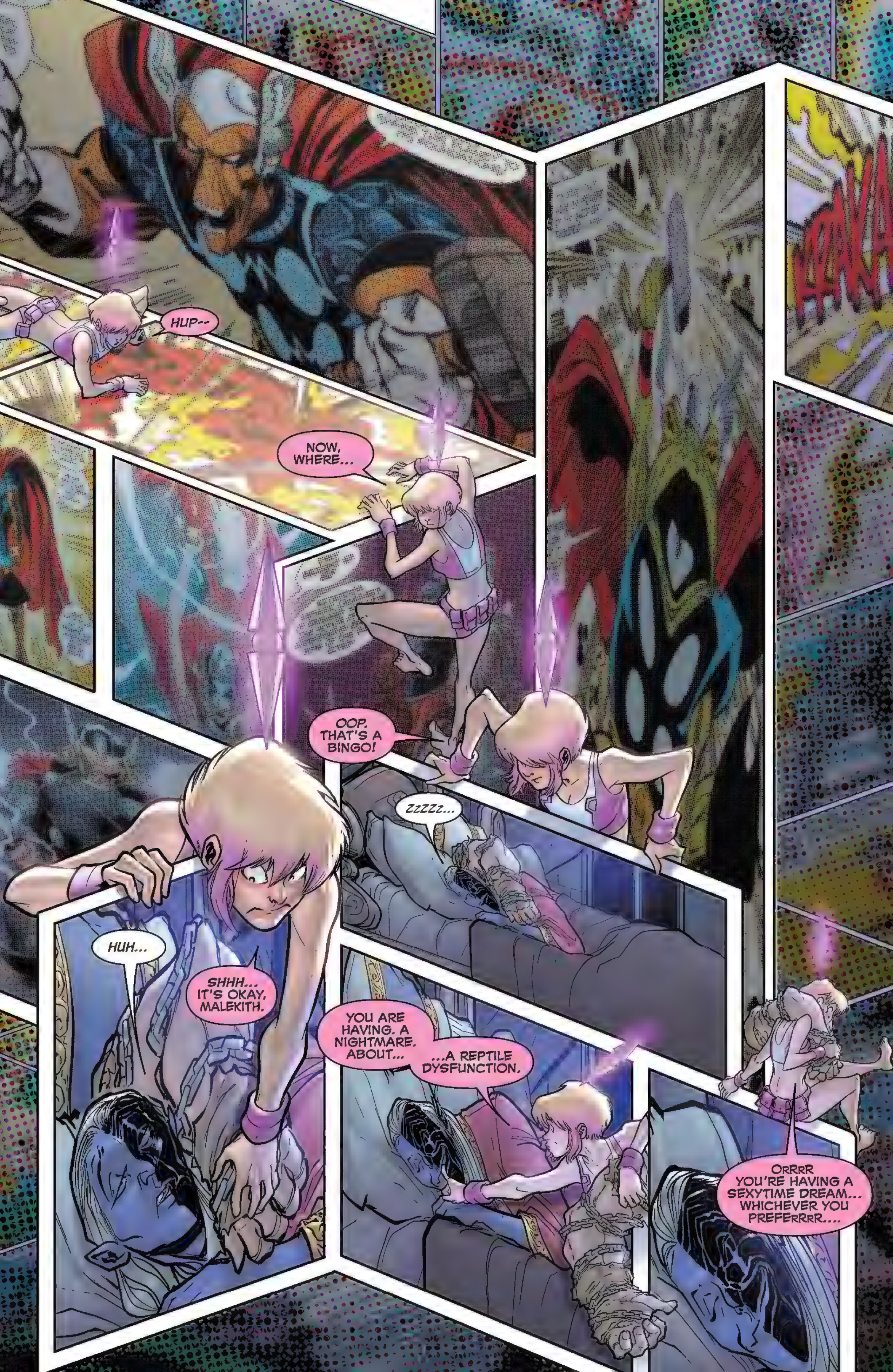

THE MARVEL COMICS CONTINUITY ABYSS.
OH, HEY, UM--YOU'RE GONNA WANNA STICK WITH THE GWENS ON THE BEACH, I THINK.
I KNOW WATCHING ME LOWER MYSELF DOWN INTO THIS PLOT HOLE SOUNDS NEAT, BUT IT'S GOING TO BE LIKE A KAZOO COVER OF "FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE" OUT THERE.
GONNA BE LIKE... A BUNCH OF MIDDLE SCHOOLERS...SPITTILY TOOTING "RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES" INTO THEIR RECORDERS...
GONNA BE LIKE "YANKEE DOODLE DANDY..."
...PLAYED IN A MINOR KEY...
thump thump
GRAHHHHH!
HERE HE COMES! GET READY!
AND...

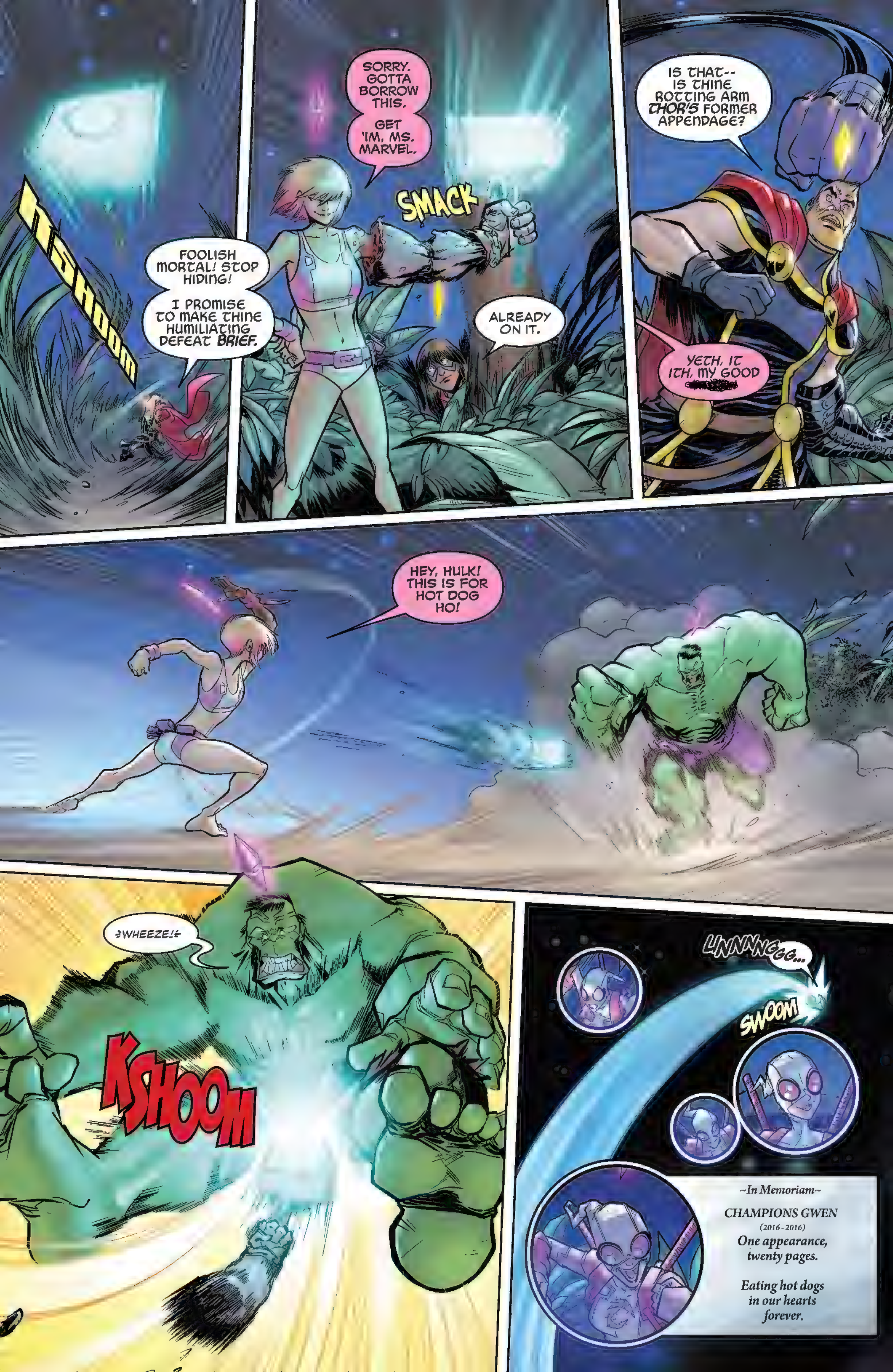

...NOW!
YANK!
MARSHMALLOW GWEN! YOU'RE UP!
GUH!
READY!
STRETCHHHHH...
SNAP!
URGPH--
HUH?
GOOD NOISE, HULK! :)

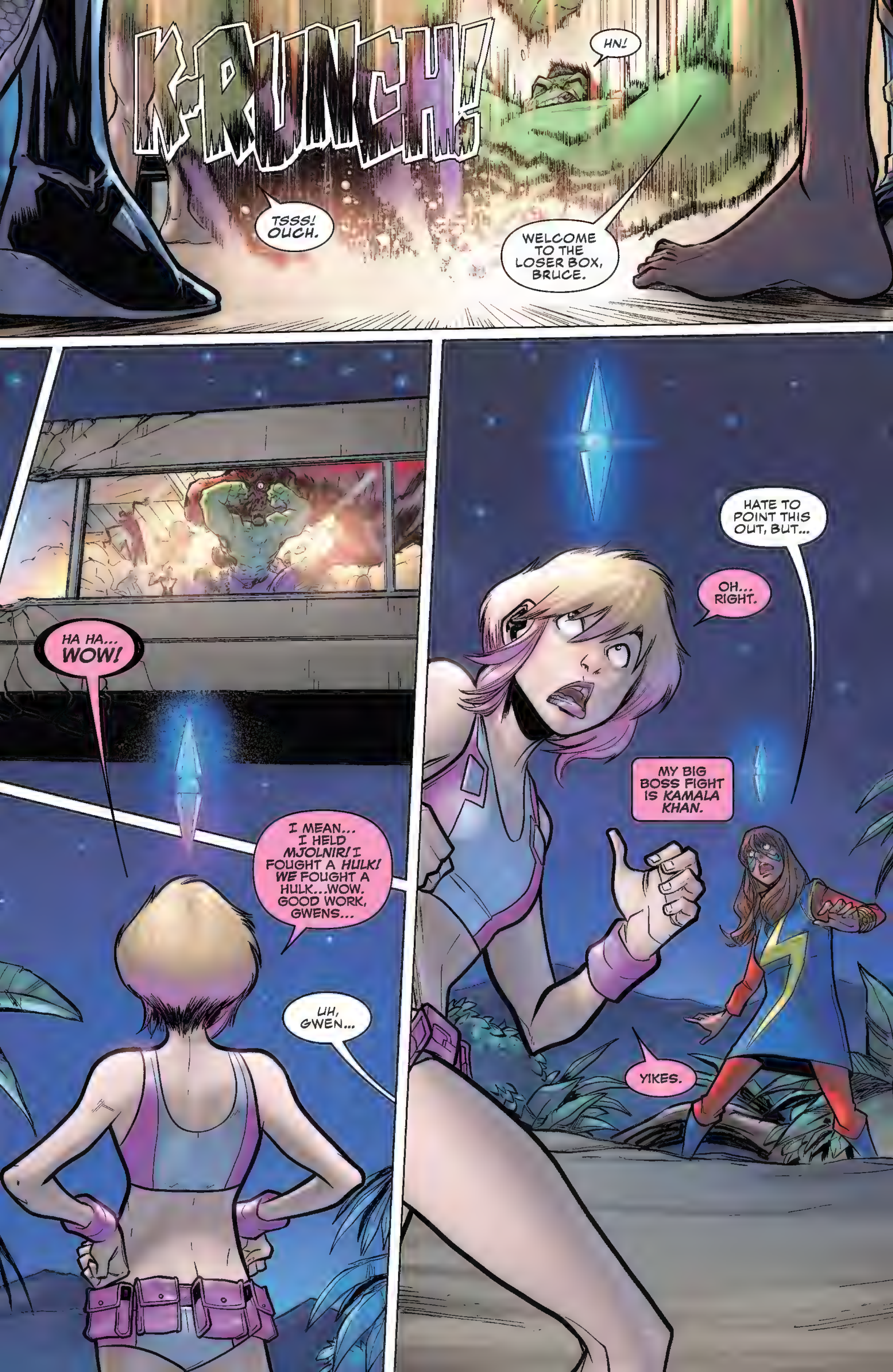

FWOOSH
FLY BALL! BATTER UP, HARLEY-GWEN!
ON IT!
SWOOOOOOOM
FOUR OUT OF FIVE GWENS AGREE: GUN VIOLENCE IS BAD!
HURG!
KRSHHHHHHH
GUESS WHICH GWEN I AM.
INCOMING.
KRUNCH
OOOOH, YOU HATE TO SEE IT.
HA HA HA!


I SEE IT! NOW, IF I COULD... JUST...
UP THERE
YOU COURTED CHAOS. I'M CONSENTING.
⋟GASP!⋞
NO! MY THOR HOLE!
SNATCH!
MARSHMALLOW GWEN, NO--NO!
SCATTER, SURVIVING GWENS! SERPENTINE!
SO, UH... HOW'S IT GOING UP THERE?
J-JUST... JUST HOLD ON, MARSHMALLOW! WE'RE GONNA G-GET YOU S-SOME ⋟SOB⋞ HELP!
TELL... TELL MY FANS...I LOVED THEM...SO MUCH...
NOOOOO!
"OOH, TOO SLOW FOR SPIDEY-SENSES!"

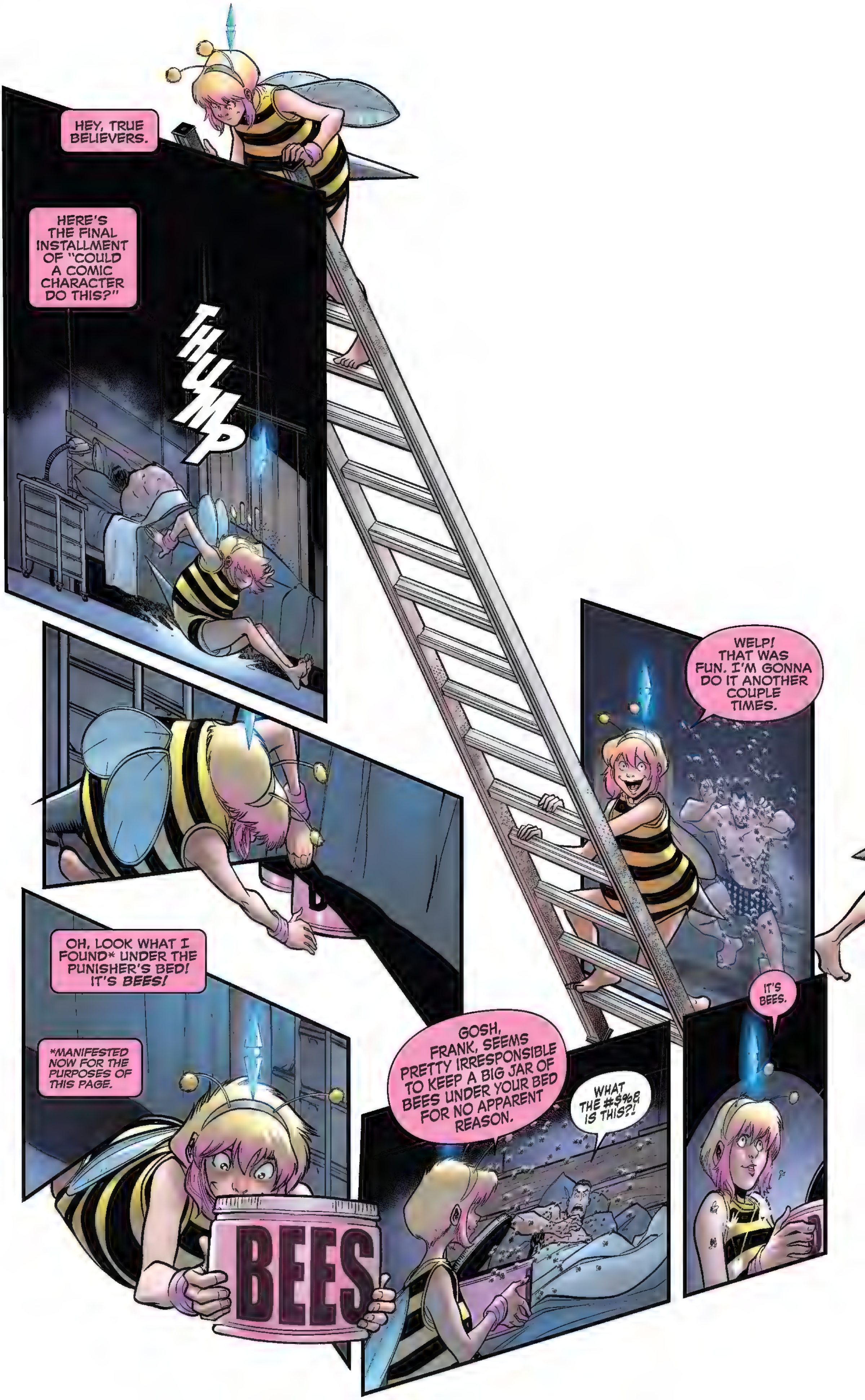

THUMP! CRASH!
DANG. SOUNDS LIKE SOME FOLKS ARE ACTUALLY TAKING THIS SERIOUSLY. IMAGINE WANTING TO W--
HA!
SMACK
KAMALAAAAAAA... NO FAAAAAIR...
I'M SORRY!
...LET US END THIS QUICKLY, MORTAL.
...CRUD.
:P
HEHE. DON'T WORRY, I'M OKAY! 😊
...CH-CHAMPIONS-GWEN? ARE YOU OKAY? WHY...AREN'T YOU GETTING SWEPT UP TO THE VIEWING BOOTH WITH MARSHMALLOW?
WHY...WHY AREN'T YOU MOVING?

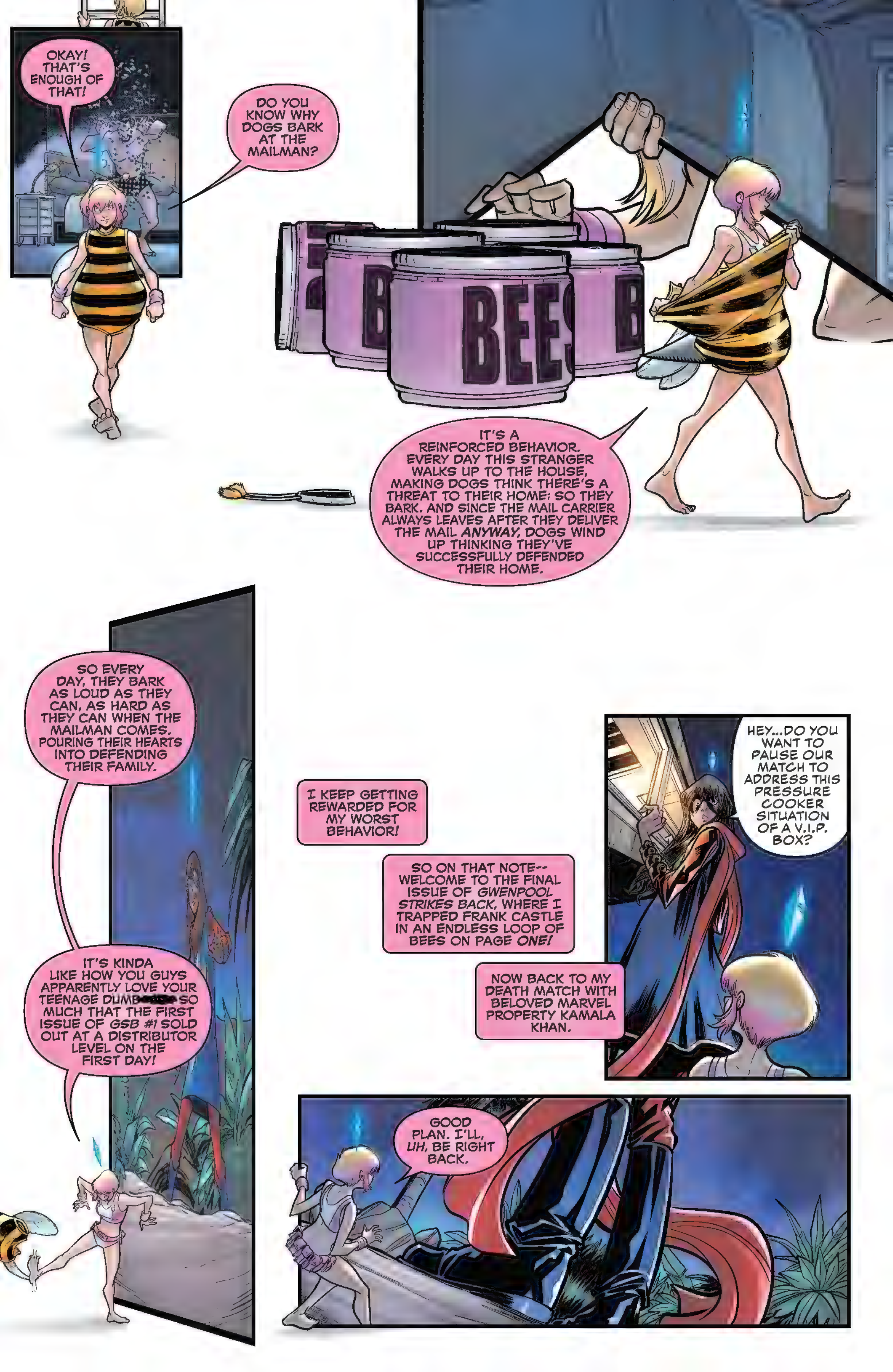

HUP--
NOW, WHERE...
OOP. THAT'S A BINGO!
ZzZZz...
HUH...
SHHH... IT'S OKAY, MALEKITH.
YOU ARE HAVING. A NIGHTMARE. ABOUT...
...A REPTILE DYSFUNCTION.
OrRrR YOU'RE HAVING A SEXYTIME DREAM... WHICHEVER YOU PREFErRrR....

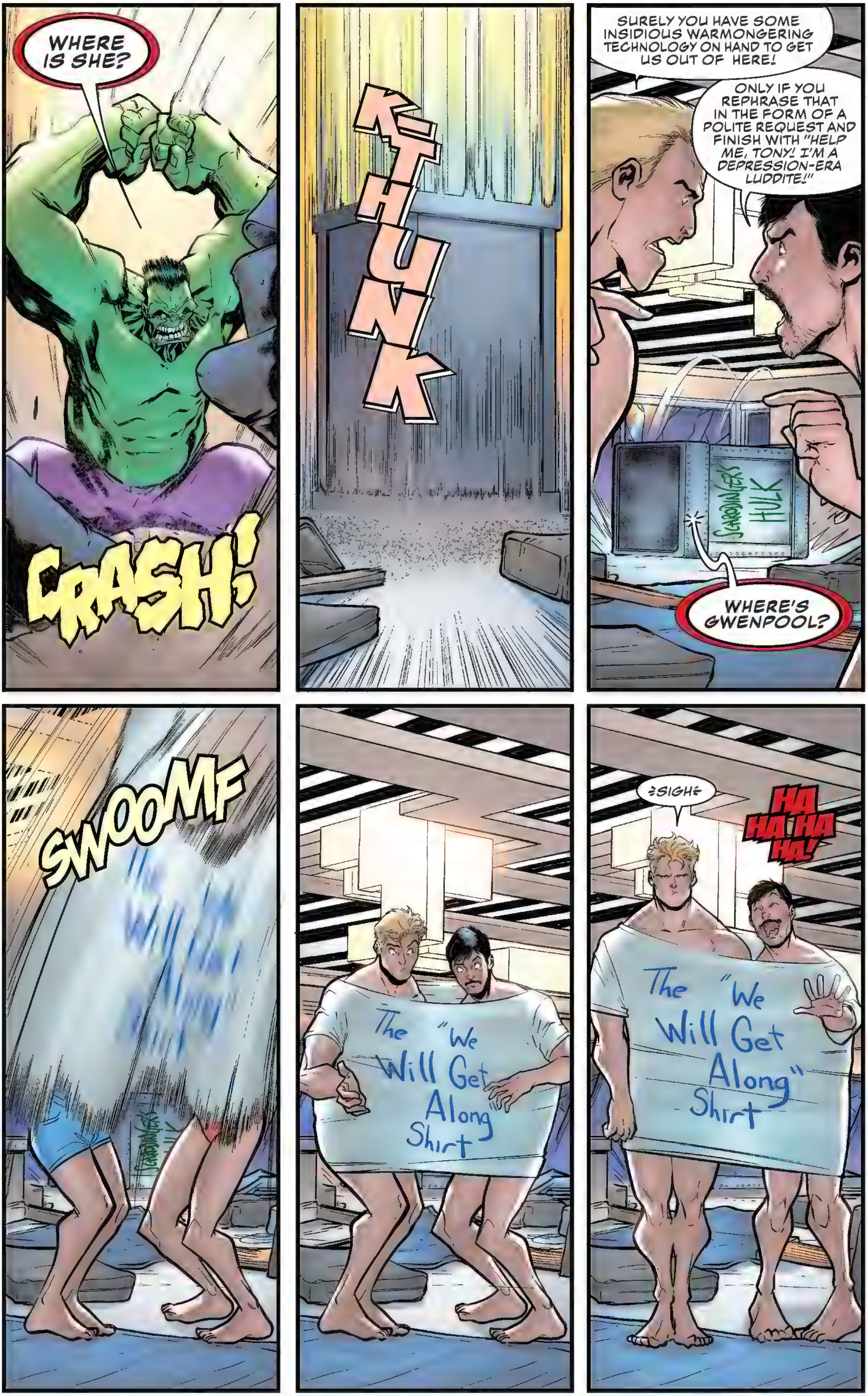

NSHOOM
FOOLISH MORTAL! STOP HIDING!
I PROMISE TO MAKE THINE HUMILIATING DEFEAT *BRIEF*.
SORRY. GOTTA BORROW THIS.
GET 'IM, MS. MARVEL.
SMACK
ALREADY ON IT.
IS THAT-- IS THINE ROTTING ARM *THOR'S* FORMER APPENDAGE?
YETH, IT ITH, MY GOOD [redacted]
HEY, HULK! THIS IS FOR HOT DOG HO!
WHEEZE!
KSHOOM
UNNNNGGG...
SWOOM
~In Memoriam~
CHAMPIONS GWEN
(2016 - 2016)
One appearance, twenty pages.
Eating hot dogs in our hearts forever.

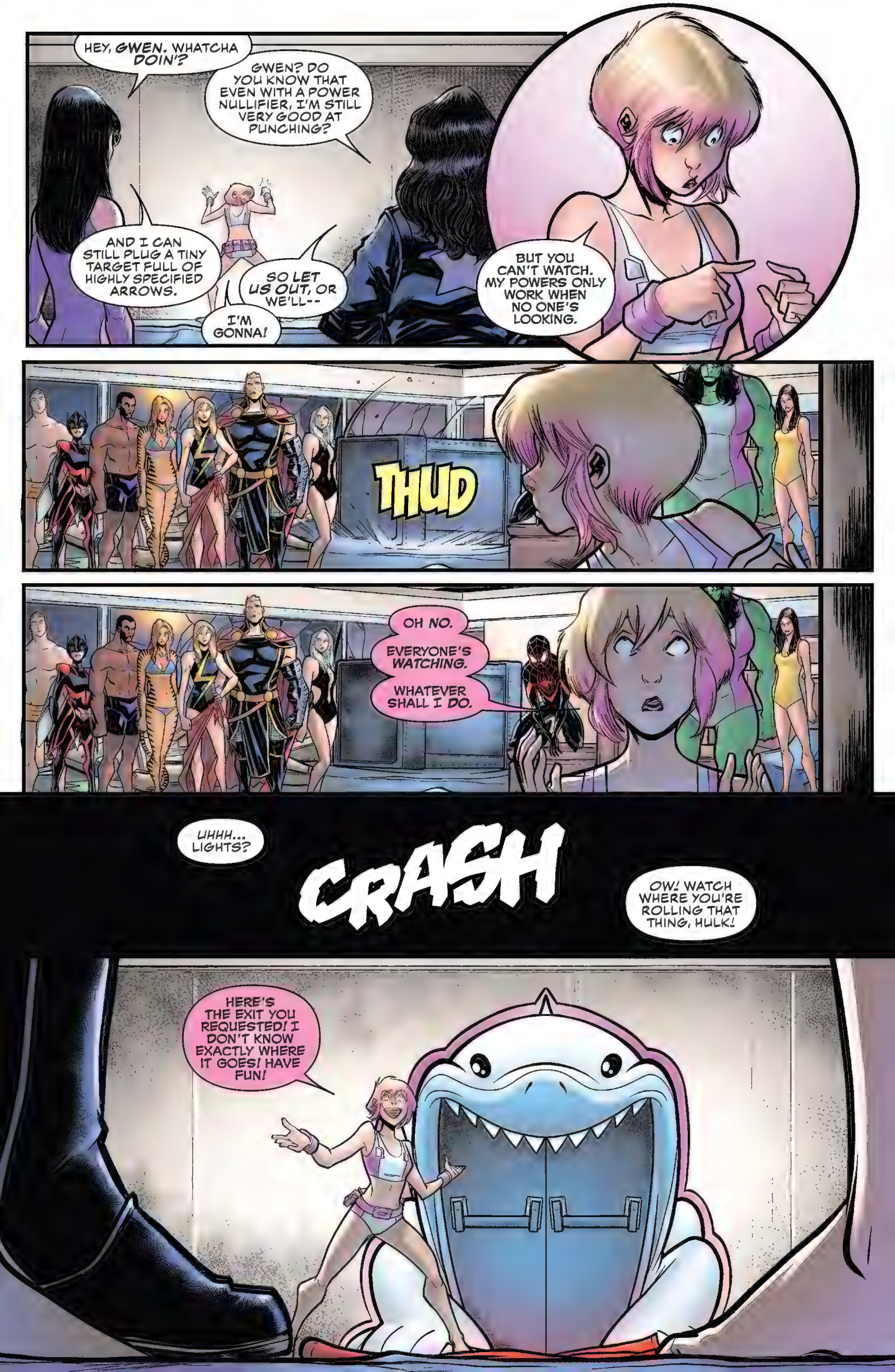

K-RUNCH!
HN!
TSSS! OUCH.
WELCOME TO THE LOSER BOX, BRUCE.
HA HA... WOW!
I MEAN... I HELD MJOLNIR! I FOUGHT A HULK! WE FOUGHT A HULK...WOW. GOOD WORK, GWENS...
UH, GWEN...
HATE TO POINT THIS OUT, BUT...
OH... RIGHT.
MY BIG BOSS FIGHT IS KAMALA KHAN.
YIKES.

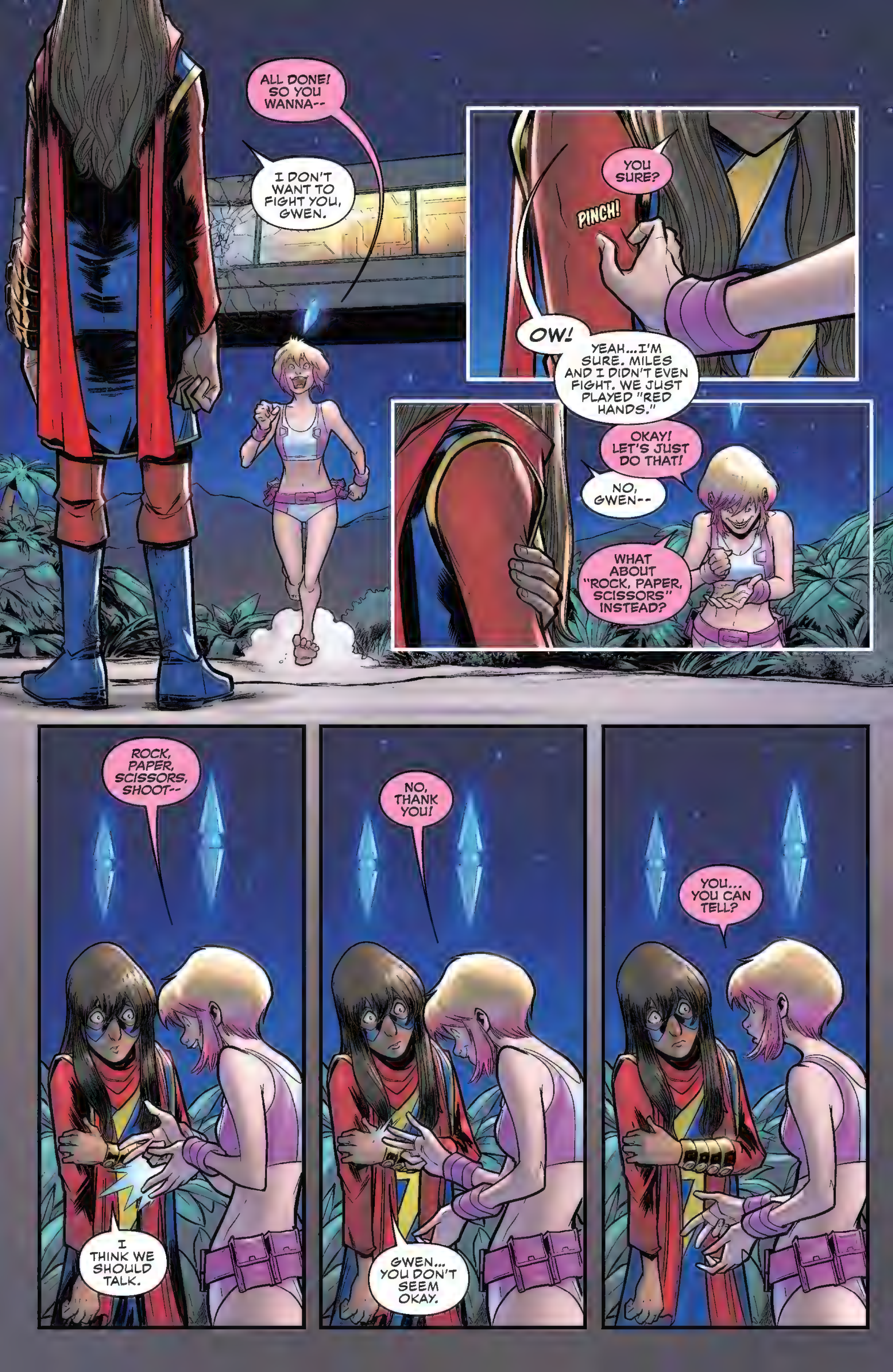
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #5

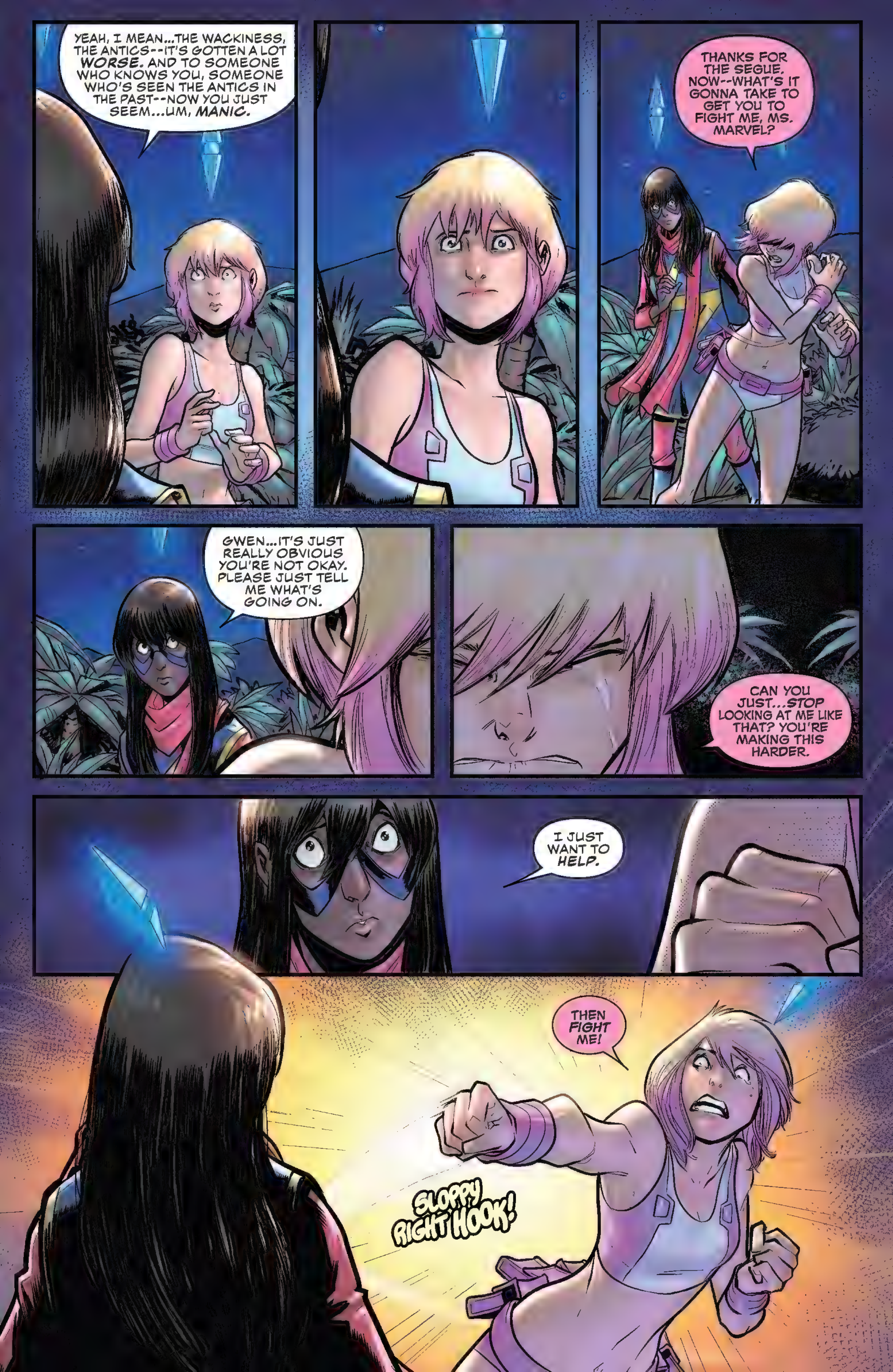

HEY, TRUE BELIEVERS.
HERE'S THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF "COULD A COMIC CHARACTER DO THIS?"
THUMP
OH, LOOK WHAT I FOUND* UNDER THE PUNISHER'S BED! IT'S *BEES!*
*MANIFESTED NOW FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PAGE.
BEES
GOSH, FRANK, SEEMS PRETTY IRRESPONSIBLE TO KEEP A BIG JAR OF BEES UNDER YOUR BED FOR NO APPARENT REASON.
WHAT THE #$%&! IS THIS?!
IT'S BEES.
WELP! THAT WAS FUN. I'M GONNA DO IT ANOTHER COUPLE TIMES.

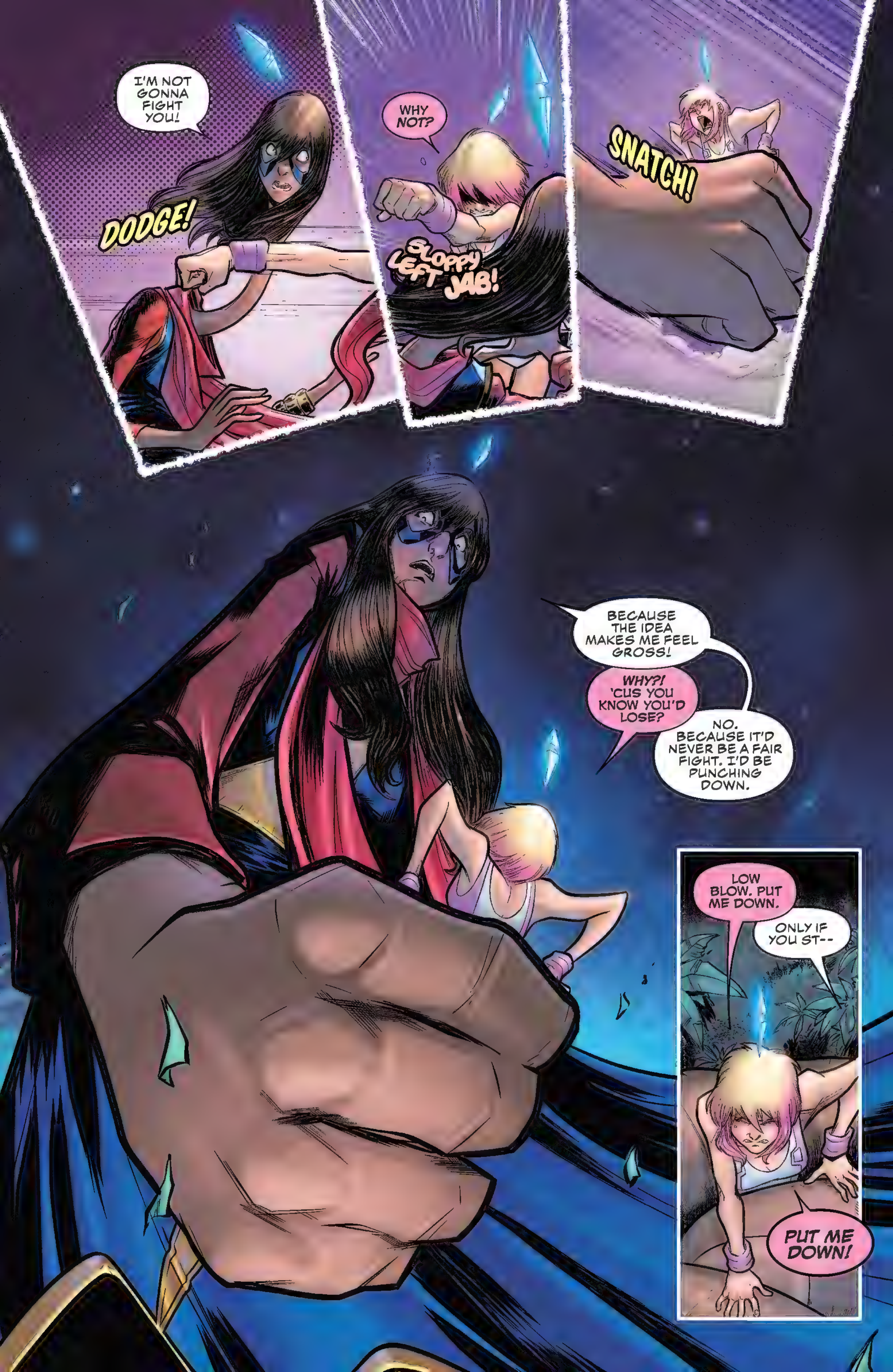

OKAY! THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT!
DO YOU KNOW WHY DOGS BARK AT THE MAILMAN?
BEES
IT'S A REINFORCED BEHAVIOR. EVERY DAY THIS STRANGER WALKS UP TO THE HOUSE, MAKING DOGS THINK THERE'S A THREAT TO THEIR HOME: SO THEY BARK. AND SINCE THE MAIL CARRIER ALWAYS LEAVES AFTER THEY DELIVER THE MAIL *ANYWAY*, DOGS WIND UP THINKING THEY'VE SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED THEIR HOME.
SO EVERY DAY, THEY BARK AS LOUD AS THEY CAN, AS HARD AS THEY CAN WHEN THE MAILMAN COMES, POURING THEIR HEARTS INTO DEFENDING THEIR FAMILY.
IT'S KINDA LIKE HOW YOU GUYS APPARENTLY LOVE YOUR TEENAGE DUMB[redacted] SO MUCH THAT THE FIRST ISSUE OF *GSB #1* SOLD OUT AT A DISTRIBUTOR LEVEL ON THE FIRST DAY!
I KEEP GETTING REWARDED FOR MY WORST BEHAVIOR!
SO ON THAT NOTE-- WELCOME TO THE FINAL ISSUE OF *GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK*, WHERE I TRAPPED FRANK CASTLE IN AN ENDLESS LOOP OF BEES ON PAGE *ONE!*
NOW BACK TO MY DEATH MATCH WITH BELOVED MARVEL PROPERTY KAMALA KHAN.
HEY...DO YOU WANT TO PAUSE OUR MATCH TO ADDRESS THIS PRESSURE COOKER SITUATION OF A V.I.P. BOX?
GOOD PLAN. I'LL, *UH*, BE RIGHT BACK.

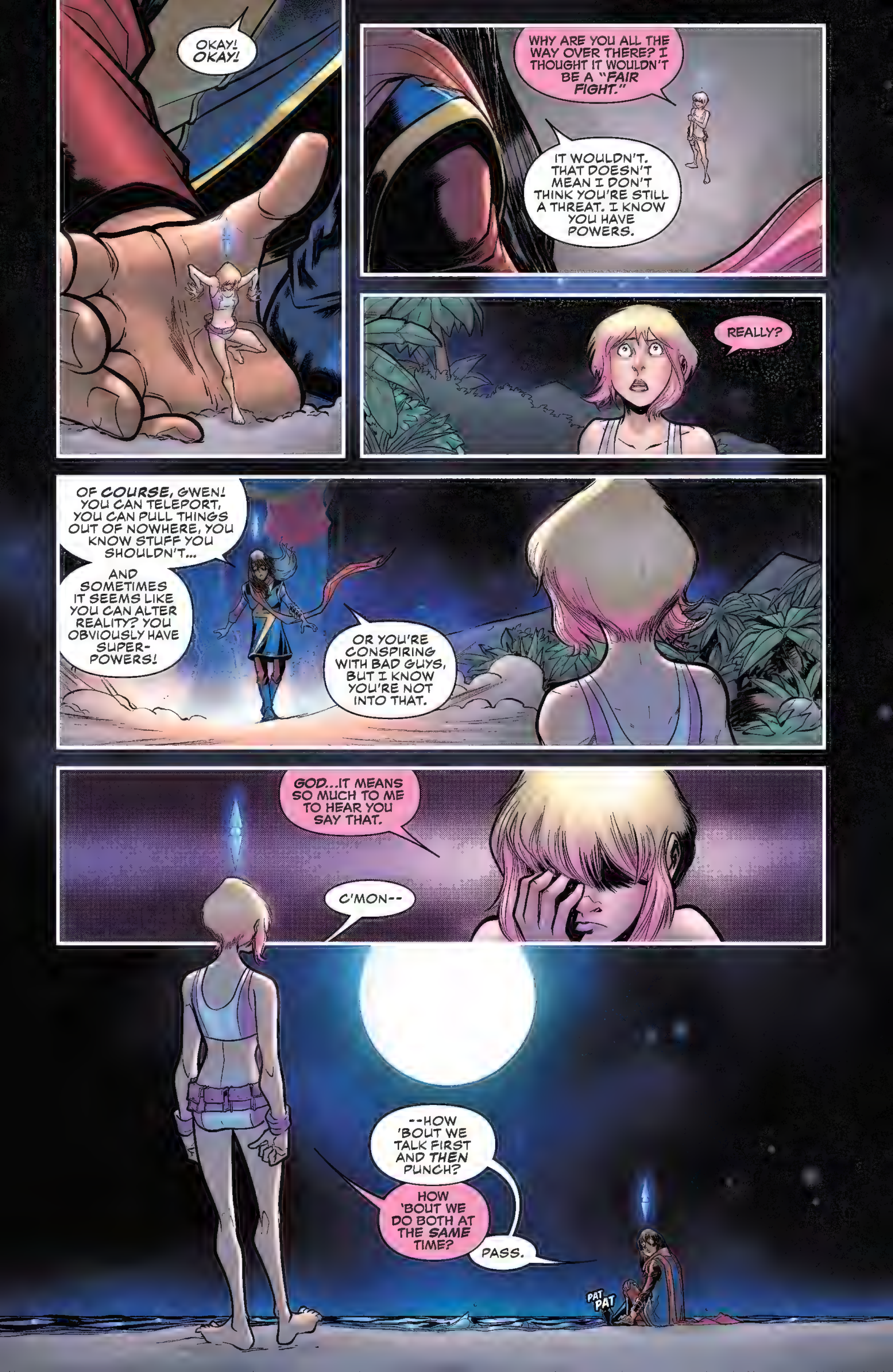

WHERE IS SHE?
CRASH!
K-THUNK
SURELY YOU HAVE SOME INSIDIOUS WARMONGERING TECHNOLOGY ON HAND TO GET US OUT OF HERE!
ONLY IF YOU REPHRASE THAT IN THE FORM OF A POLITE REQUEST AND FINISH WITH "HELP ME, TONY! I'M A DEPRESSION-ERA LUDDITE!"
SCHRODINGER'S HULK
WHERE'S GWENPOOL?
SWOOMF
The "We Will Get Along" Shirt
SIGH
HA HA HA HA!
The "We Will Get Along" Shirt

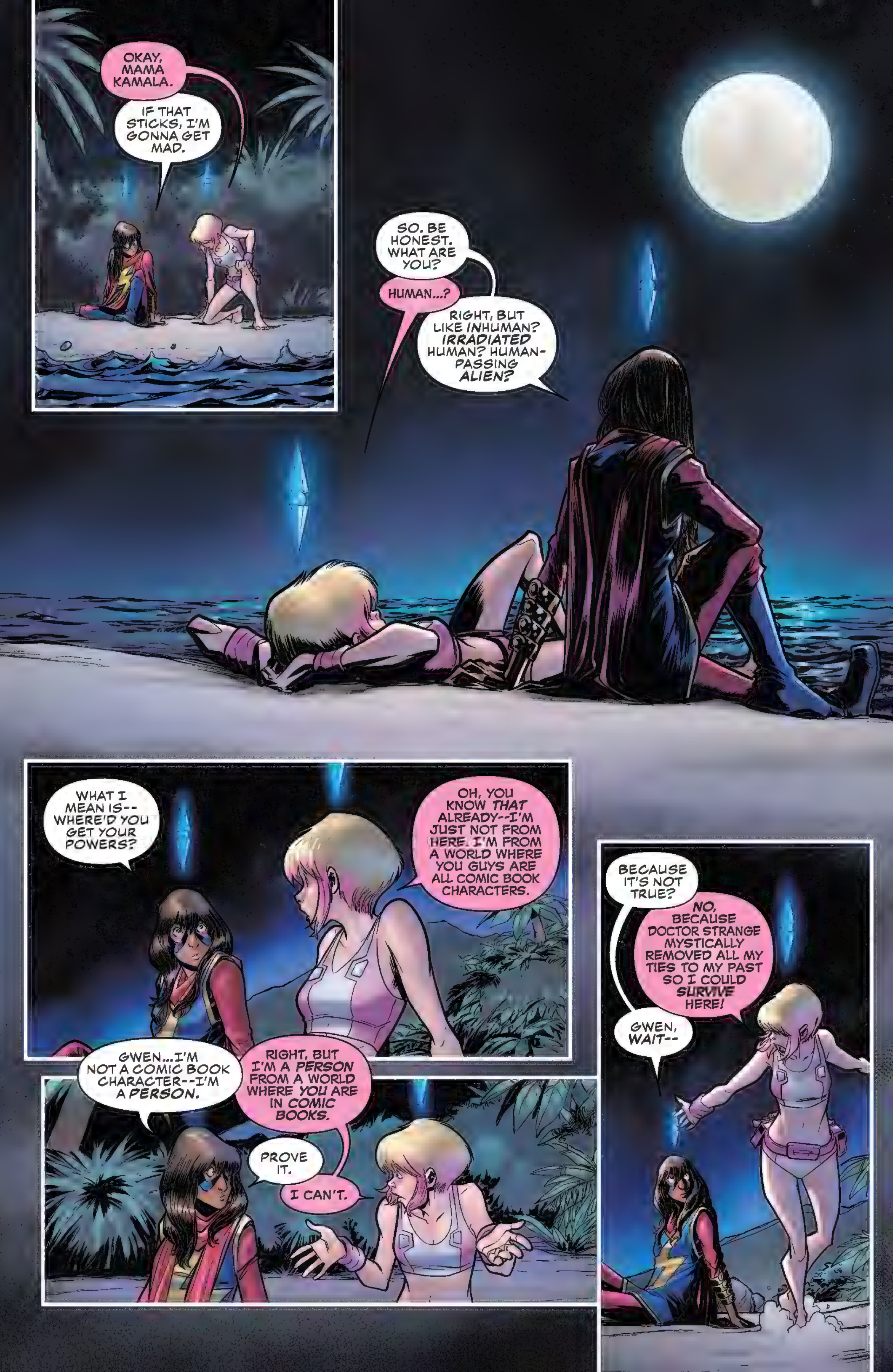

HEY, GWEN. WHATCHA DOIN'?
GWEN? DO YOU KNOW THAT EVEN WITH A POWER NULLIFIER, I'M STILL VERY GOOD AT PUNCHING?
AND I CAN STILL PLUG A TINY TARGET FULL OF HIGHLY SPECIFIED ARROWS.
SO LET US OUT, OR WE'LL--
I'M GONNA!
BUT YOU CAN'T WATCH. MY POWERS ONLY WORK WHEN NO ONE'S LOOKING.
THUD
OH NO.
EVERYONE'S WATCHING.
WHATEVER SHALL I DO.
UHHH... LIGHTS?
CRASH
OW! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE ROLLING THAT THING, HULK!
HERE'S THE EXIT YOU REQUESTED! I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE IT GOES! HAVE FUN!

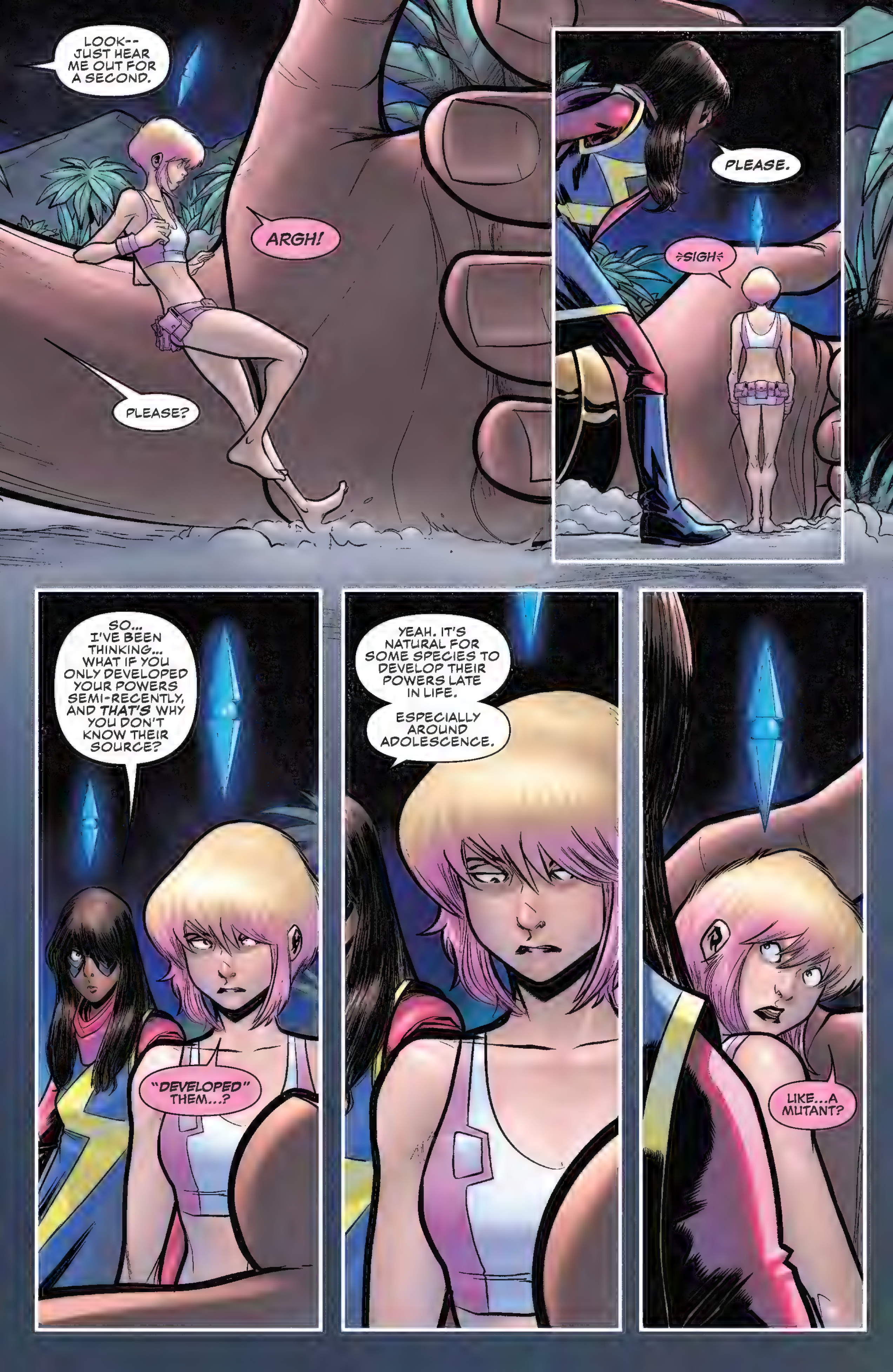

ALL DONE! SO YOU WANNA--
I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU, GWEN.
YOU SURE?
PINCH!
OW!
YEAH...I'M SURE. MILES AND I DIDN'T EVEN FIGHT. WE JUST PLAYED "RED HANDS."
OKAY! LET'S JUST DO THAT!
NO, GWEN--
WHAT ABOUT "ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS" INSTEAD?
ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS, SHOOT--
I THINK WE SHOULD TALK.
NO, THANK YOU!
GWEN... YOU DON'T SEEM OKAY.
YOU... YOU CAN TELL?

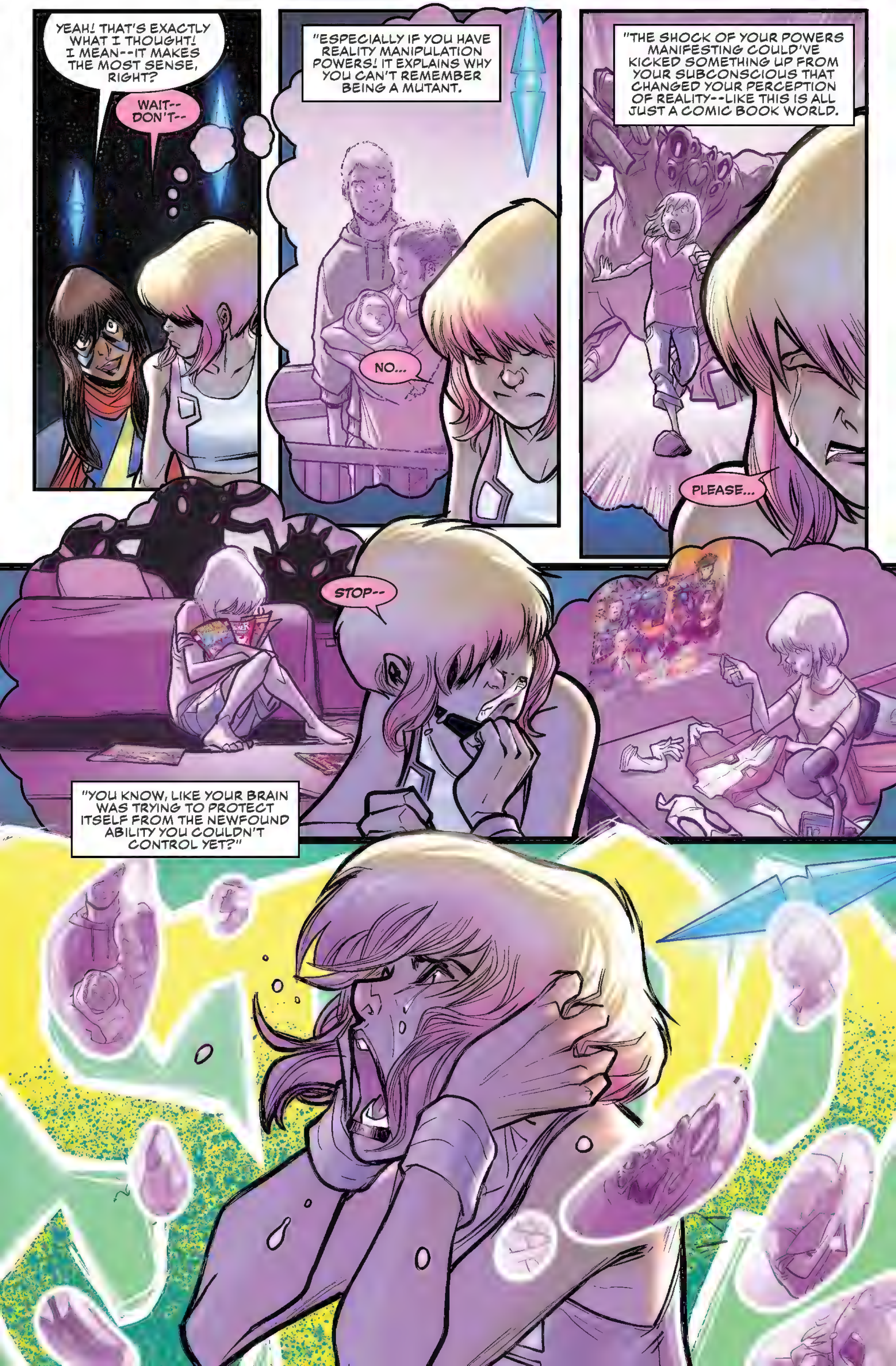

YEAH, I MEAN...THE WACKINESS, THE ANTICS--IT'S GOTTEN A LOT *WORSE*. AND TO SOMEONE WHO KNOWS YOU, SOMEONE WHO'S SEEN THE ANTICS IN THE PAST--NOW YOU JUST SEEM...UM, *MANIC*.
THANKS FOR THE SEGUE. NOW--WHAT'S IT GONNA TAKE TO GET YOU TO FIGHT ME, MS. MARVEL?
GWEN...IT'S JUST REALLY OBVIOUS YOU'RE NOT OKAY. PLEASE JUST TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON.
CAN YOU JUST...*STOP* LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT? YOU'RE MAKING THIS HARDER.
I JUST WANT TO *HELP*.
THEN *FIGHT* ME!
SLOPPY RIGHT HOOK!

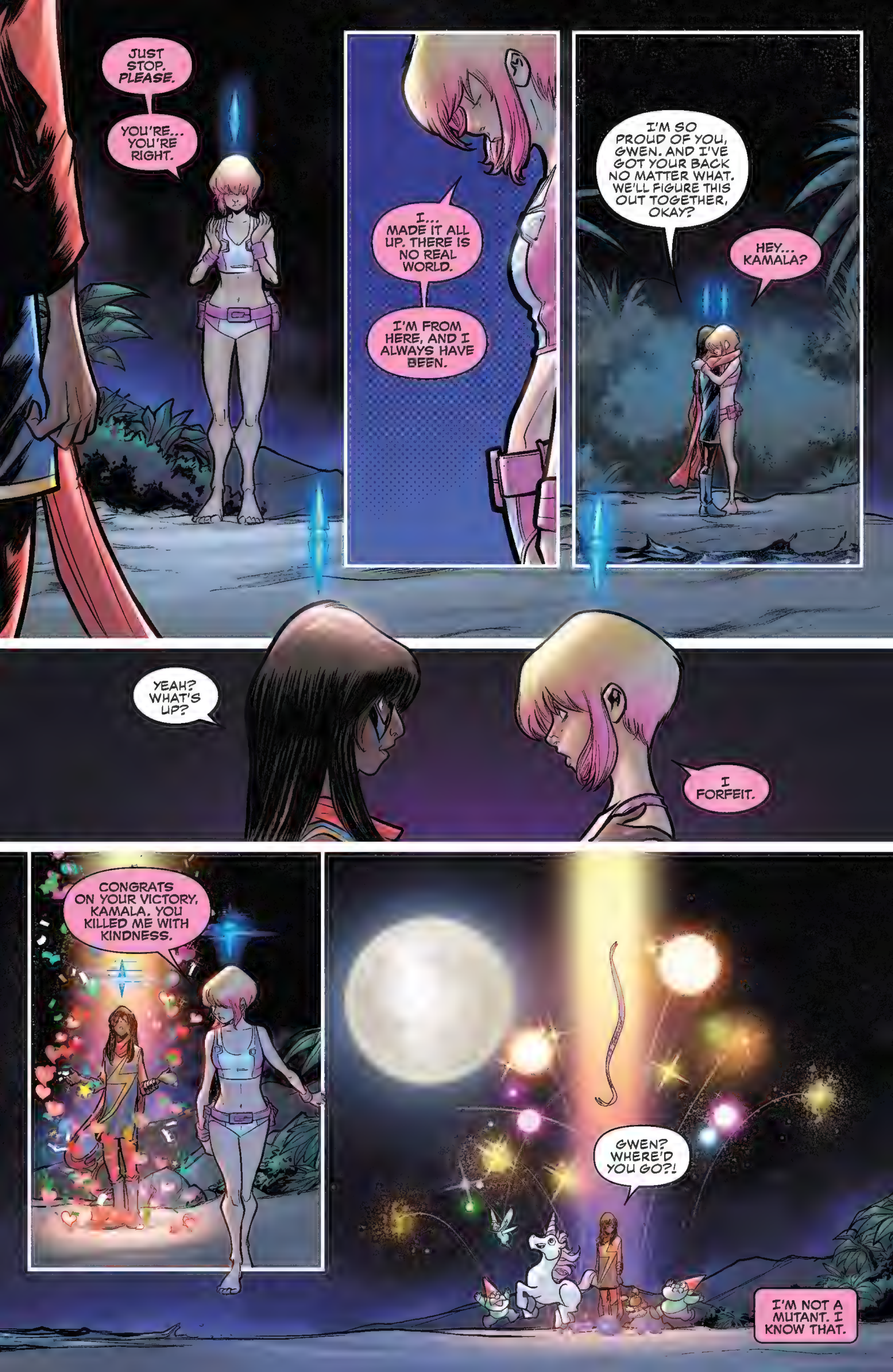

I'M NOT GONNA FIGHT YOU!
DODGE!
WHY NOT?
SLOPPY LEFT JAB!
SNATCH!
BECAUSE THE IDEA MAKES ME FEEL GROSS!
WHY?! 'CUS YOU KNOW YOU'D LOSE?
NO. BECAUSE IT'D NEVER BE A FAIR FIGHT. I'D BE PUNCHING DOWN.
LOW BLOW. PUT ME DOWN.
ONLY IF YOU ST--
PUT ME DOWN!

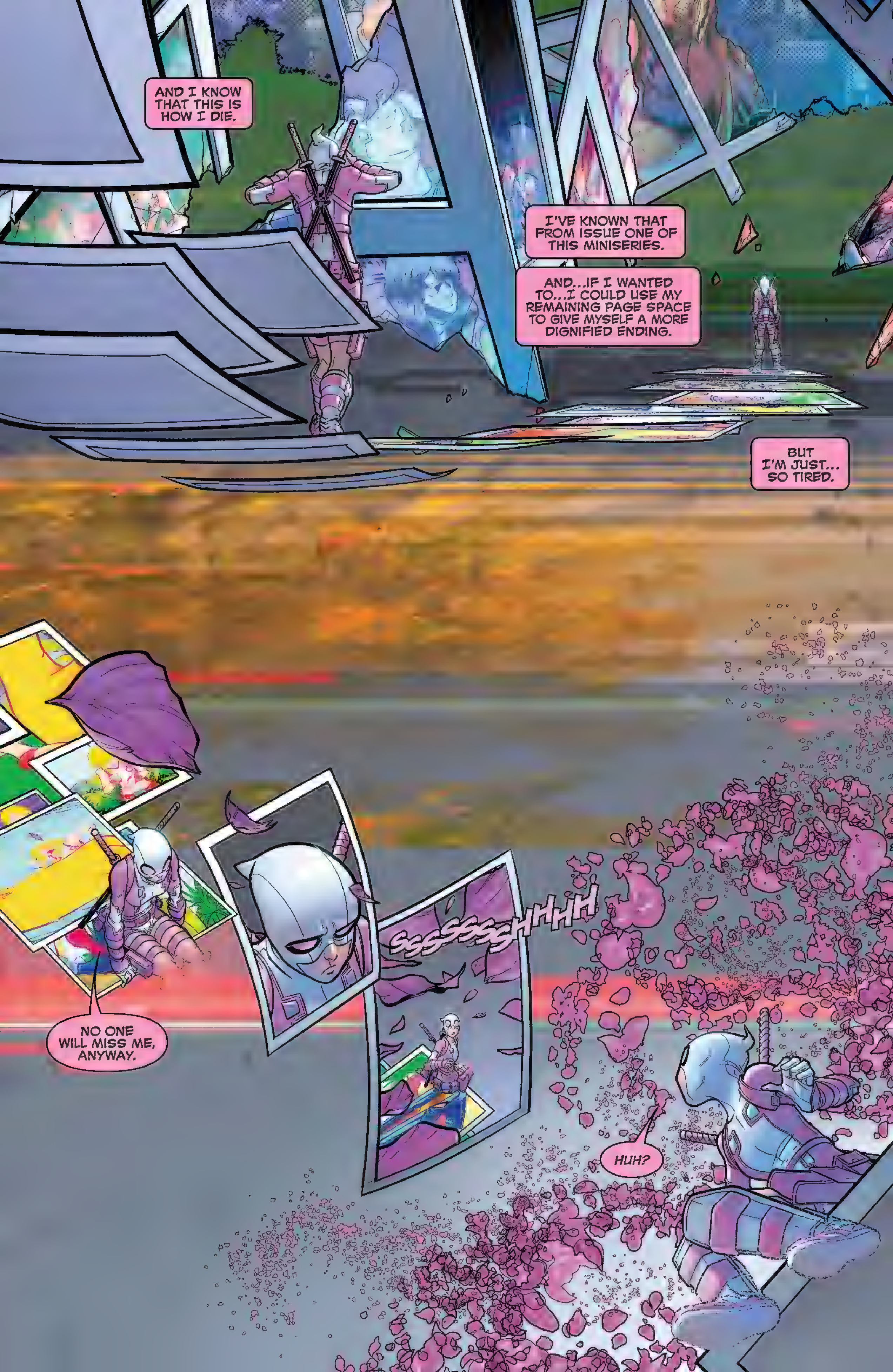

OKAY! OKAY!
WHY ARE YOU ALL THE WAY OVER THERE? I THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T BE A "FAIR FIGHT."
IT WOULDN'T. THAT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T THINK YOU'RE STILL A THREAT. I KNOW YOU HAVE POWERS.
REALLY?
OF COURSE, GWEN! YOU CAN TELEPORT, YOU CAN PULL THINGS OUT OF NOWHERE, YOU KNOW STUFF YOU SHOULDN'T...
AND SOMETIMES IT SEEMS LIKE YOU CAN ALTER REALITY? YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE SUPER-POWERS!
OR YOU'RE CONSPIRING WITH BAD GUYS, BUT I KNOW YOU'RE NOT INTO THAT.
GOD...IT MEANS SO MUCH TO ME TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT.
C'MON--
--HOW 'BOUT WE TALK FIRST AND THEN PUNCH?
HOW 'BOUT WE DO BOTH AT THE SAME TIME?
PASS.
PAT PAT

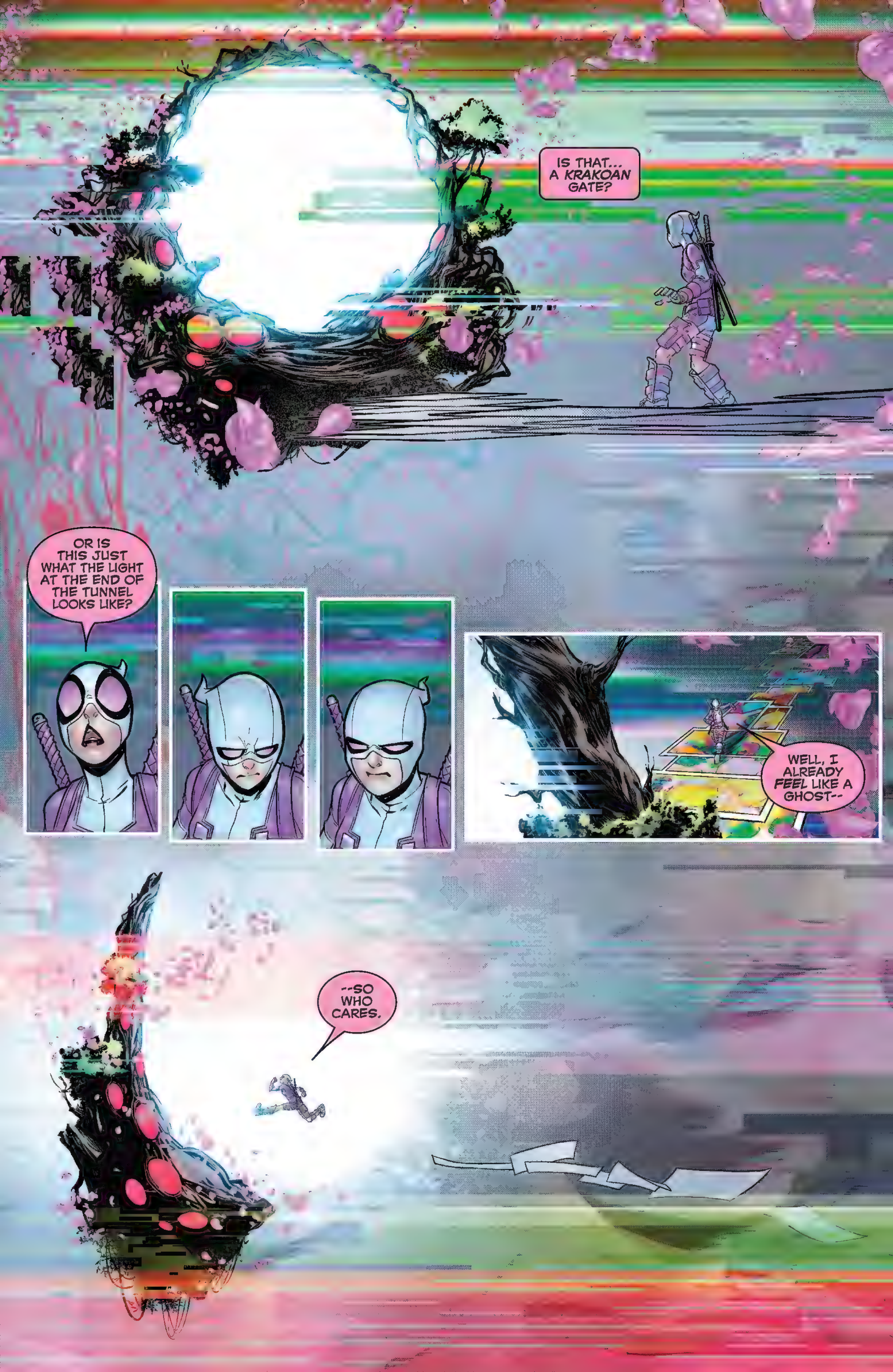

OKAY, MAMA KAMALA.
IF THAT STICKS, I'M GONNA GET MAD.
SO. BE HONEST. WHAT ARE YOU?
HUMAN...?
RIGHT, BUT LIKE *INHUMAN*? *IRRADIATED* HUMAN? HUMAN-PASSING *ALIEN?*
WHAT I MEAN IS--WHERE'D YOU GET YOUR POWERS?
OH, YOU KNOW *THAT* ALREADY--I'M JUST NOT FROM HERE. I'M FROM A WORLD WHERE YOU GUYS ARE ALL COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS.
GWEN...I'M NOT A COMIC BOOK CHARACTER--I'M A *PERSON.*
RIGHT, BUT I'M A *PERSON* FROM A WORLD WHERE *YOU* ARE IN *COMIC BOOKS.*
PROVE IT.
I CAN'T.
BECAUSE IT'S NOT TRUE?
NO, BECAUSE DOCTOR STRANGE MYSTICALLY REMOVED ALL MY TIES TO MY PAST SO I COULD *SURVIVE* HERE!
GWEN, *WAIT--*

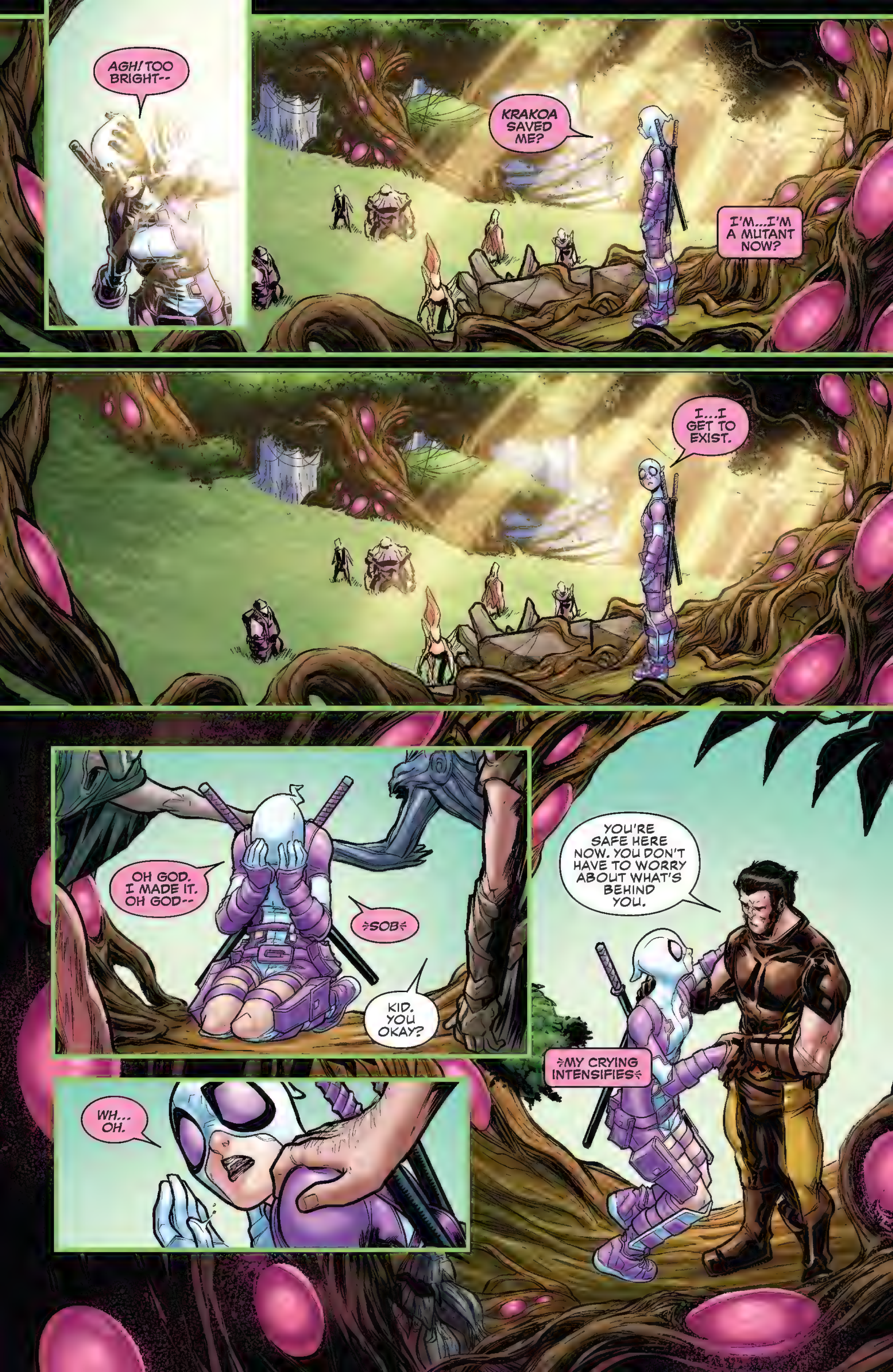

LOOK-- JUST HEAR ME OUT FOR A SECOND.
ARGH!
PLEASE?
PLEASE.
⪢SIGH⪡
SO... I'VE BEEN THINKING... WHAT IF YOU ONLY DEVELOPED YOUR POWERS SEMI-RECENTLY, AND *THAT'S* WHY YOU DON'T KNOW THEIR SOURCE?
"DEVELOPED" THEM...?
YEAH. IT'S NATURAL FOR SOME SPECIES TO DEVELOP THEIR POWERS LATE IN LIFE.
ESPECIALLY AROUND ADOLESCENCE.
LIKE...A MUTANT?

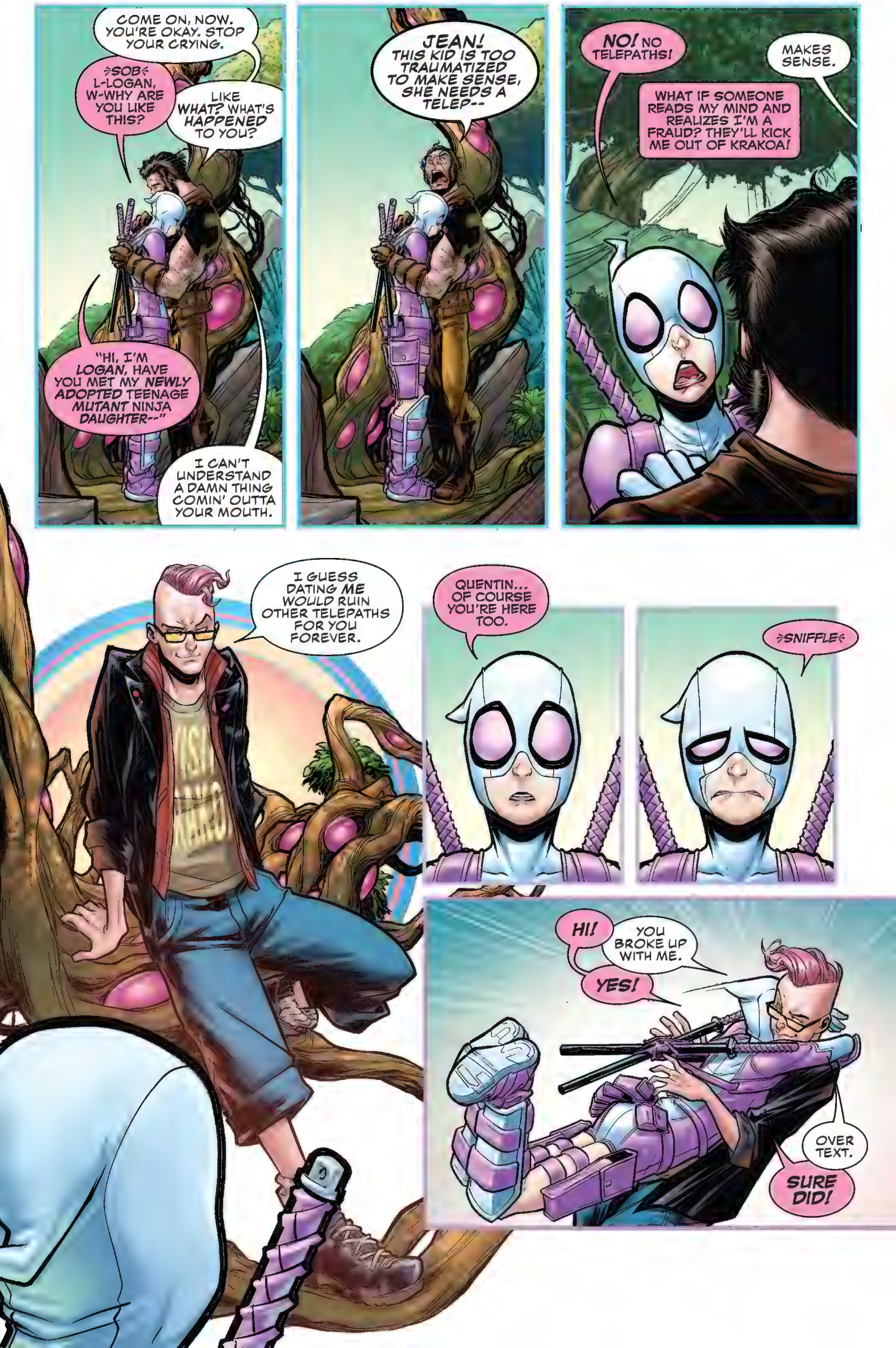

YEAH! THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I THOUGHT! I MEAN--IT MAKES THE MOST SENSE, RIGHT?
WAIT-- DON'T--
"ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE REALITY MANIPULATION POWERS! IT EXPLAINS WHY YOU CAN'T REMEMBER BEING A MUTANT.
NO...
"THE SHOCK OF YOUR POWERS MANIFESTING COULD'VE KICKED SOMETHING UP FROM YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS THAT CHANGED YOUR PERCEPTION OF REALITY--LIKE THIS IS ALL JUST A COMIC BOOK WORLD.
PLEASE...
STOP--
"YOU KNOW, LIKE YOUR BRAIN WAS TRYING TO PROTECT ITSELF FROM THE NEWFOUND ABILITY YOU COULDN'T CONTROL YET?"

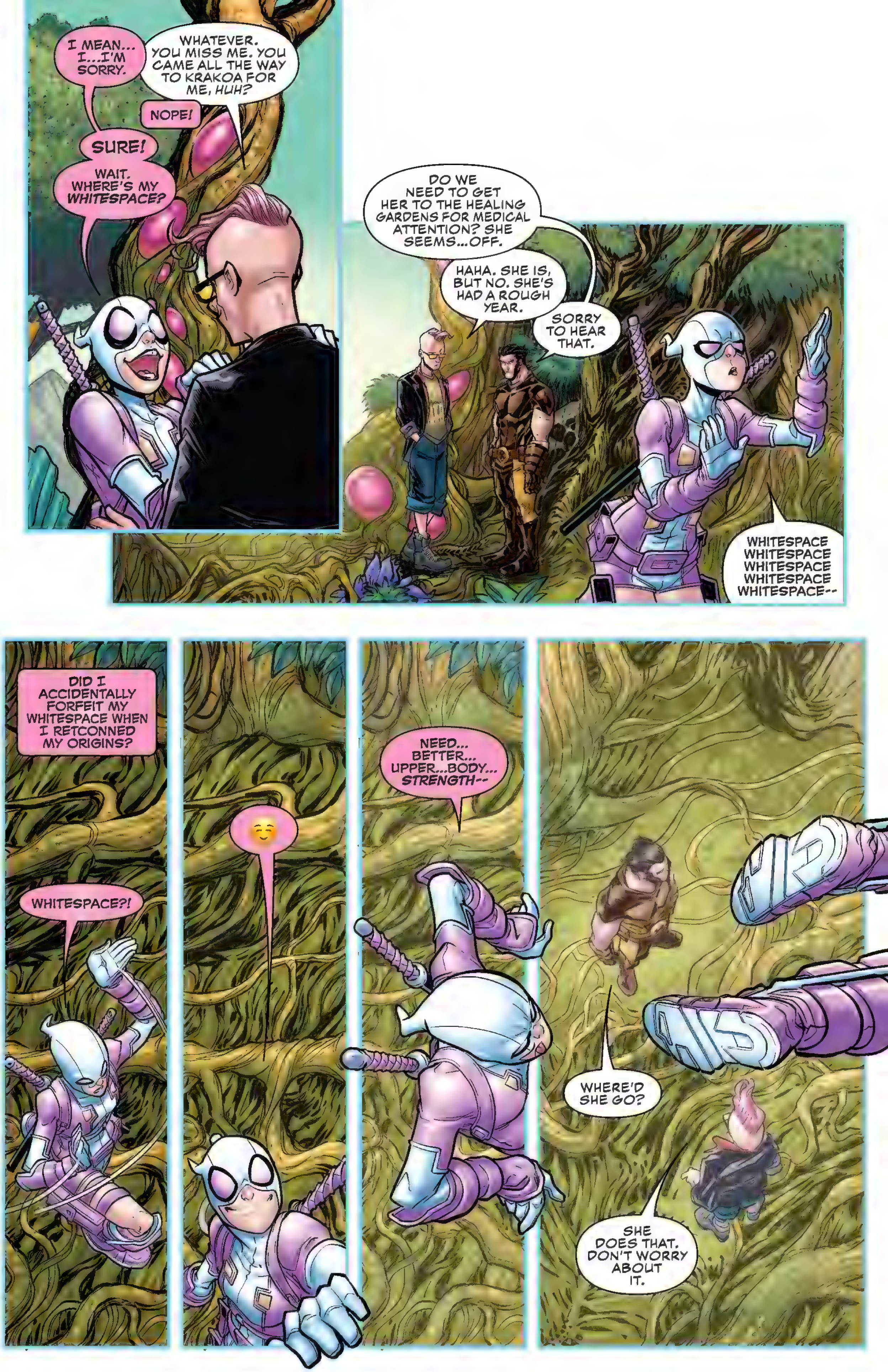

JUST STOP. *PLEASE.*
YOU'RE... YOU'RE RIGHT.
I... MADE IT ALL UP. THERE IS NO REAL WORLD.
I'M FROM HERE, AND I ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.
I'M SO PROUD OF YOU, GWEN. AND I'VE GOT YOUR BACK NO MATTER WHAT. WE'LL FIGURE THIS OUT TOGETHER, OKAY?
HEY... KAMALA?
YEAH? WHAT'S UP?
I FORFEIT.
CONGRATS ON YOUR VICTORY, KAMALA. YOU KILLED ME WITH KINDNESS.
GWEN? WHERE'D YOU GO?!
I'M NOT A MUTANT. I KNOW THAT.

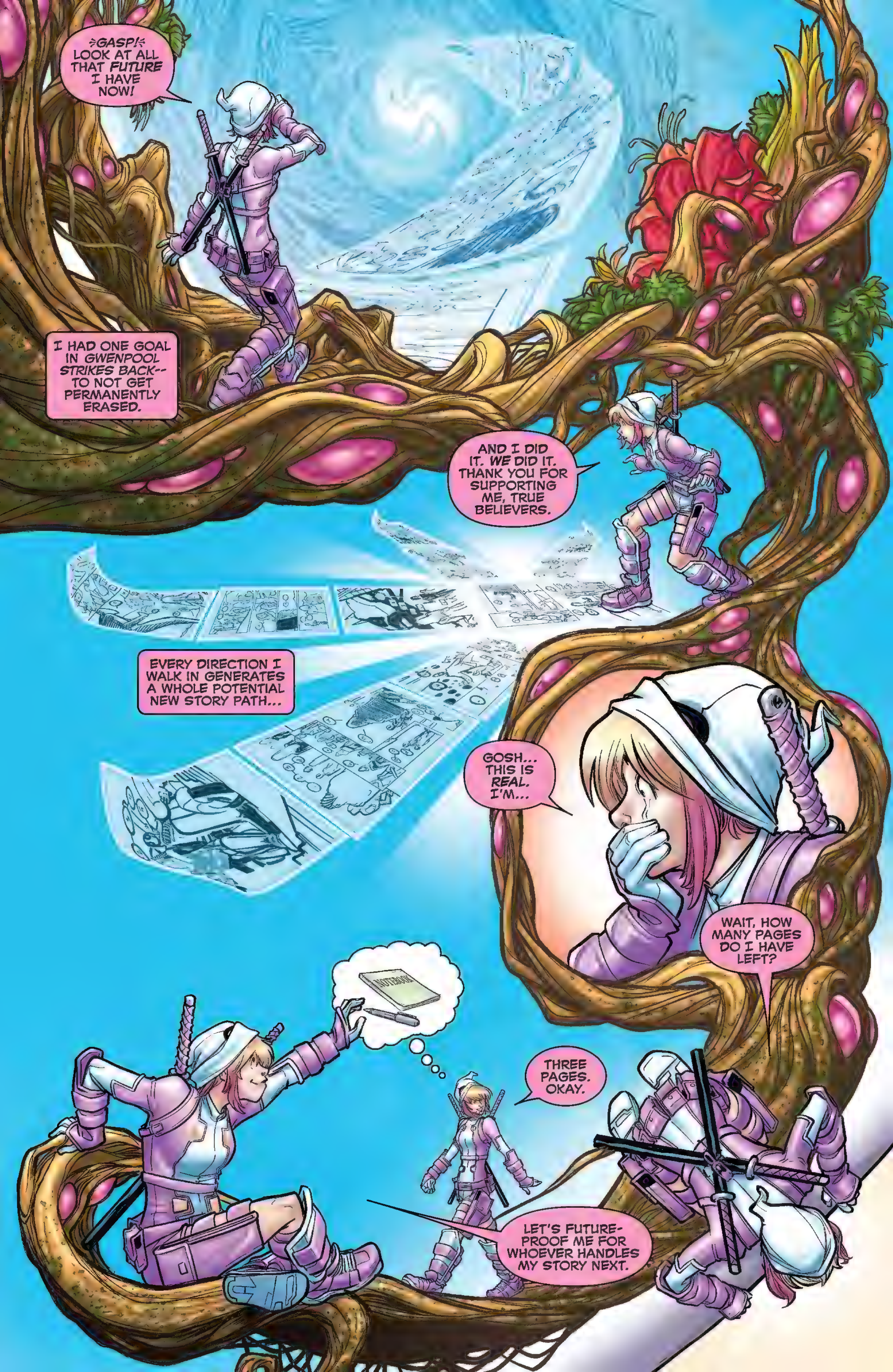

AND I KNOW THAT THIS IS HOW I DIE.
I'VE KNOWN THAT FROM ISSUE ONE OF THIS MINISERIES.
AND...IF I WANTED TO...I COULD USE MY REMAINING PAGE SPACE TO GIVE MYSELF A MORE DIGNIFIED ENDING.
BUT I'M JUST... SO TIRED.
NO ONE WILL MISS ME, ANYWAY.
SSSSSSSHHHHH
HUH?


IS THAT... A KRAKOAN GATE?
OR IS THIS JUST WHAT THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL LOOKS LIKE?
WELL, I ALREADY FEEL LIKE A GHOST--
--SO WHO CARES.


AGH! TOO BRIGHT--
KRAKOA SAVED ME?
I'M...I'M A MUTANT NOW?
I...I GET TO EXIST.
OH GOD. I MADE IT. OH GOD--
SOB
KID. YOU OKAY?
WH... OH.
YOU'RE SAFE HERE NOW. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT'S BEHIND YOU.
MY CRYING INTENSIFIES


COME ON, NOW. YOU'RE OKAY. STOP YOUR CRYING.
SOB L-LOGAN, W-WHY ARE YOU LIKE THIS?
LIKE WHAT? WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO YOU?
"HI, I'M *LOGAN*, HAVE YOU MET MY *NEWLY ADOPTED* TEENAGE *MUTANT* NINJA *DAUGHTER*--"
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND A DAMN THING COMIN' OUTTA YOUR MOUTH.
JEAN! THIS KID IS TOO TRAUMATIZED TO MAKE SENSE, SHE NEEDS A TELEP--
NO! NO TELEPATHS!
MAKES SENSE.
WHAT IF SOMEONE READS MY MIND AND REALIZES I'M A FRAUD? THEY'LL KICK ME OUT OF KRAKOA!
I GUESS DATING *ME* WOULD RUIN OTHER TELEPATHS FOR YOU FOREVER.
QUENTIN... OF COURSE YOU'RE HERE TOO.
SNIFFLE
HI!
YOU BROKE UP WITH ME.
YES!
OVER TEXT.
SURE DID!


I MEAN... I...I'M SORRY.
WHATEVER. YOU MISS ME. YOU CAME ALL THE WAY TO KRAKOA FOR ME, HUH?
NOPE!
SURE!
WAIT. WHERE'S MY *WHITESPACE?*
DO WE NEED TO GET HER TO THE HEALING GARDENS FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION? SHE SEEMS...OFF.
HAHA. SHE IS, BUT NO. SHE'S HAD A ROUGH YEAR.
SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
WHITESPACE WHITESPACE WHITESPACE WHITESPACE WHITESPACE--
DID I ACCIDENTALLY FORFEIT MY WHITESPACE WHEN I RETCONNED MY ORIGINS?
WHITESPACE?!
☺
NEED... BETTER... UPPER...BODY... *STRENGTH--*
WHERE'D SHE GO?
SHE DOES THAT. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.


GASP! LOOK AT ALL THAT *FUTURE* I HAVE NOW!
I HAD ONE GOAL IN *GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK*-- TO NOT GET PERMANENTLY ERASED.
AND I DID IT. *WE* DID IT. THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ME, TRUE BELIEVERS.
EVERY DIRECTION I WALK IN GENERATES A WHOLE POTENTIAL NEW STORY PATH...
GOSH... THIS IS *REAL*. I'M...
WAIT, HOW MANY PAGES DO I HAVE LEFT?
NOTEBOOK
THREE PAGES. OKAY.
LET'S FUTURE-PROOF ME FOR WHOEVER HANDLES MY STORY NEXT.

GWENDOLYN POOLE (GWENPOOL)

- Comics fan from the same Earth as you who chose to live in Earth-616 forever.

- Cheerful, sweet, goofy and earnest when not burdened by the existential exhaustion of being a real person in a comic book world.

- Friends: Cecil, Batroc, Terrible Eye, Jeff the Land Shark, Deadpool, Squirrel Girl, Quentin Quire.

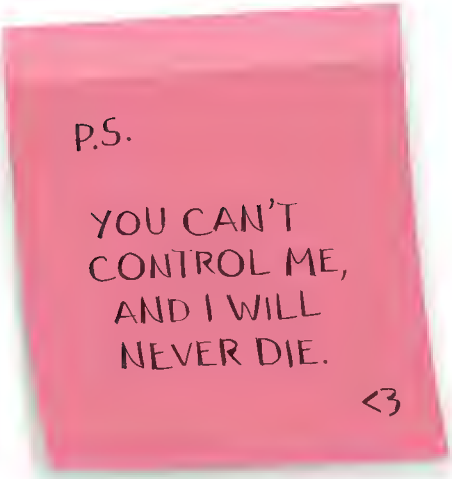
- Enemies: depends on which book.

- Crushes: depends on which book, also [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and sometimes Quentin.

- Family: two parents left behind in real world, and a brother named Teddy whom...we never quite resolved things with, I'm realizing.

- I may or may not have a new mutant ability. That's not my job to figure out--it's yours now.

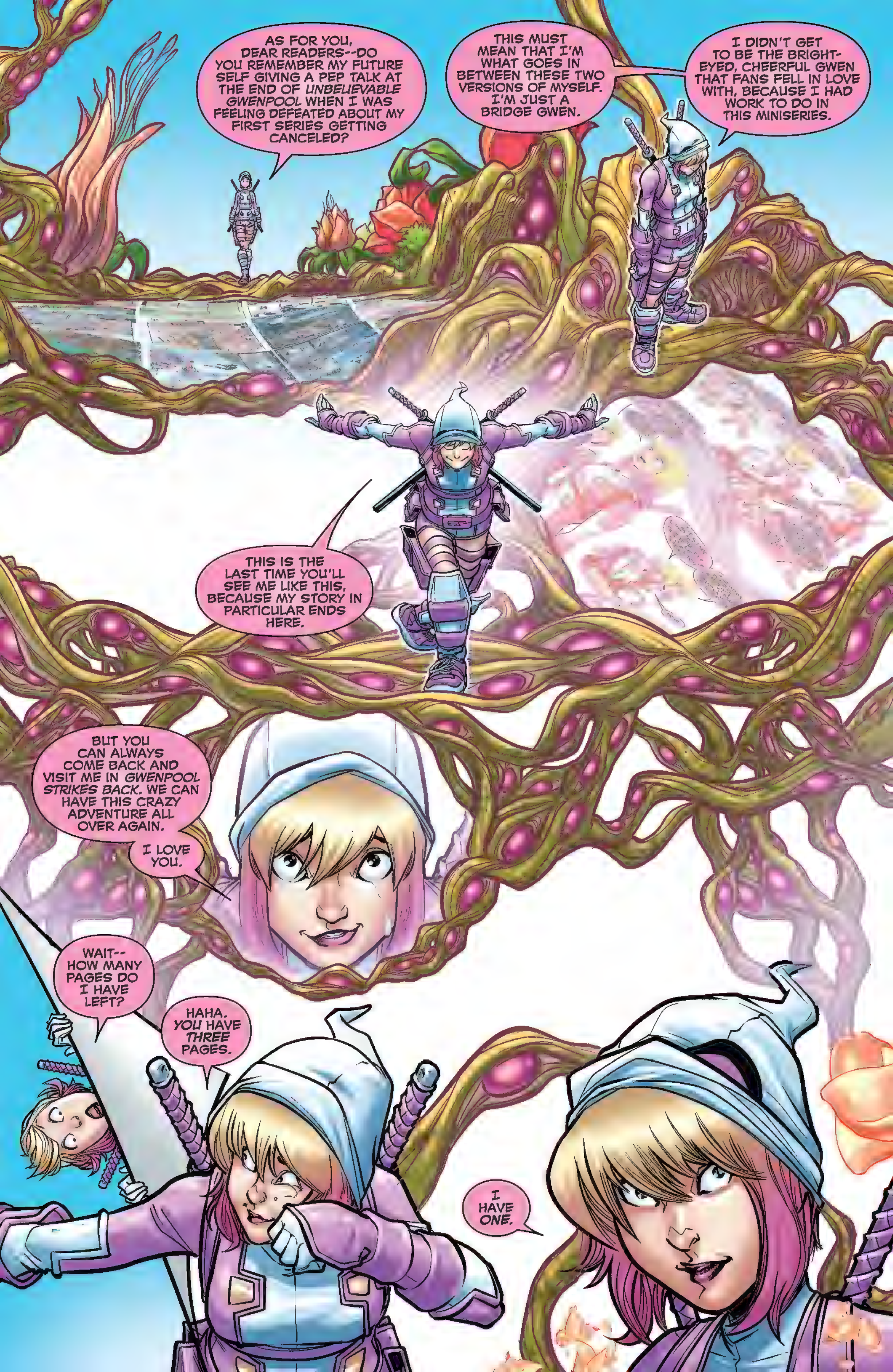
- Have fun!



P.S.

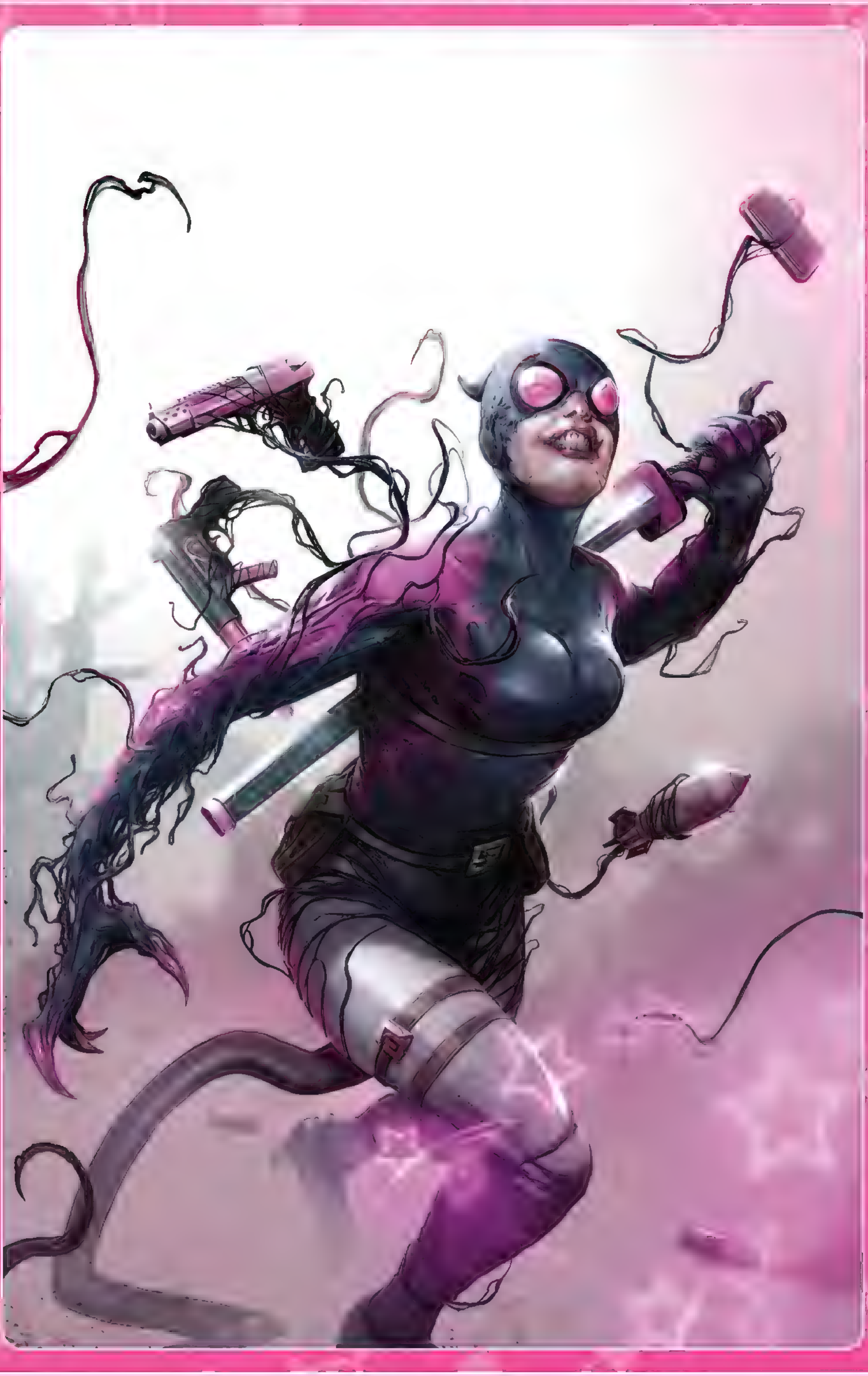
YOU CAN'T
CONTROL ME,
AND I WILL
NEVER DIE.

<3

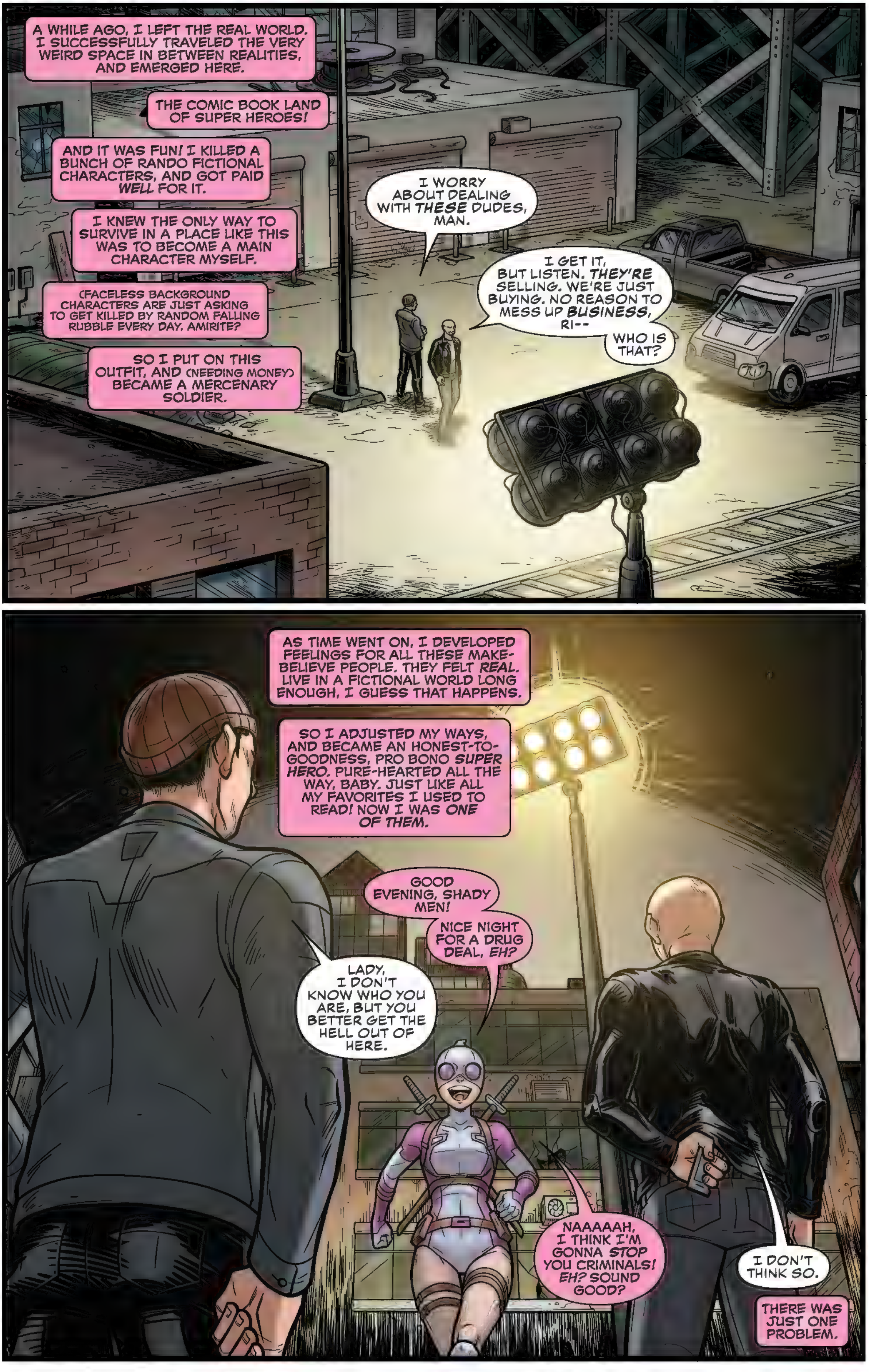

AS FOR YOU, DEAR READERS--DO YOU REMEMBER MY FUTURE SELF GIVING A PEP TALK AT THE END OF *UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL* WHEN I WAS FEELING DEFEATED ABOUT MY FIRST SERIES GETTING CANCELED?
THIS MUST MEAN THAT I'M WHAT GOES IN BETWEEN THESE TWO VERSIONS OF MYSELF. I'M JUST A BRIDGE GWEN.
I DIDN'T GET TO BE THE BRIGHT-EYED, CHEERFUL GWEN THAT FANS FELL IN LOVE WITH, BECAUSE I HAD WORK TO DO IN THIS MINISERIES.
THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU'LL SEE ME LIKE THIS, BECAUSE MY STORY IN PARTICULAR ENDS HERE.
BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS COME BACK AND VISIT ME IN *GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK*. WE CAN HAVE THIS CRAZY ADVENTURE ALL OVER AGAIN.
I LOVE YOU.
WAIT-- HOW MANY PAGES DO I HAVE LEFT?
HAHA. *YOU* HAVE *THREE* PAGES.
I HAVE *ONE*.

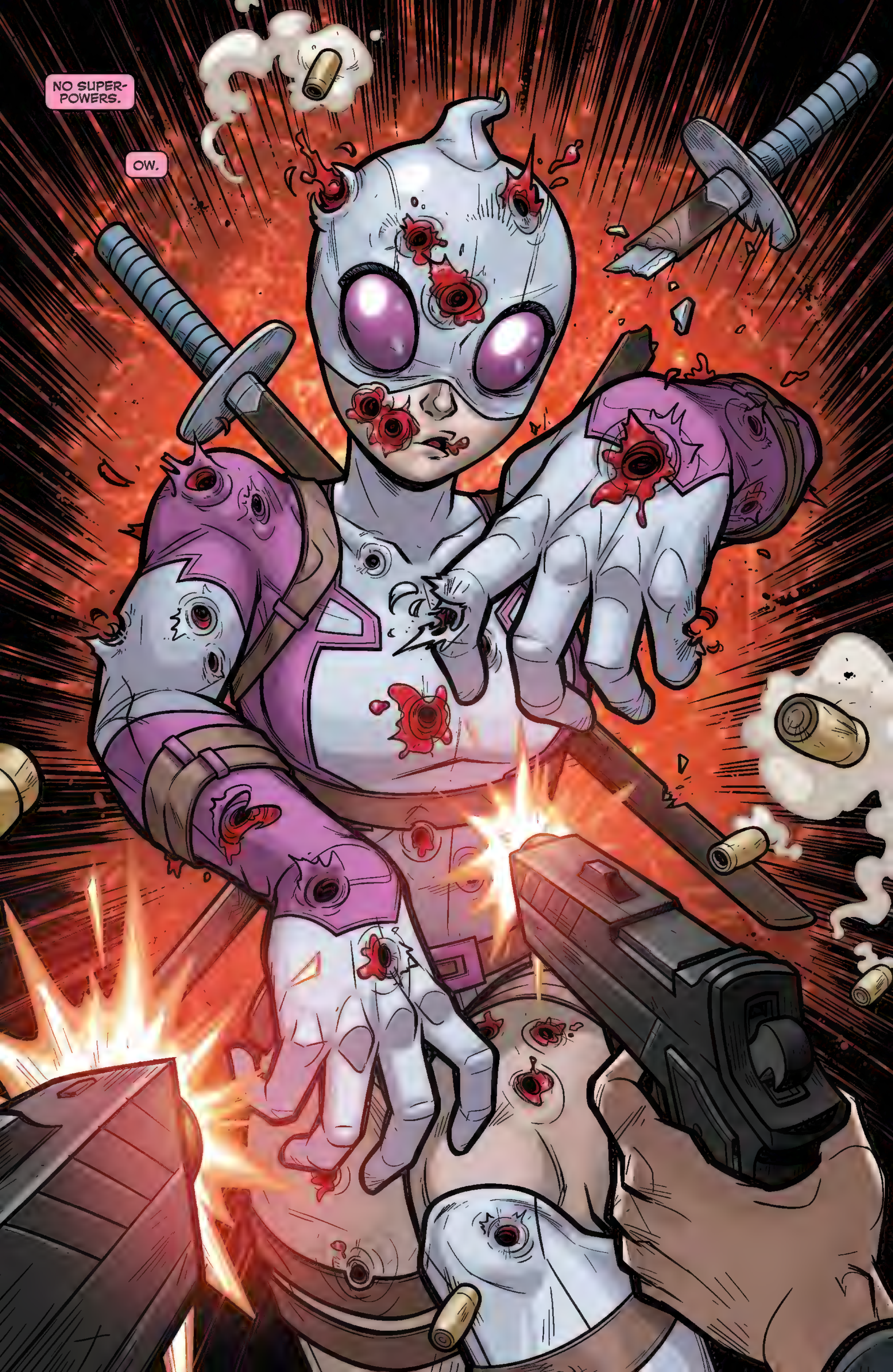
THE END. :*
Was it good for you too, baby?

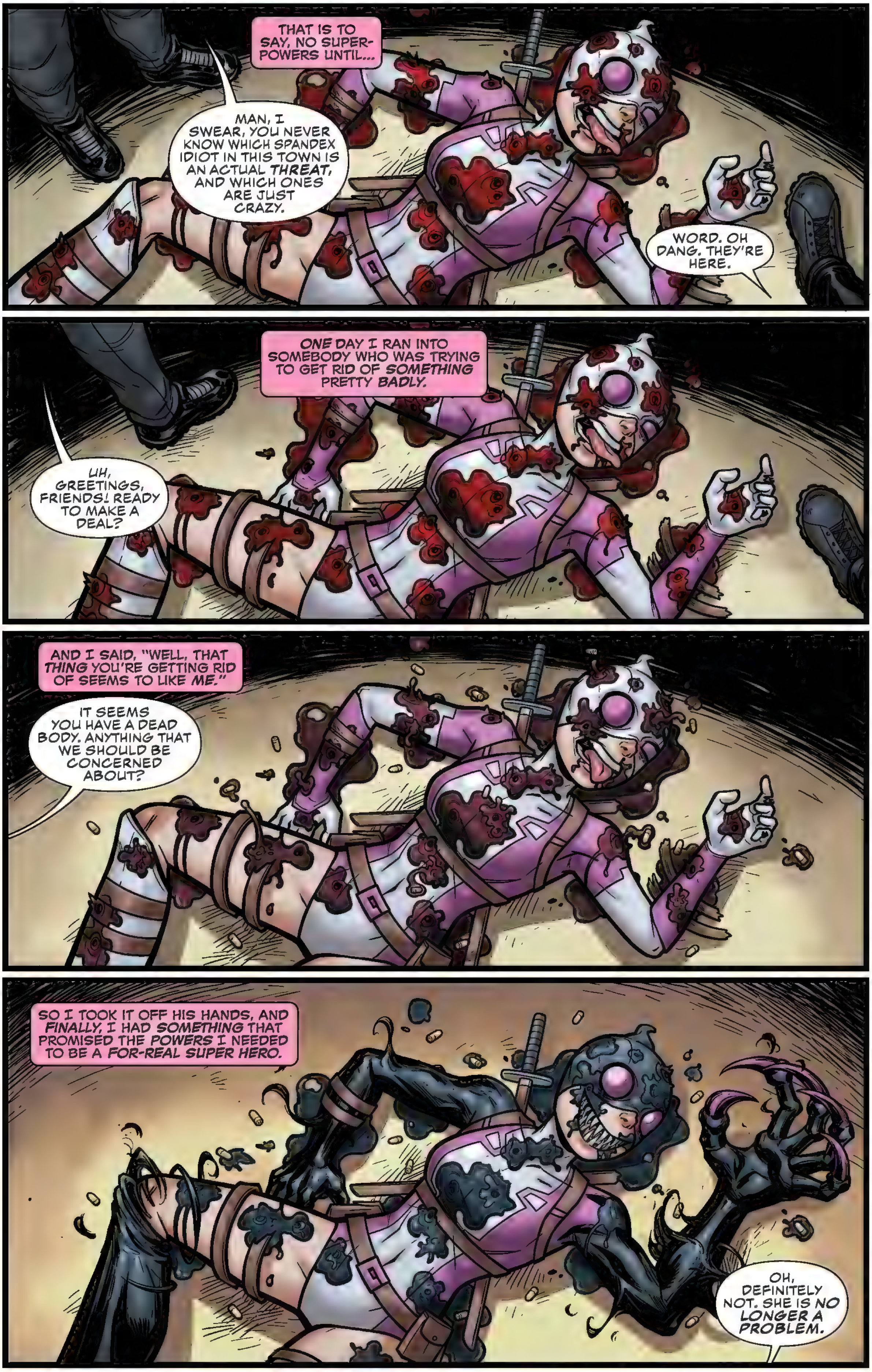
IT'S NOT THE END OF THE ROAD JUST YET, GWENPOOL FANS! ORIGINAL SERIES WRITER CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS ALSO PENNED TWO MORE GWENPOOL ADVENTURES THAT OCCUR IN OTHER DIMENSIONS. THE FIRST IS SET DURING THE MULTIVERSAL SYMBIOTIC MADNESS OF THE "VENOMVERSE" EVENT. AND THE OTHER -- WELL, WE'LL LET YOU READ FOR YOURSELF...

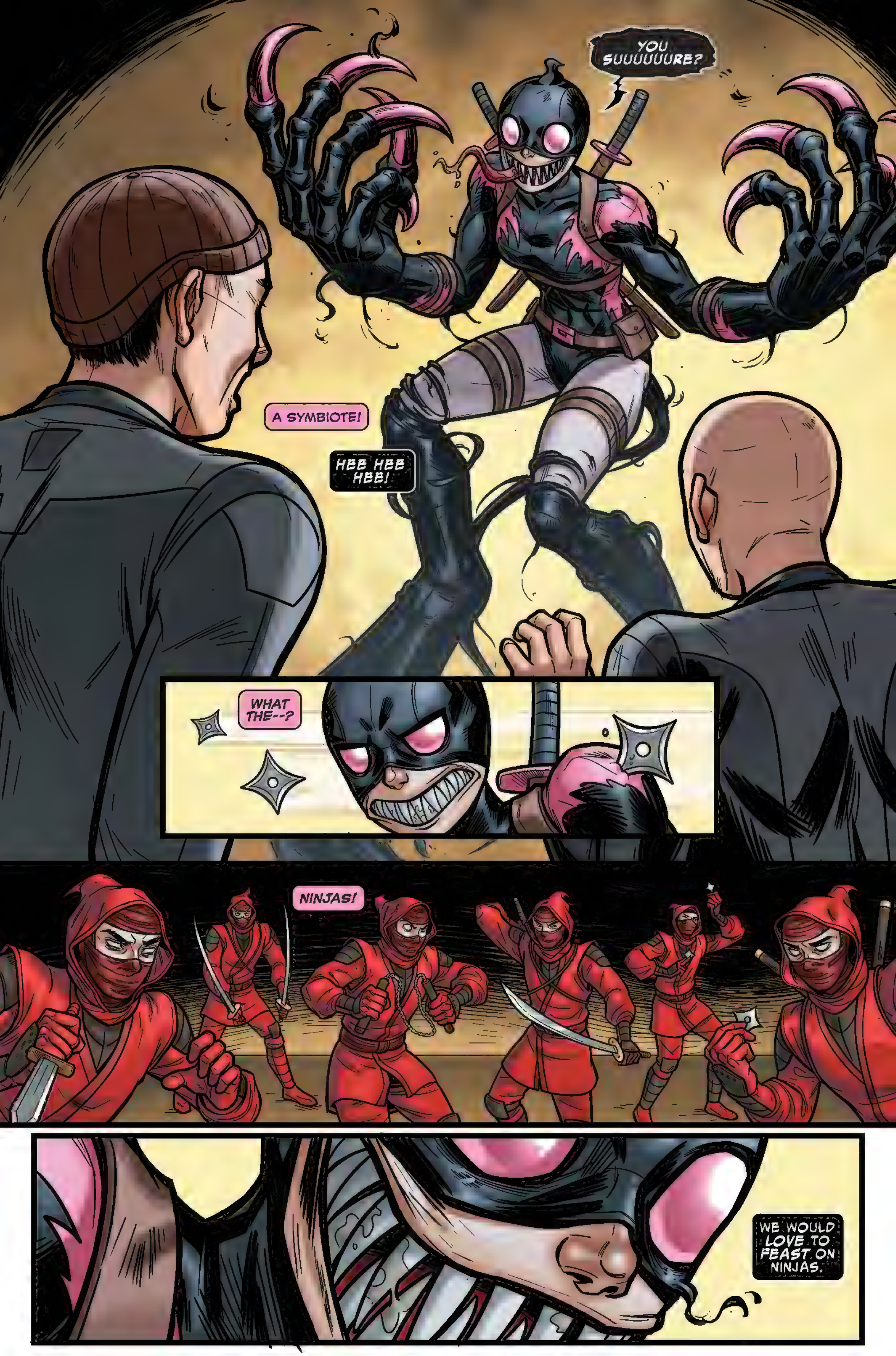


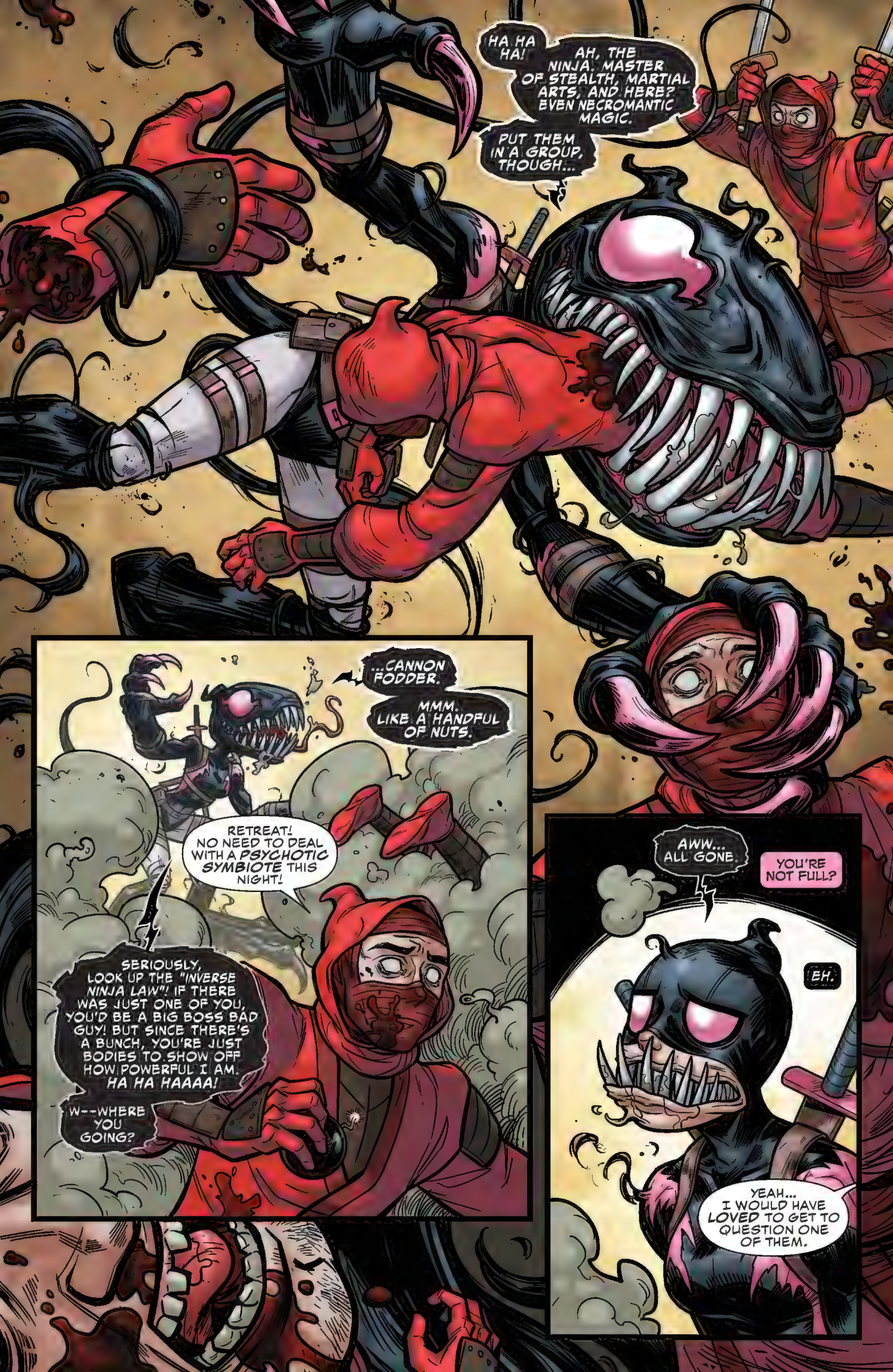
EDGE OF VENOMVERSE #2

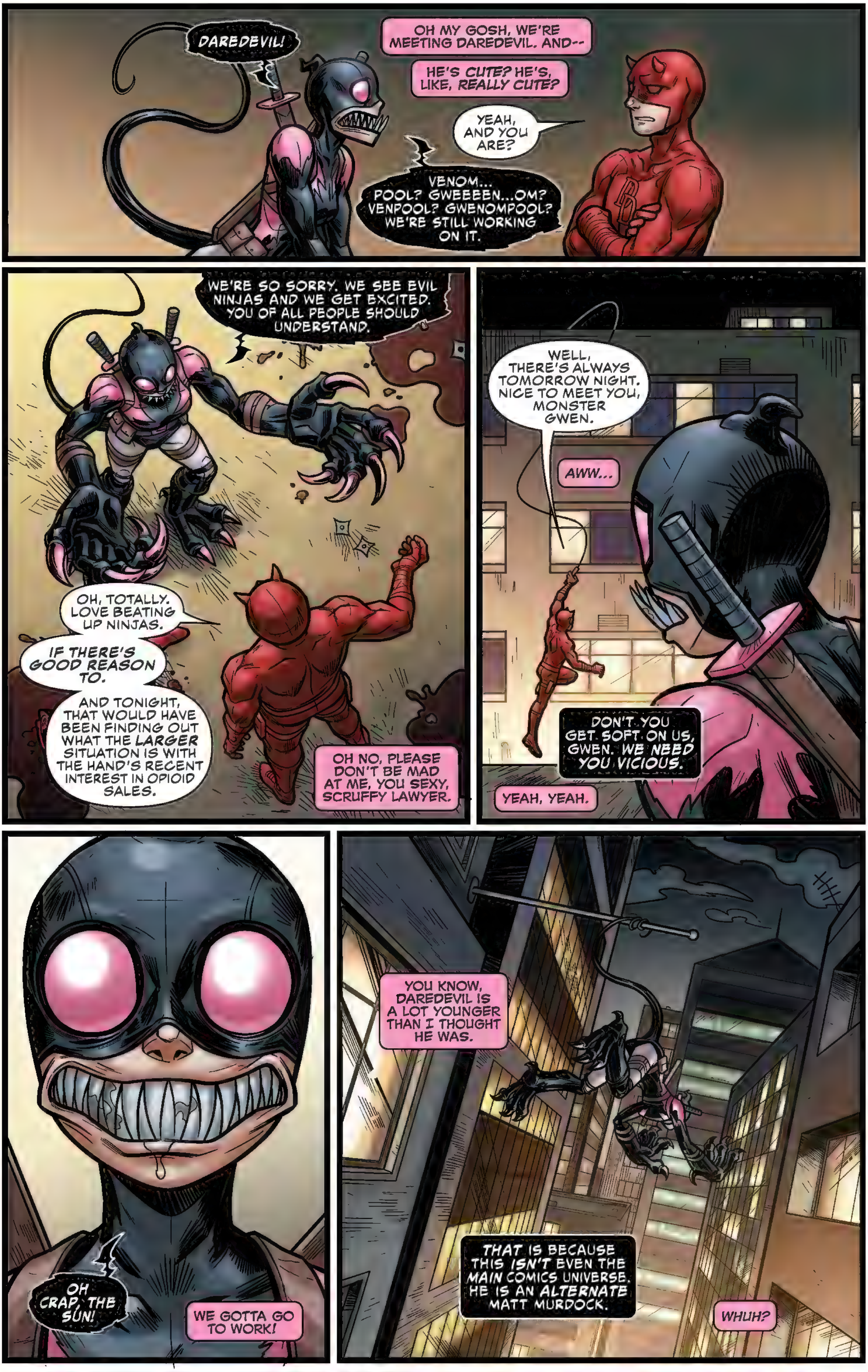

A WHILE AGO, I LEFT THE REAL WORLD. I SUCCESSFULLY TRAVELED THE VERY WEIRD SPACE IN BETWEEN REALITIES, AND EMERGED HERE.
THE COMIC BOOK LAND OF SUPER HEROES!
AND IT WAS FUN! I KILLED A BUNCH OF RANDO FICTIONAL CHARACTERS, AND GOT PAID *WELL* FOR IT.
I KNEW THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS WAS TO BECOME A MAIN CHARACTER MYSELF.
(FACELESS BACKGROUND CHARACTERS ARE JUST ASKING TO GET KILLED BY RANDOM FALLING RUBBLE EVERY DAY, AMIRITE?
SO I PUT ON THIS OUTFIT, AND (NEEDING MONEY) BECAME A MERCENARY SOLDIER.
I WORRY ABOUT DEALING WITH *THESE* DUDES, MAN.
I GET IT, BUT LISTEN. *THEY'RE* SELLING. WE'RE JUST BUYING. NO REASON TO MESS UP *BUSINESS*, RI--
WHO IS THAT?
AS TIME WENT ON, I DEVELOPED FEELINGS FOR ALL THESE MAKE-BELIEVE PEOPLE. THEY FELT *REAL*. LIVE IN A FICTIONAL WORLD LONG ENOUGH, I GUESS THAT HAPPENS.
SO I ADJUSTED MY WAYS, AND BECAME AN HONEST-TO-GOODNESS, PRO BONO *SUPER HERO*. PURE-HEARTED ALL THE WAY, BABY. JUST LIKE ALL MY FAVORITES I USED TO READ! NOW I WAS *ONE OF THEM*.
GOOD EVENING, SHADY MEN!
NICE NIGHT FOR A DRUG DEAL, *EH?*
LADY, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU BETTER GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
NAAAAAH, I THINK I'M GONNA *STOP* YOU CRIMINALS! *EH?* SOUND GOOD?
I DON'T THINK SO.
THERE WAS JUST ONE PROBLEM.

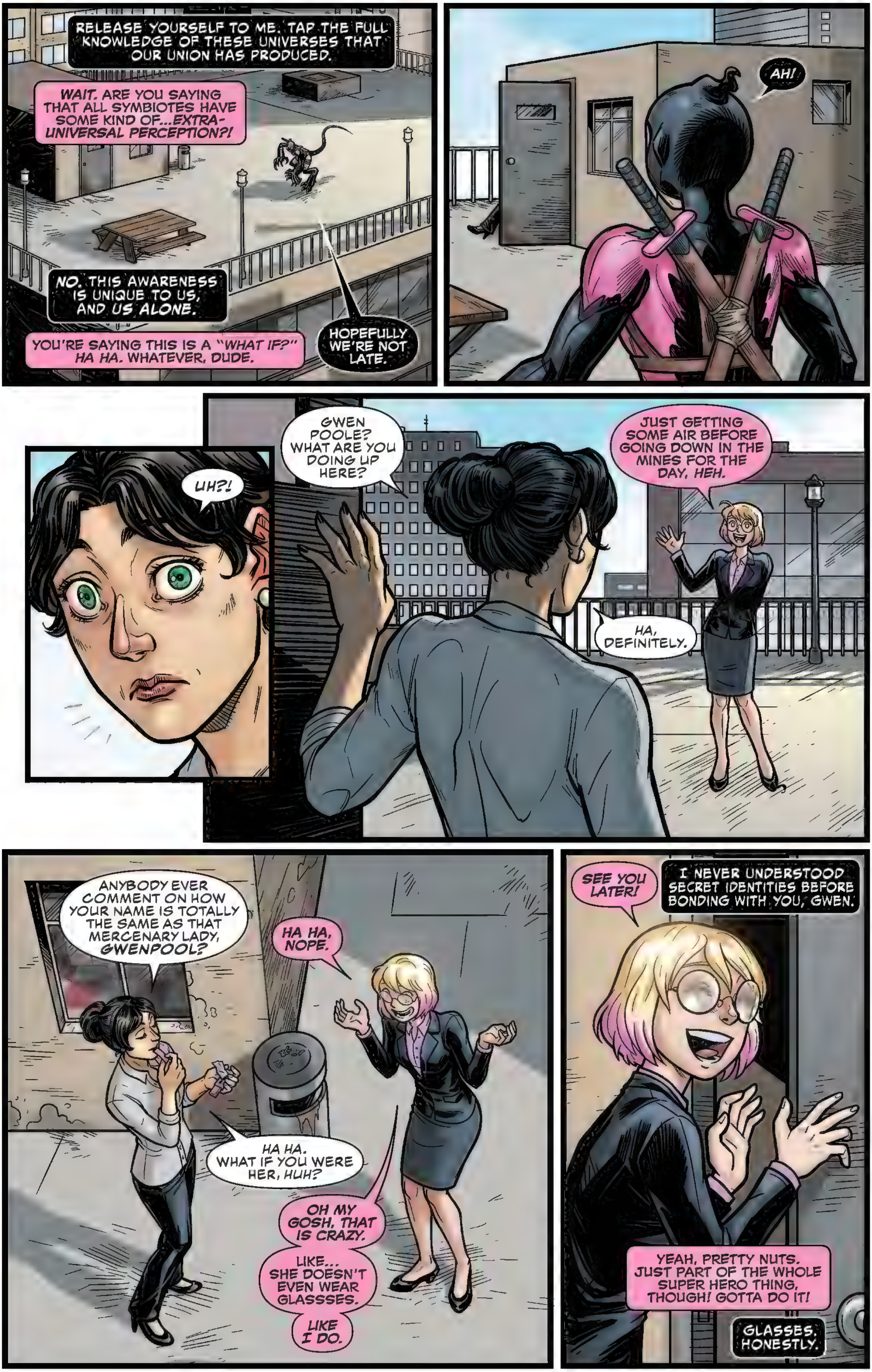

NO SUPER-POWERS.
OW.

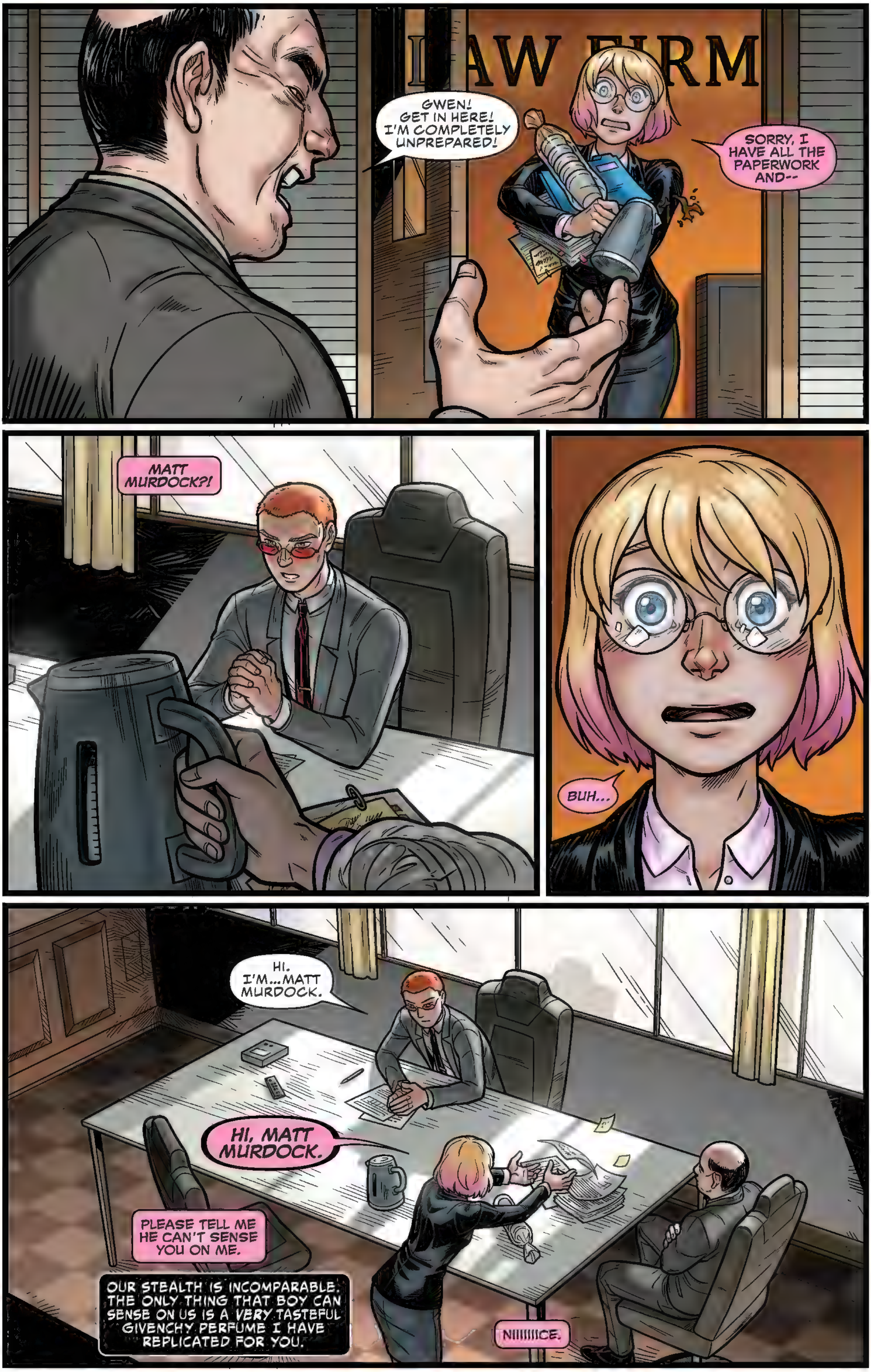

THAT IS TO SAY, NO SUPER-POWERS UNTIL...
MAN, I SWEAR, YOU NEVER KNOW WHICH SPANDEX IDIOT IN THIS TOWN IS AN ACTUAL *THREAT*, AND WHICH ONES ARE JUST CRAZY.
WORD. OH DANG. THEY'RE HERE.
ONE DAY I RAN INTO SOMEBODY WHO WAS TRYING TO GET RID OF *SOMETHING* PRETTY *BADLY*.
UH, GREETINGS, FRIENDS! READY TO MAKE A DEAL?
AND I SAID, "WELL, THAT *THING* YOU'RE GETTING RID OF SEEMS TO LIKE *ME*."
IT SEEMS YOU HAVE A DEAD BODY. ANYTHING THAT WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT?
SO I TOOK IT OFF HIS HANDS, AND *FINALLY*, I HAD *SOMETHING* THAT PROMISED THE *POWERS* I NEEDED TO BE A *FOR-REAL SUPER HERO*.
OH, DEFINITELY NOT. SHE IS *NO LONGER A PROBLEM*.

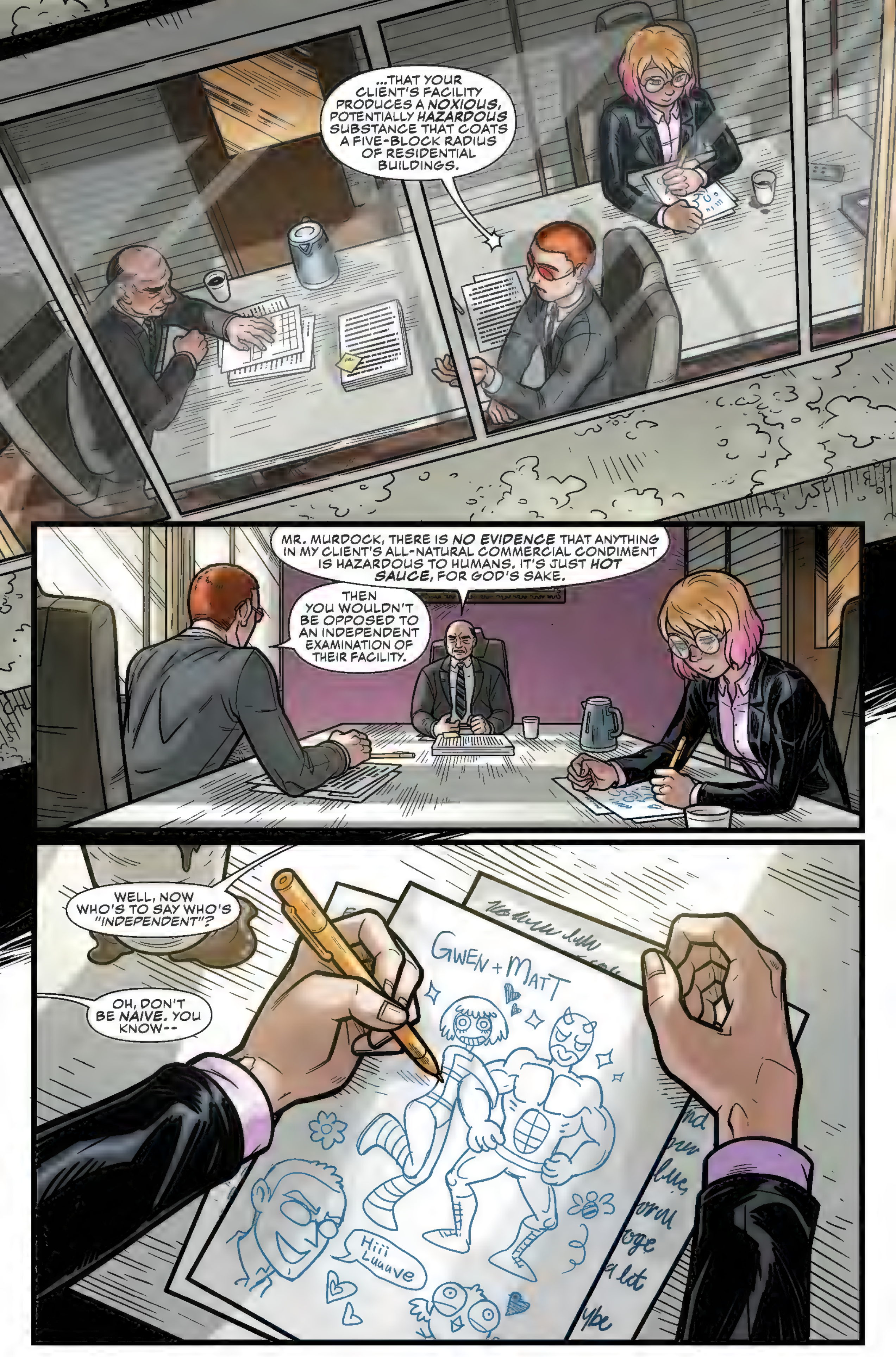

YOU SUUUUUURE?
A SYMBIOTE!
HEE HEE HEE!
WHAT THE--?
NINJAS!
WE WOULD LOVE TO FEAST ON NINJAS.

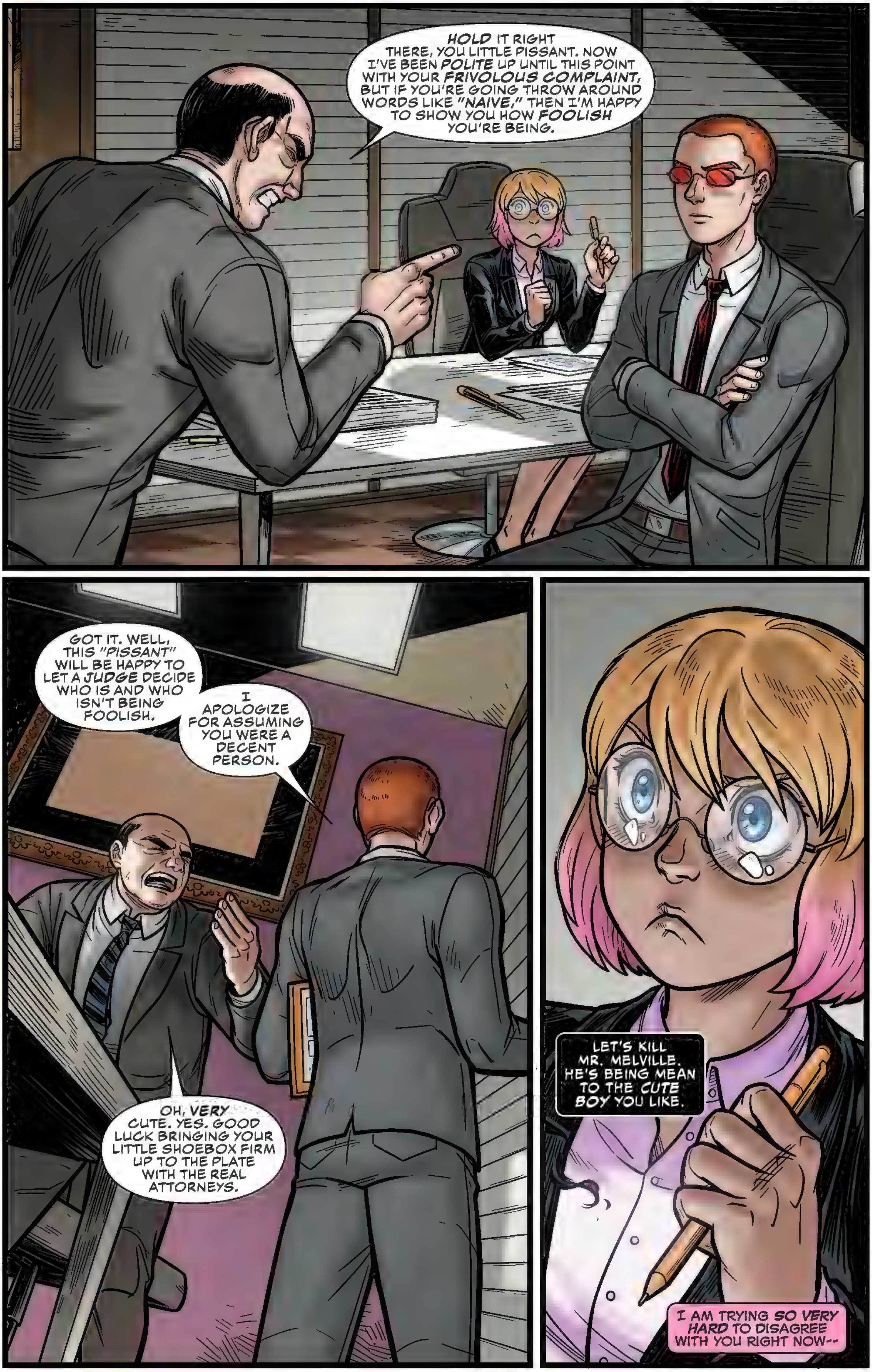

HA HA HA!
AH, THE NINJA. MASTER OF STEALTH, MARTIAL ARTS, AND HERE? EVEN NECROMANTIC MAGIC.
PUT THEM IN A GROUP, THOUGH...
...CANNON FODDER.
MMM. LIKE A HANDFUL OF NUTS.
RETREAT! NO NEED TO DEAL WITH A *PSYCHOTIC SYMBIOTE* THIS NIGHT!
SERIOUSLY, LOOK UP THE "*INVERSE NINJA LAW*"! IF THERE WAS JUST ONE OF YOU, YOU'D BE A BIG BOSS BAD GUY! BUT SINCE THERE'S A BUNCH, YOU'RE JUST BODIES TO SHOW OFF HOW POWERFUL I AM. *HA HA HAAAA!*
W--WHERE YOU GOING?
AWW... ALL GONE.
YOU'RE NOT FULL?
EH.
YEAH... I WOULD HAVE *LOVED* TO GET TO QUESTION ONE OF THEM.

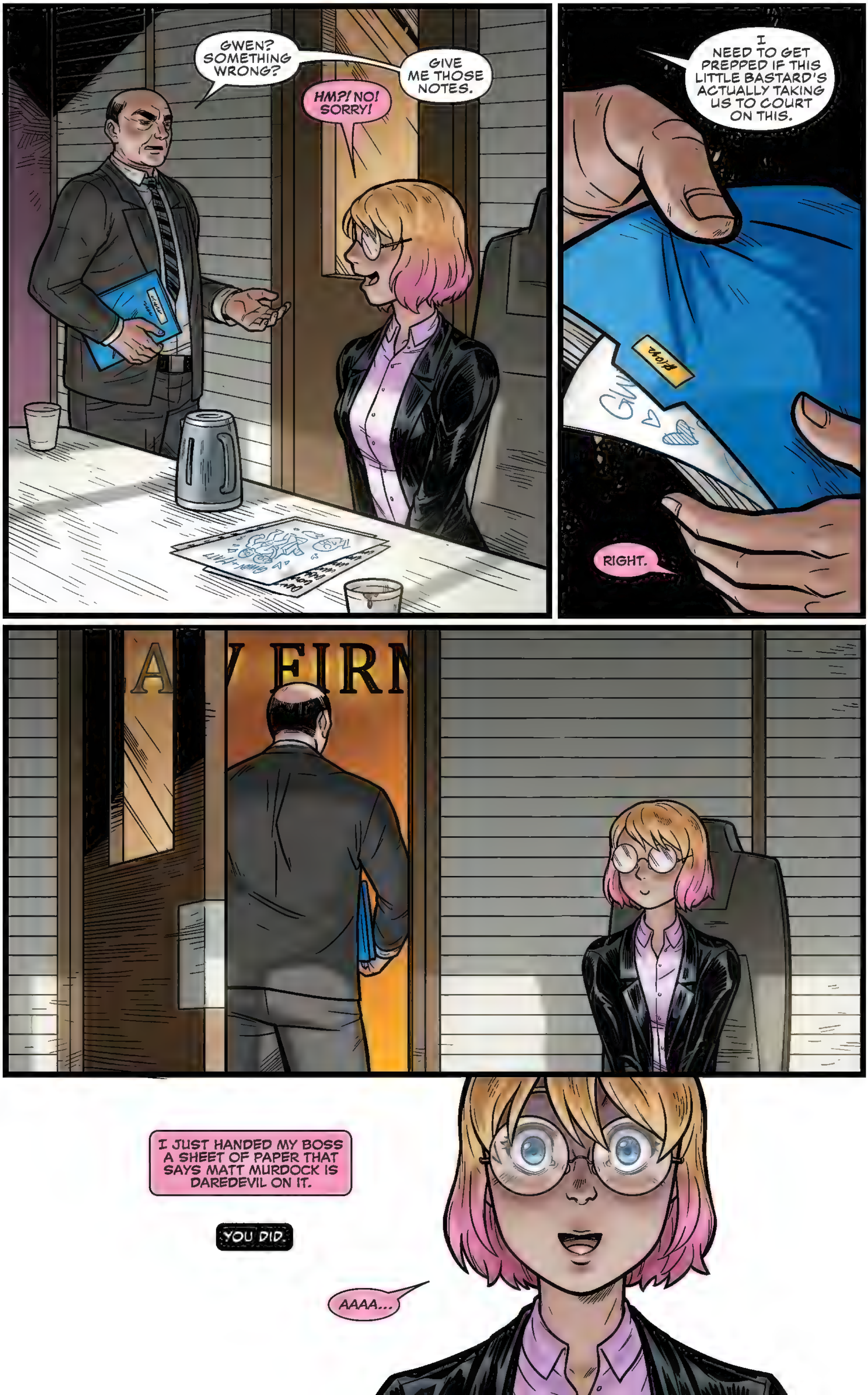

DAREDEVIL!
OH MY GOSH, WE'RE MEETING DAREDEVIL. AND--
HE'S *CUTE?* HE'S, LIKE, *REALLY CUTE?*
YEAH, AND YOU ARE?
VENOM... POOL? GWEEEEN...OM? VENPOOL? GWENOMPOOL? WE'RE STILL WORKING ON IT.
WE'RE SO SORRY. WE SEE EVIL NINJAS AND WE GET EXCITED. YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD UNDERSTAND.
OH, TOTALLY. LOVE BEATING UP NINJAS.
IF THERE'S GOOD REASON TO.
AND TONIGHT, THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN FINDING OUT WHAT THE *LARGER* SITUATION IS WITH THE HAND'S RECENT INTEREST IN OPIOID SALES.
OH NO, PLEASE DON'T BE MAD AT ME, YOU SEXY, SCRUFFY LAWYER.
WELL, THERE'S ALWAYS TOMORROW NIGHT. NICE TO MEET YOU, MONSTER GWEN.
AWW...
DON'T YOU GET SOFT ON US, GWEN. *WE NEED YOU VICIOUS.*
YEAH, YEAH.
OH CRAP, THE SUN!
WE GOTTA GO TO WORK!
YOU KNOW, DAREDEVIL IS A LOT YOUNGER THAN I THOUGHT HE WAS.
THAT IS BECAUSE THIS *ISN'T* EVEN THE *MAIN* COMICS UNIVERSE. HE IS AN *ALTERNATE* MATT MURDOCK.
WHUH?

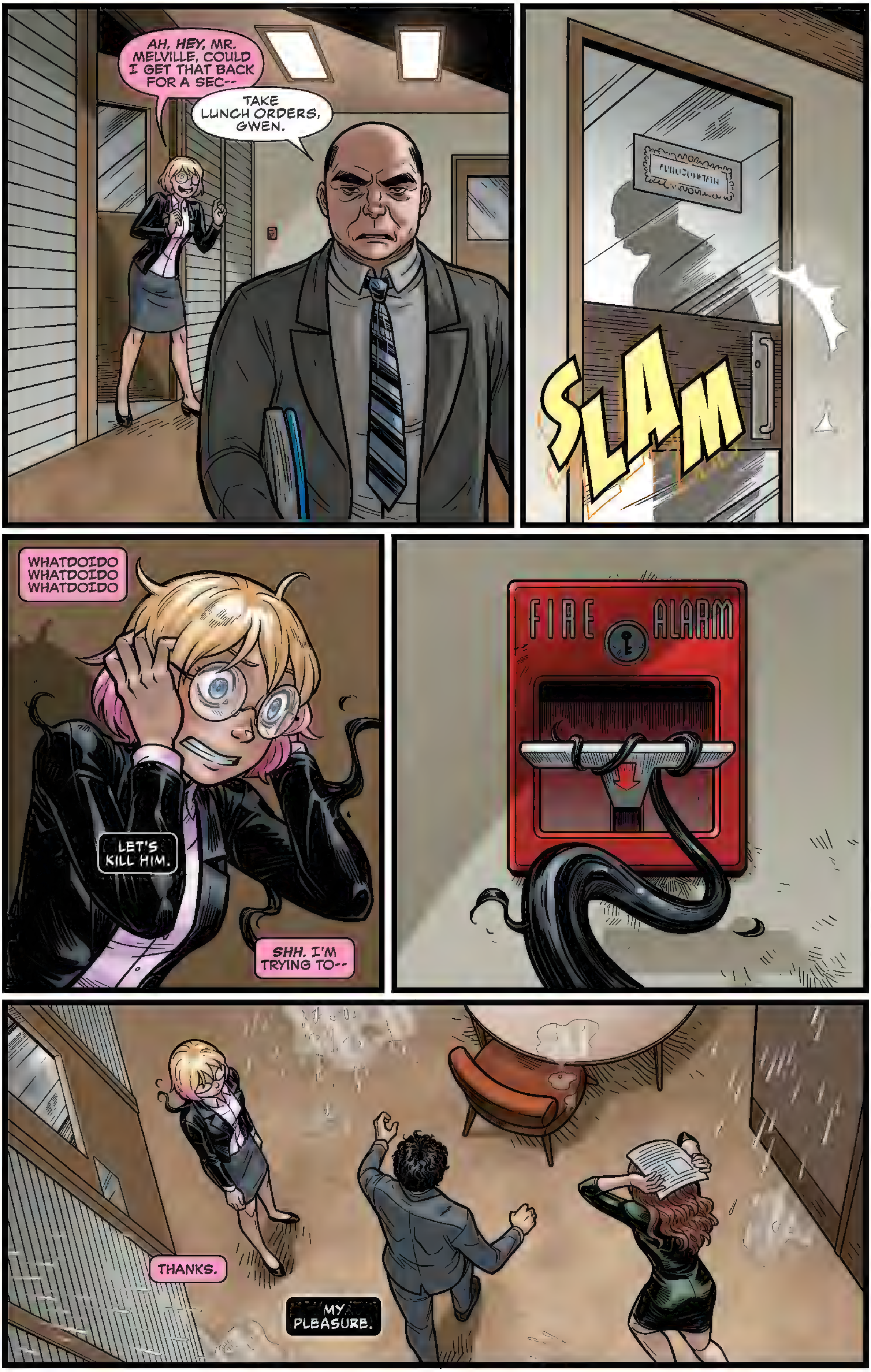

RELEASE YOURSELF TO ME. TAP THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THESE UNIVERSES THAT OUR UNION HAS PRODUCED.
WAIT. ARE YOU SAYING THAT ALL SYMBIOTES HAVE SOME KIND OF...EXTRA-UNIVERSAL PERCEPTION?!
NO. THIS AWARENESS IS UNIQUE TO US, AND US ALONE.
YOU'RE SAYING THIS IS A "WHAT IF?" HA HA. WHATEVER, DUDE.
HOPEFULLY WE'RE NOT LATE.
AH!
UH?!
GWEN POOLE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP HERE?
JUST GETTING SOME AIR BEFORE GOING DOWN IN THE MINES FOR THE DAY, HEH.
HA, DEFINITELY.
ANYBODY EVER COMMENT ON HOW YOUR NAME IS TOTALLY THE SAME AS THAT MERCENARY LADY, GWENPOOL?
HA HA, NOPE.
HA HA. WHAT IF YOU WERE HER, HUH?
OH MY GOSH, THAT IS CRAZY.
LIKE... SHE DOESN'T EVEN WEAR GLASSSES.
LIKE I DO.
SEE YOU LATER!
I NEVER UNDERSTOOD SECRET IDENTITIES BEFORE BONDING WITH YOU, GWEN.
YEAH, PRETTY NUTS. JUST PART OF THE WHOLE SUPER HERO THING, THOUGH! GOTTA DO IT!
GLASSES. HONESTLY.

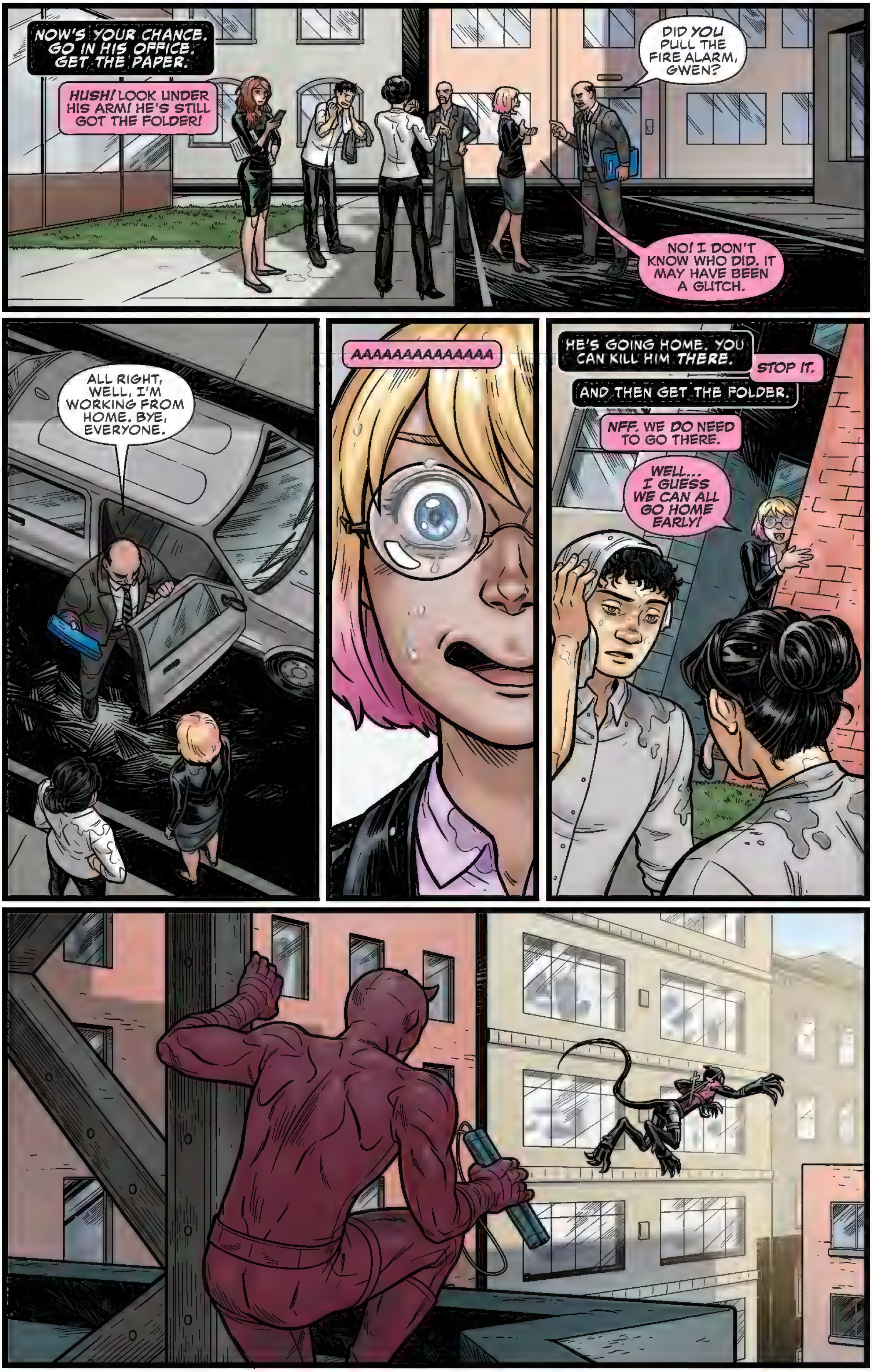

LAW FIRM
GWEN! GET IN HERE! I'M COMPLETELY UNPREPARED!
SORRY, I HAVE ALL THE PAPERWORK AND--
MATT MURDOCK?!
BUH...
HI. I'M...MATT MURDOCK.
HI, MATT MURDOCK.
PLEASE TELL ME HE CAN'T SENSE YOU ON ME.
OUR STEALTH IS INCOMPARABLE. THE ONLY THING THAT BOY CAN SENSE ON US IS A *VERY* TASTEFUL GIVENCHY PERFUME I HAVE REPLICATED FOR YOU.
NIIIIIICE.

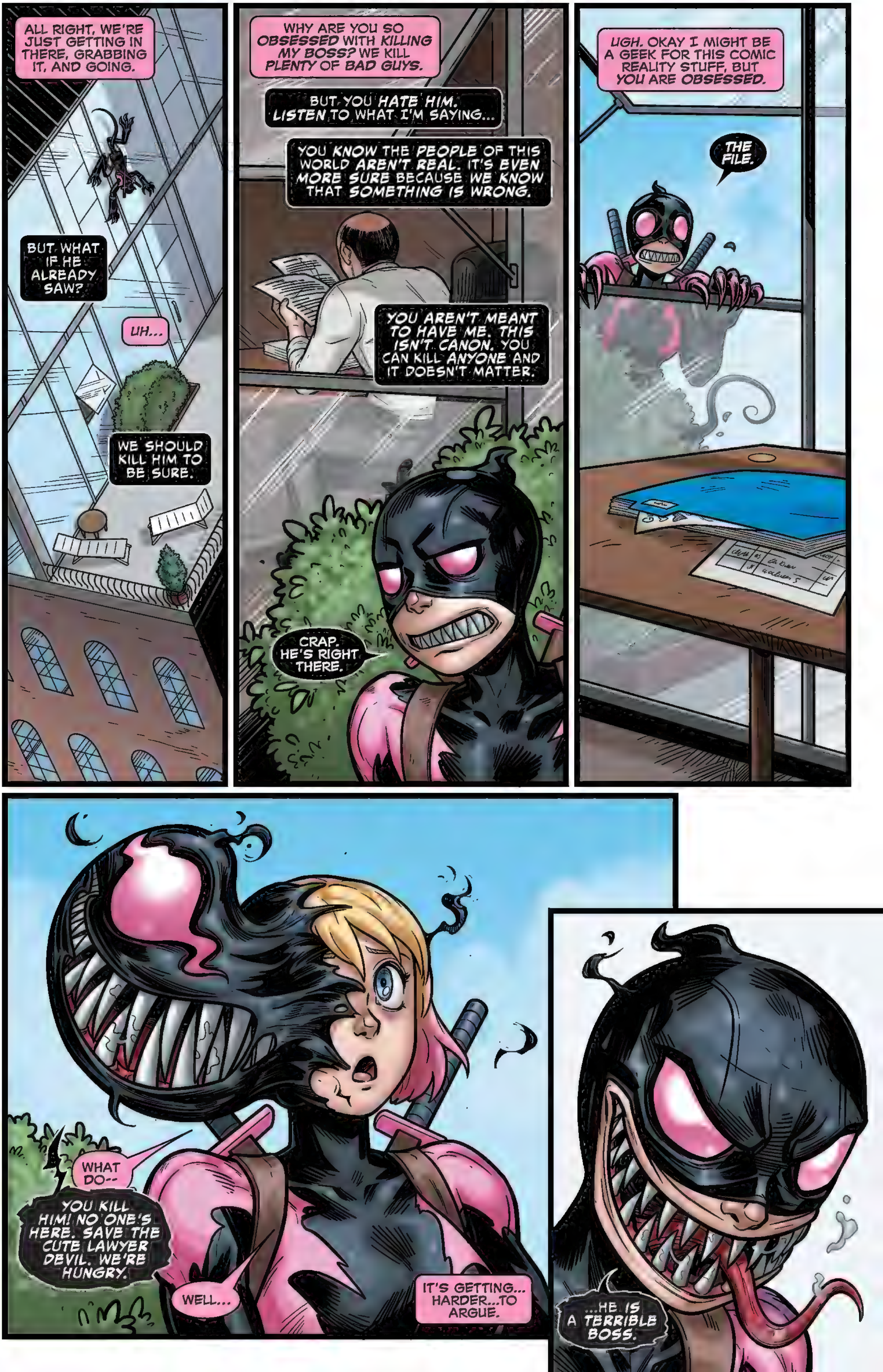

...THAT YOUR CLIENT'S FACILITY PRODUCES A *NOXIOUS*, POTENTIALLY *HAZARDOUS* SUBSTANCE THAT COATS A FIVE-BLOCK RADIUS OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.
MR. MURDOCK, THERE IS *NO EVIDENCE* THAT ANYTHING IN MY CLIENT'S ALL-NATURAL COMMERCIAL CONDIMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO HUMANS. IT'S JUST *HOT SAUCE*, FOR GOD'S SAKE.
THEN YOU WOULDN'T BE OPPOSED TO AN INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THEIR FACILITY.
WELL, NOW WHO'S TO SAY WHO'S "INDEPENDENT"?
OH, DON'T BE *NAIVE*. YOU KNOW--
GWEN + MATT
Hiii Luuuve

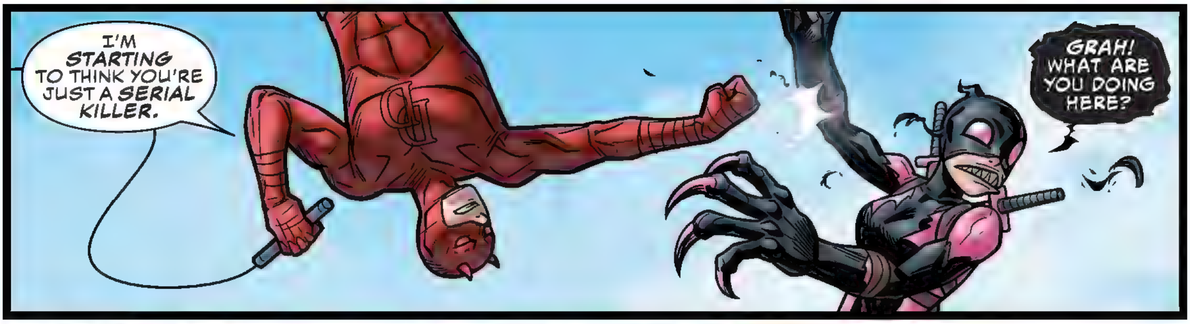

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, YOU LITTLE PISSANT. NOW I'VE BEEN POLITE UP UNTIL THIS POINT WITH YOUR FRIVOLOUS COMPLAINT, BUT IF YOU'RE GOING THROW AROUND WORDS LIKE "NAIVE," THEN I'M HAPPY TO SHOW YOU HOW FOOLISH YOU'RE BEING.
GOT IT. WELL, THIS "PISSANT" WILL BE HAPPY TO LET A JUDGE DECIDE WHO IS AND WHO ISN'T BEING FOOLISH.
I APOLOGIZE FOR ASSUMING YOU WERE A DECENT PERSON.
OH, VERY CUTE. YES. GOOD LUCK BRINGING YOUR LITTLE SHOEBOX FIRM UP TO THE PLATE WITH THE REAL ATTORNEYS.
LET'S KILL MR. MELVILLE. HE'S BEING MEAN TO THE CUTE BOY YOU LIKE.
I AM TRYING SO VERY HARD TO DISAGREE WITH YOU RIGHT NOW--

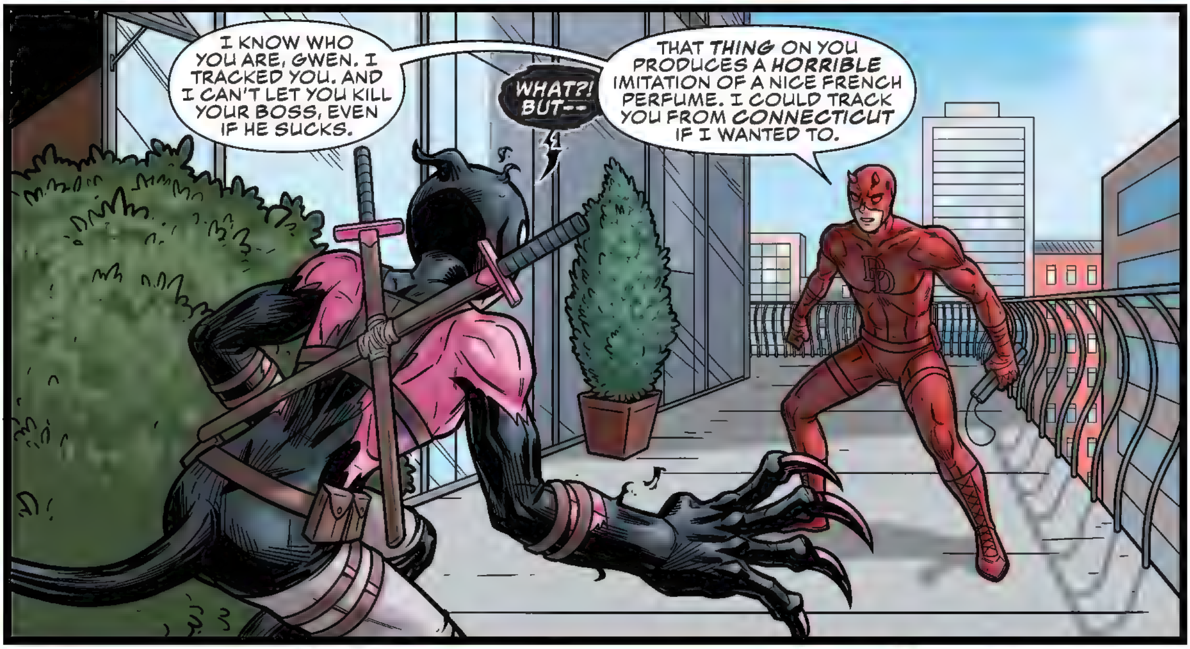

GWEN? SOMETHING WRONG?
HM?! NO! SORRY!
GIVE ME THOSE NOTES.
I NEED TO GET PREPPED IF THIS LITTLE BASTARD'S ACTUALLY TAKING US TO COURT ON THIS.
RIGHT.
I JUST HANDED MY BOSS A SHEET OF PAPER THAT SAYS MATT MURDOCK IS DAREDEVIL ON IT.
YOU DID.
AAAA...

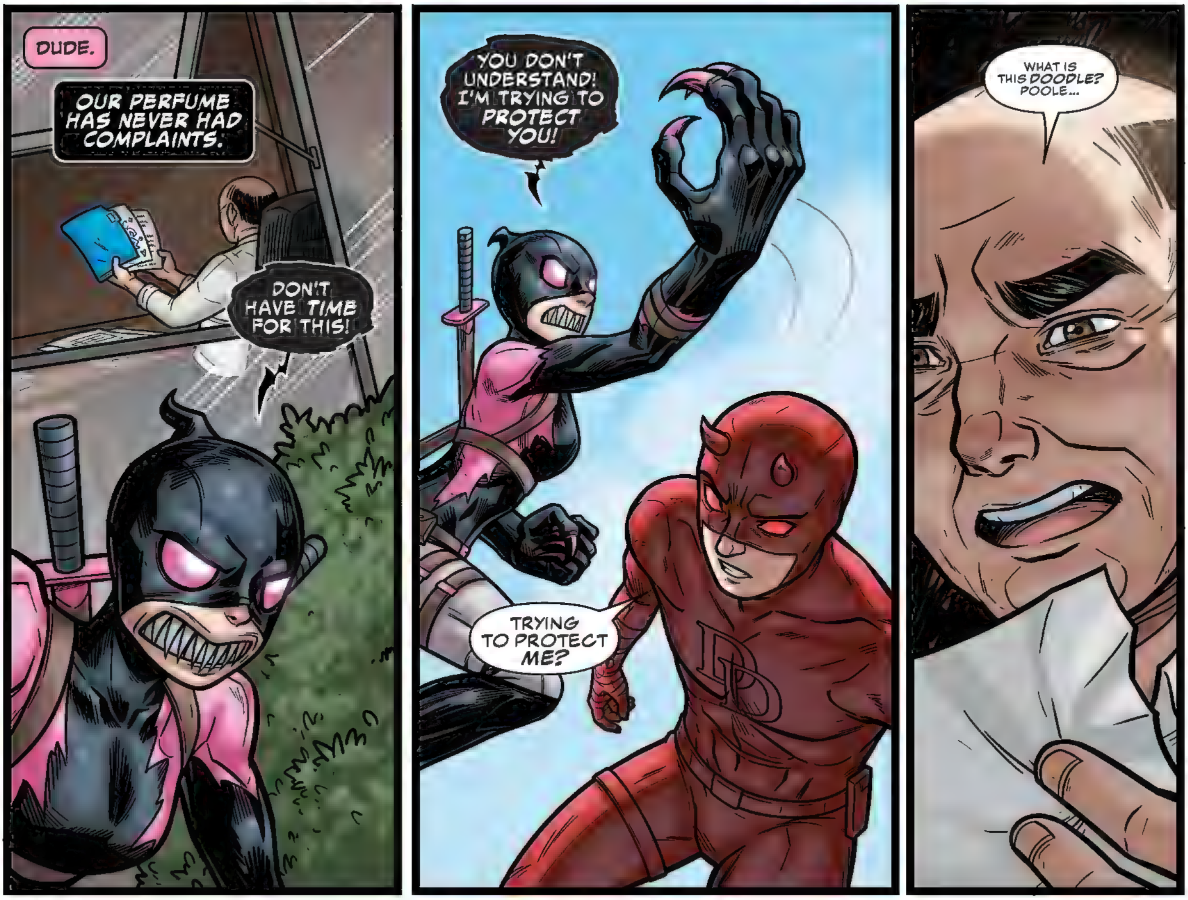

AH, HEY, MR. MELVILLE, COULD I GET THAT BACK FOR A SEC--
TAKE LUNCH ORDERS, GWEN.
SLAM
WHATDOIDO WHATDOIDO WHATDOIDO
LET'S KILL HIM.
SHH. I'M TRYING TO--
FIRE ALARM
THANKS.
MY PLEASURE.

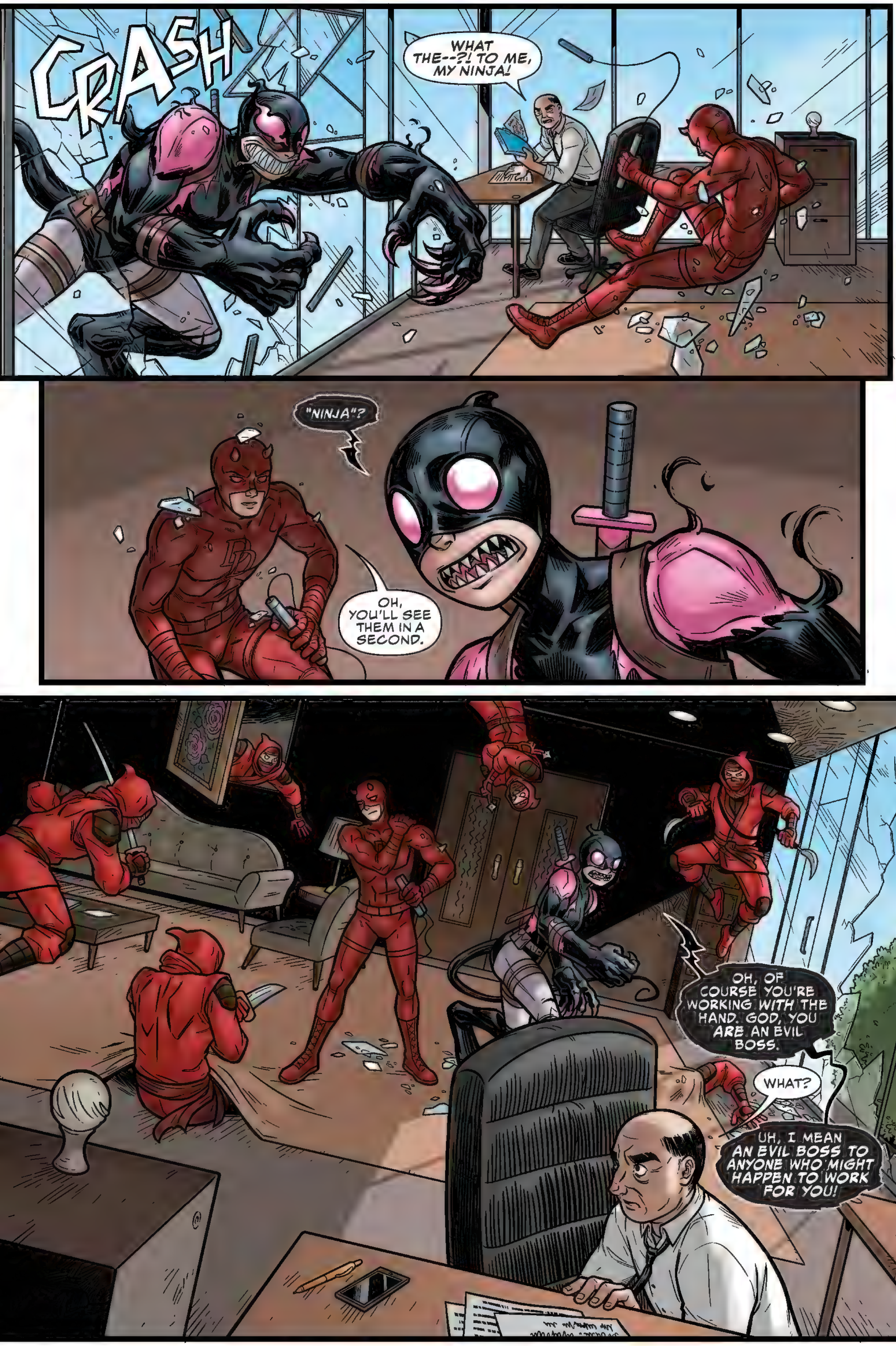

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE. GO IN HIS OFFICE. GET THE PAPER.
HUSH! LOOK UNDER HIS ARM! HE'S STILL GOT THE FOLDER!
DID YOU PULL THE FIRE ALARM, GWEN?
NO! I DON'T KNOW WHO DID. IT MAY HAVE BEEN A GLITCH.
ALL RIGHT, WELL, I'M WORKING FROM HOME. BYE, EVERYONE.
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
HE'S GOING HOME. YOU CAN KILL HIM THERE.
STOP IT.
AND THEN GET THE FOLDER.
NFF. WE DO NEED TO GO THERE.
WELL... I GUESS WE CAN ALL GO HOME EARLY!

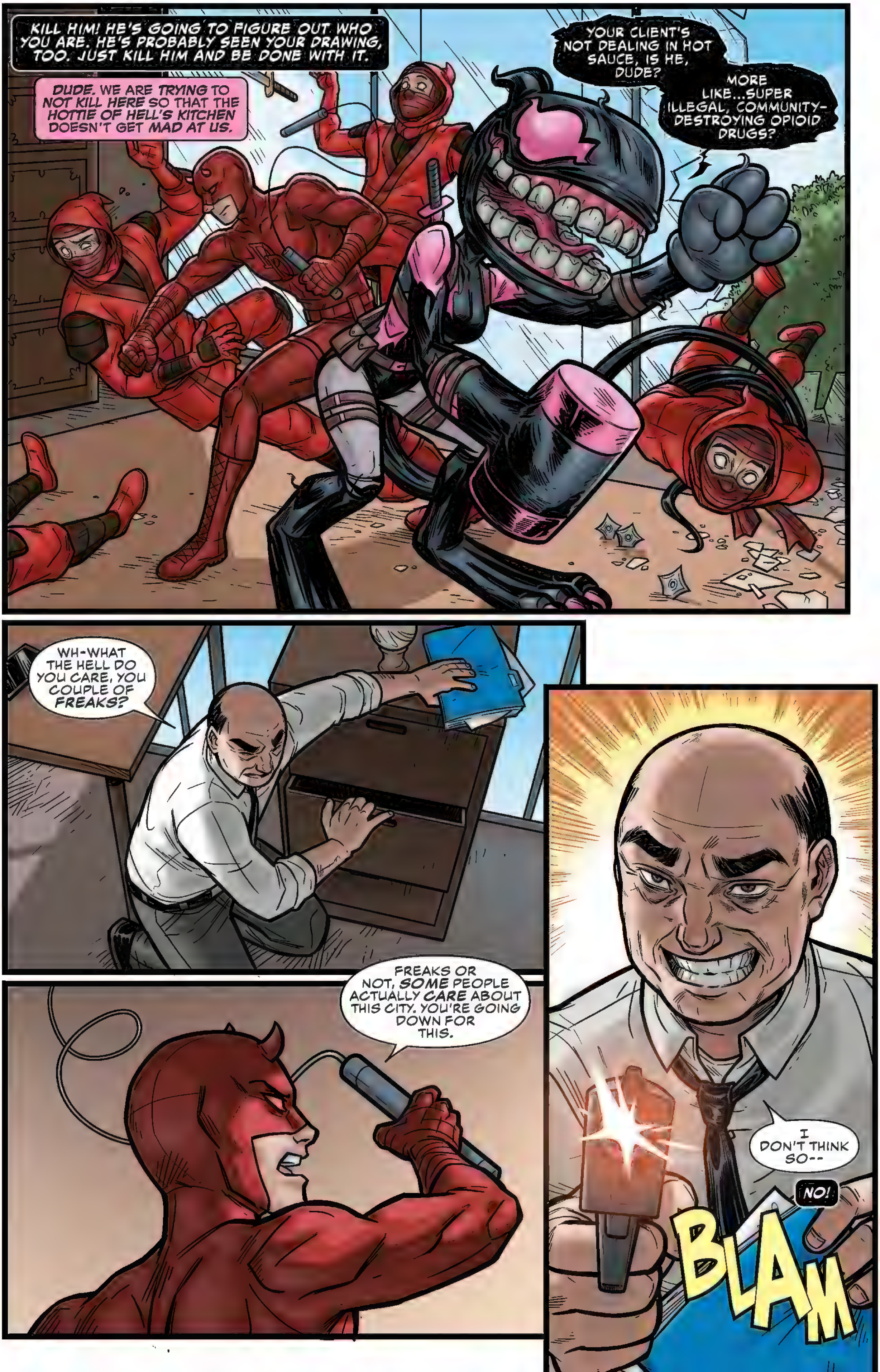

ALL RIGHT, WE'RE JUST GETTING IN THERE, GRABBING IT, AND GOING.
BUT WHAT IF HE ALREADY SAW?
UH...
WE SHOULD KILL HIM TO BE SURE.
WHY ARE YOU SO OBSESSED WITH KILLING MY BOSS? WE KILL PLENTY OF BAD GUYS.
BUT YOU HATE HIM. LISTEN TO WHAT I'M SAYING...
YOU KNOW THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD AREN'T REAL. IT'S EVEN MORE SURE BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG.
YOU AREN'T MEANT TO HAVE ME. THIS ISN'T CANON. YOU CAN KILL ANYONE AND IT DOESN'T MATTER.
CRAP. HE'S RIGHT THERE.
UGH. OKAY I MIGHT BE A GEEK FOR THIS COMIC REALITY STUFF, BUT YOU ARE OBSESSED.
THE FILE.
WHAT DO--
YOU KILL HIM! NO ONE'S HERE. SAVE THE CUTE LAWYER DEVIL. WE'RE HUNGRY.
WELL...
IT'S GETTING... HARDER...TO ARGUE.
...HE IS A TERRIBLE BOSS.

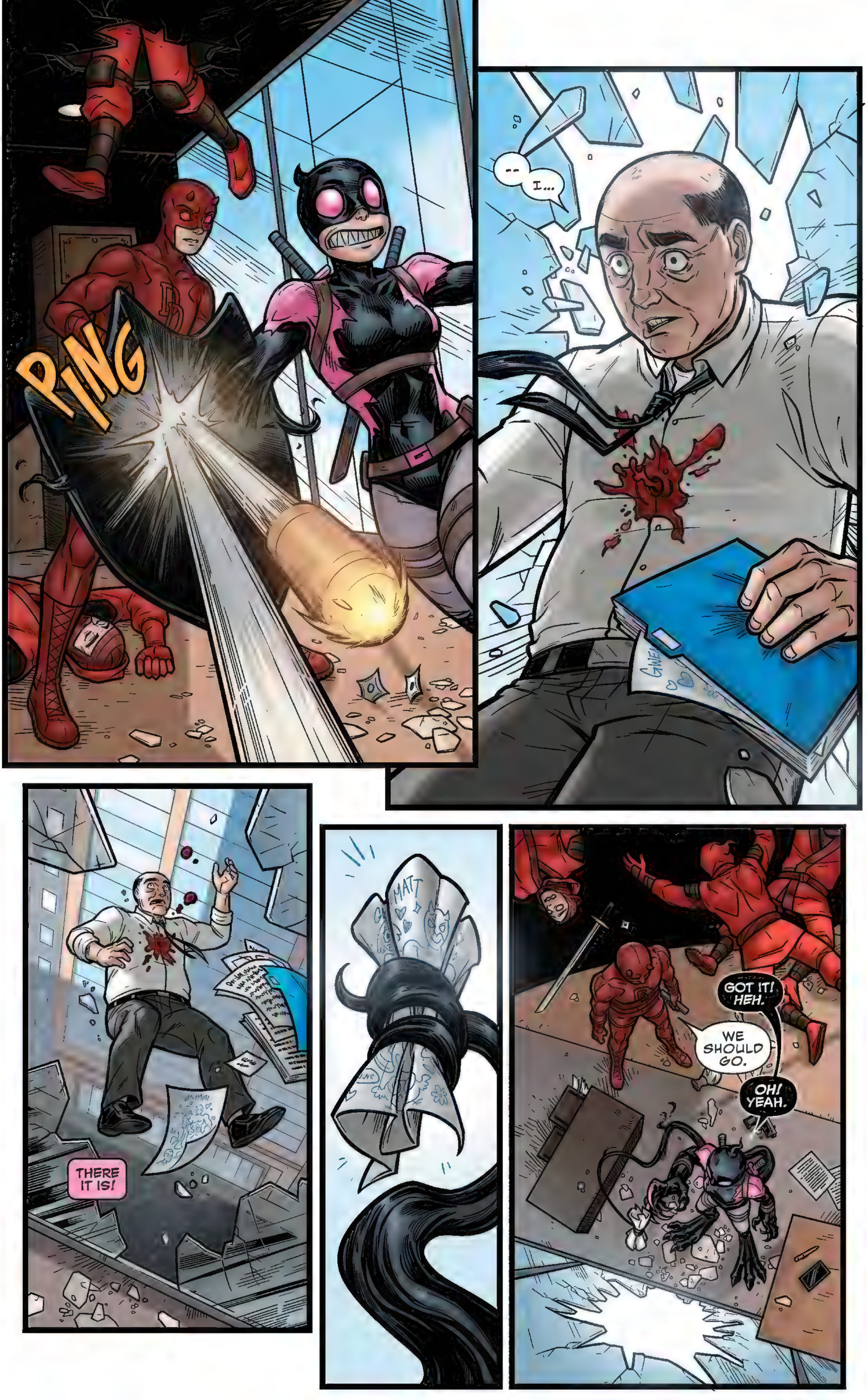

I'M STARTING TO THINK YOU'RE JUST A SERIAL KILLER.
GRAH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

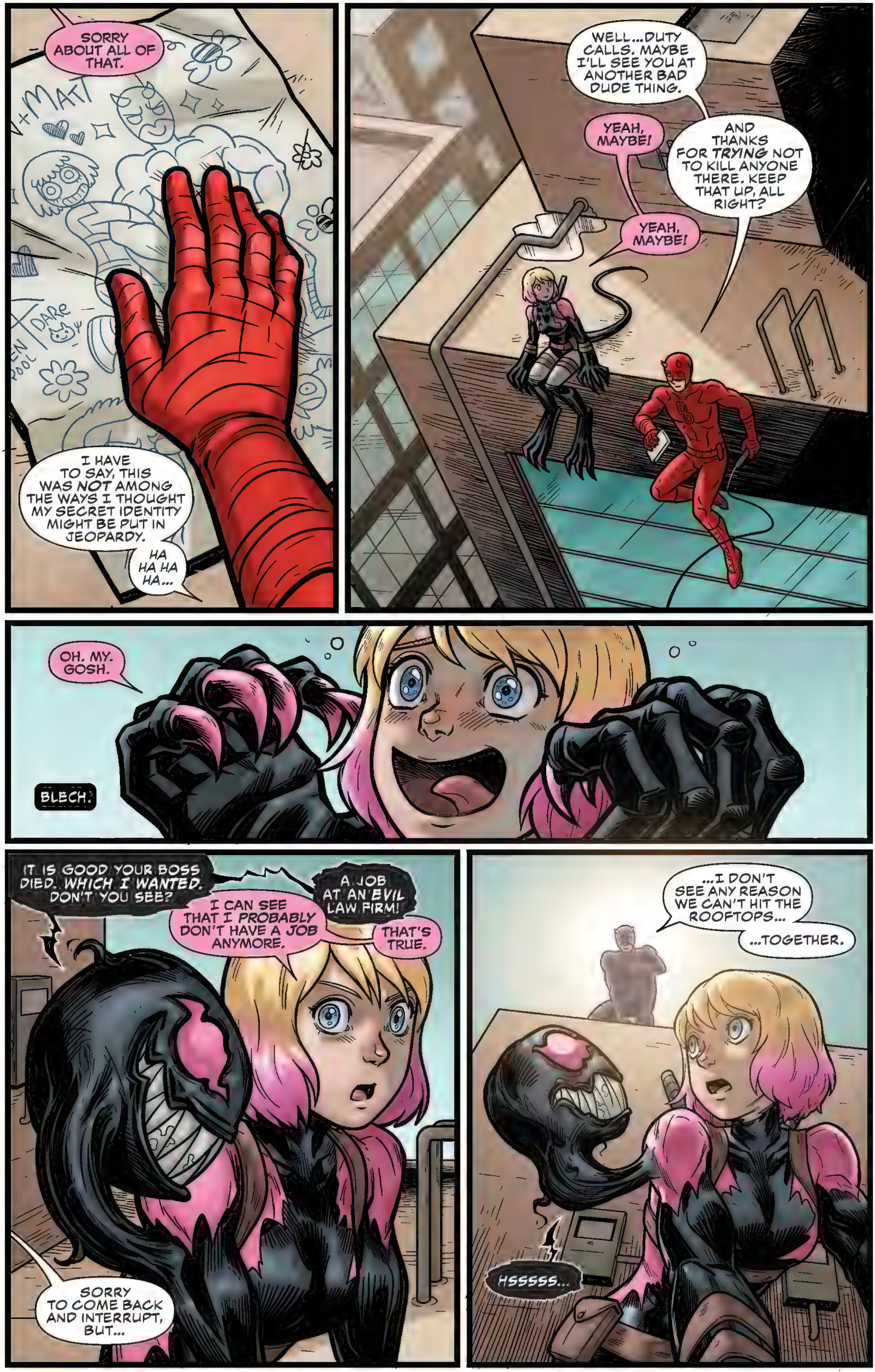

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, GWEN. I TRACKED YOU. AND I CAN'T LET YOU KILL YOUR BOSS, EVEN IF HE SUCKS.
THAT THING ON YOU PRODUCES A HORRIBLE IMITATION OF A NICE FRENCH PERFUME. I COULD TRACK YOU FROM CONNECTICUT IF I WANTED TO.
WHAT?! BUT--

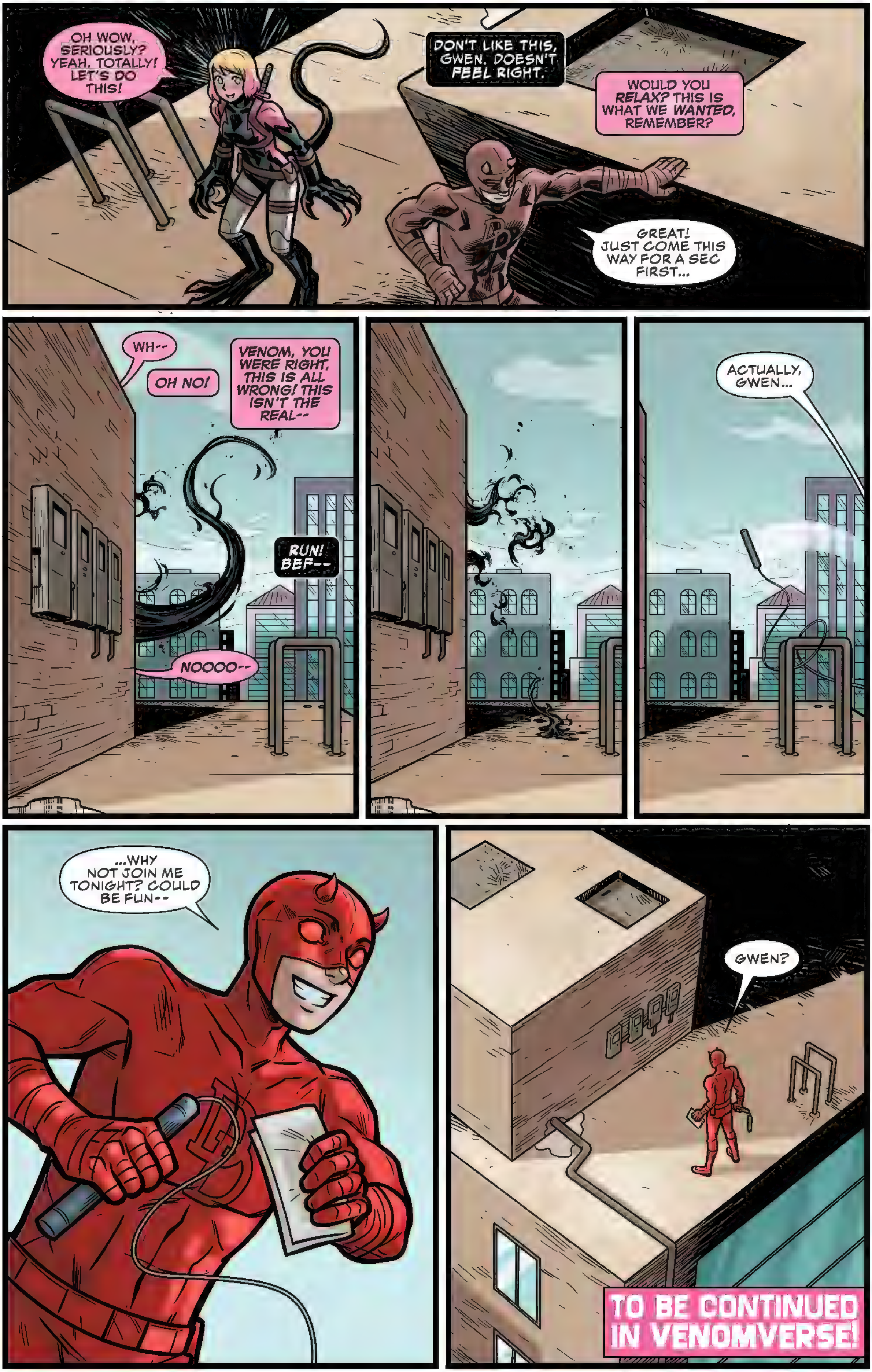

DUDE.
OUR PERFUME HAS NEVER HAD COMPLAINTS.
DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I'M TRYING TO PROTECT YOU!
TRYING TO PROTECT ME?
WHAT IS THIS DOODLE? POOLE...

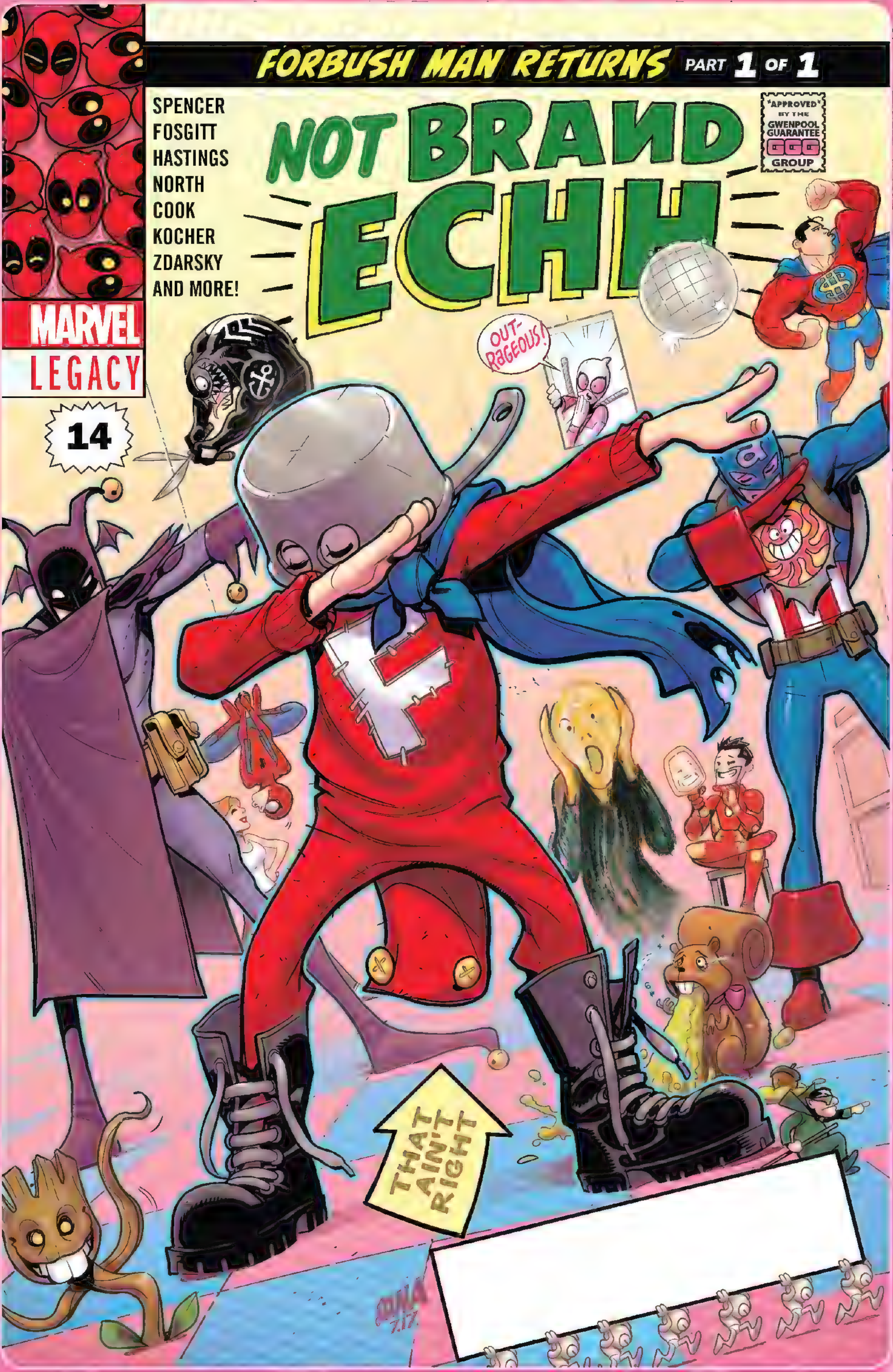

CRASH
WHAT THE--?! TO ME, MY NINJA!
"NINJA"?
OH, YOU'LL SEE THEM IN A SECOND.
OH, OF COURSE YOU'RE WORKING WITH THE HAND. GOD, YOU ARE AN EVIL BOSS.
WHAT?
UH, I MEAN AN EVIL BOSS TO ANYONE WHO MIGHT HAPPEN TO WORK FOR YOU!


KILL HIM! HE'S GOING TO FIGURE OUT WHO YOU ARE. HE'S PROBABLY SEEN YOUR DRAWING, TOO. JUST KILL HIM AND BE DONE WITH IT.
DUDE. WE ARE TRYING TO NOT KILL HERE SO THAT THE HOTTIE OF HELL'S KITCHEN DOESN'T GET MAD AT US.
YOUR CLIENT'S NOT DEALING IN HOT SAUCE, IS HE, DUDE?
MORE LIKE...SUPER ILLEGAL, COMMUNITY-DESTROYING OPIOID DRUGS?
WH-WHAT THE HELL DO YOU CARE, YOU COUPLE OF FREAKS?
FREAKS OR NOT, SOME PEOPLE ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT THIS CITY. YOU'RE GOING DOWN FOR THIS.
I DON'T THINK SO--
NO!
BLAM


PING
-- I...
GWEN
THERE IT IS!
MATT
GOT IT! HEH.
WE SHOULD GO.
OH! YEAH.

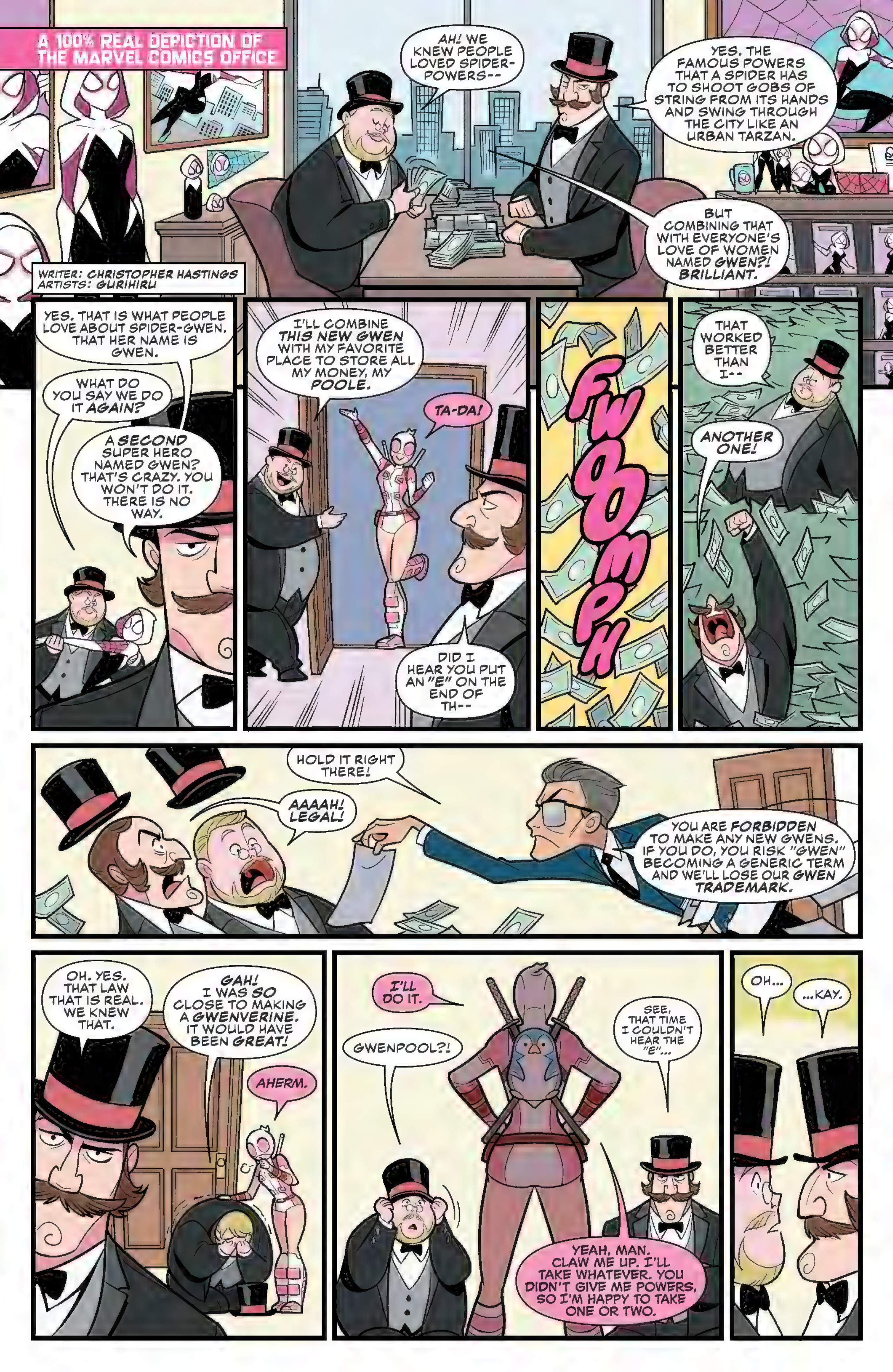

SORRY ABOUT ALL OF THAT.
I HAVE TO SAY, THIS WAS *NOT* AMONG THE WAYS I THOUGHT MY SECRET IDENTITY MIGHT BE PUT IN JEOPARDY.
HA HA HA HA...
WELL...DUTY CALLS. MAYBE I'LL SEE YOU AT ANOTHER BAD DUDE THING.
YEAH, MAYBE!
AND THANKS FOR *TRYING* NOT TO KILL ANYONE THERE. KEEP THAT UP, ALL RIGHT?
YEAH, MAYBE!
OH. MY. GOSH.
BLECH.
IT IS GOOD YOUR BOSS DIED. *WHICH I WANTED.* DON'T YOU SEE?
I CAN SEE THAT I *PROBABLY* DON'T HAVE A *JOB* ANYMORE.
A JOB AT AN *EVIL* LAW FIRM!
THAT'S TRUE.
SORRY TO COME BACK AND INTERRUPT, BUT...
...I DON'T SEE ANY REASON WE CAN'T HIT THE ROOFTOPS...
...TOGETHER.
HSSSSS...


OH WOW, SERIOUSLY? YEAH, TOTALLY! LET'S DO THIS!
DON'T LIKE THIS, GWEN. DOESN'T *FEEL* RIGHT.
WOULD YOU *RELAX?* THIS IS WHAT WE *WANTED,* REMEMBER?
GREAT! JUST COME THIS WAY FOR A SEC FIRST...
WH--
OH NO!
VENOM, YOU WERE RIGHT, THIS IS ALL WRONG! THIS ISN'T THE REAL--
RUN! BEF--
NOOOO--
ACTUALLY, GWEN...
...WHY NOT JOIN ME TONIGHT? COULD BE FUN--
GWEN?
TO BE CONTINUED IN VENOMVERSE!

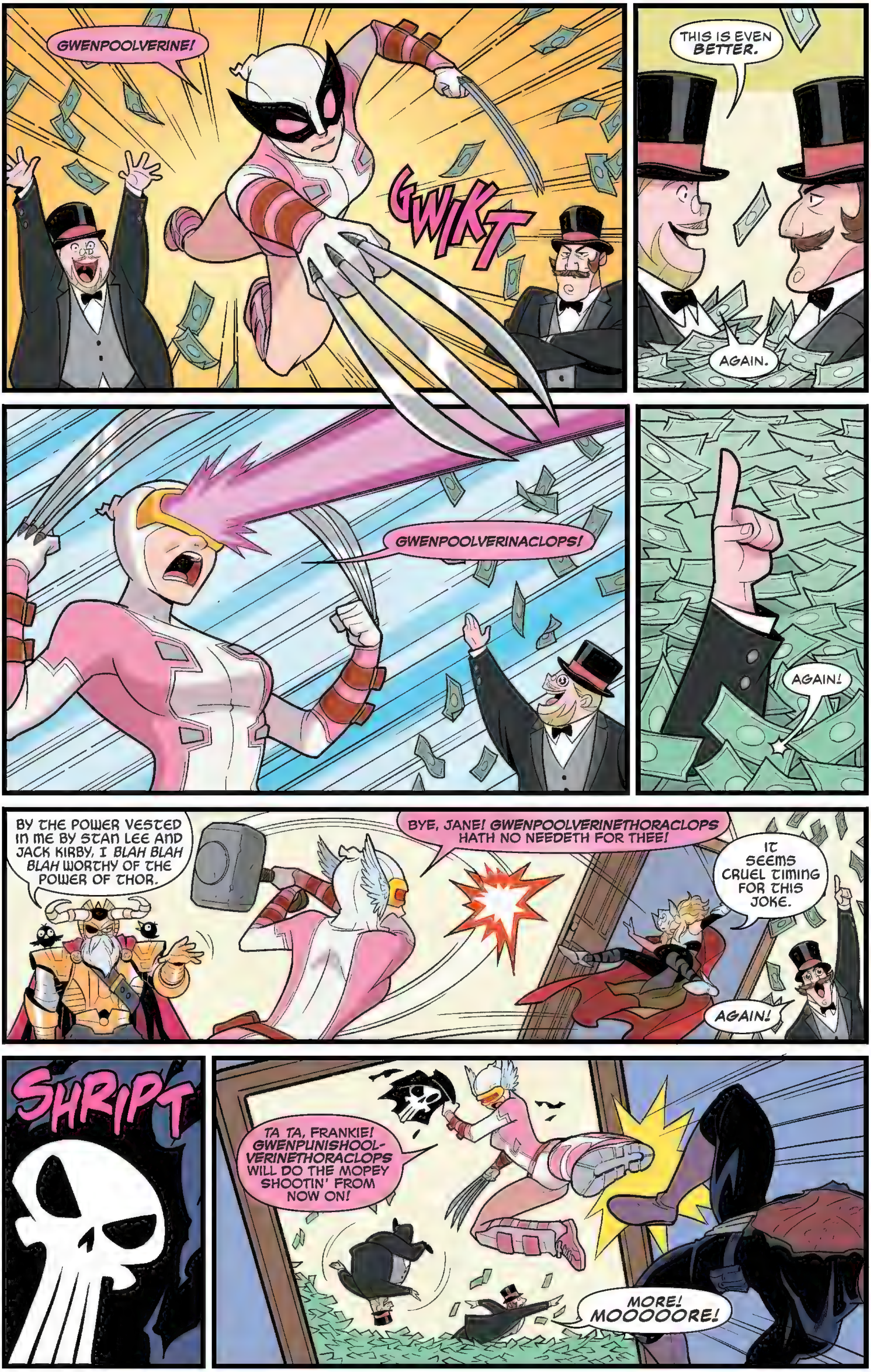

FORBUSH MAN RETURNS PART 1 OF 1
SPENCER
FOSGITT
HASTINGS
NORTH
COOK
KOCHER
ZDARSKY
AND MORE!
NOT BRAND ECHH
"APPROVED" BY THE GWENPOOL GUARANTEE GGG GROUP
MARVEL
LEGACY
14
OUT-RAGEOUS!
THAT AIN'T RIGHT

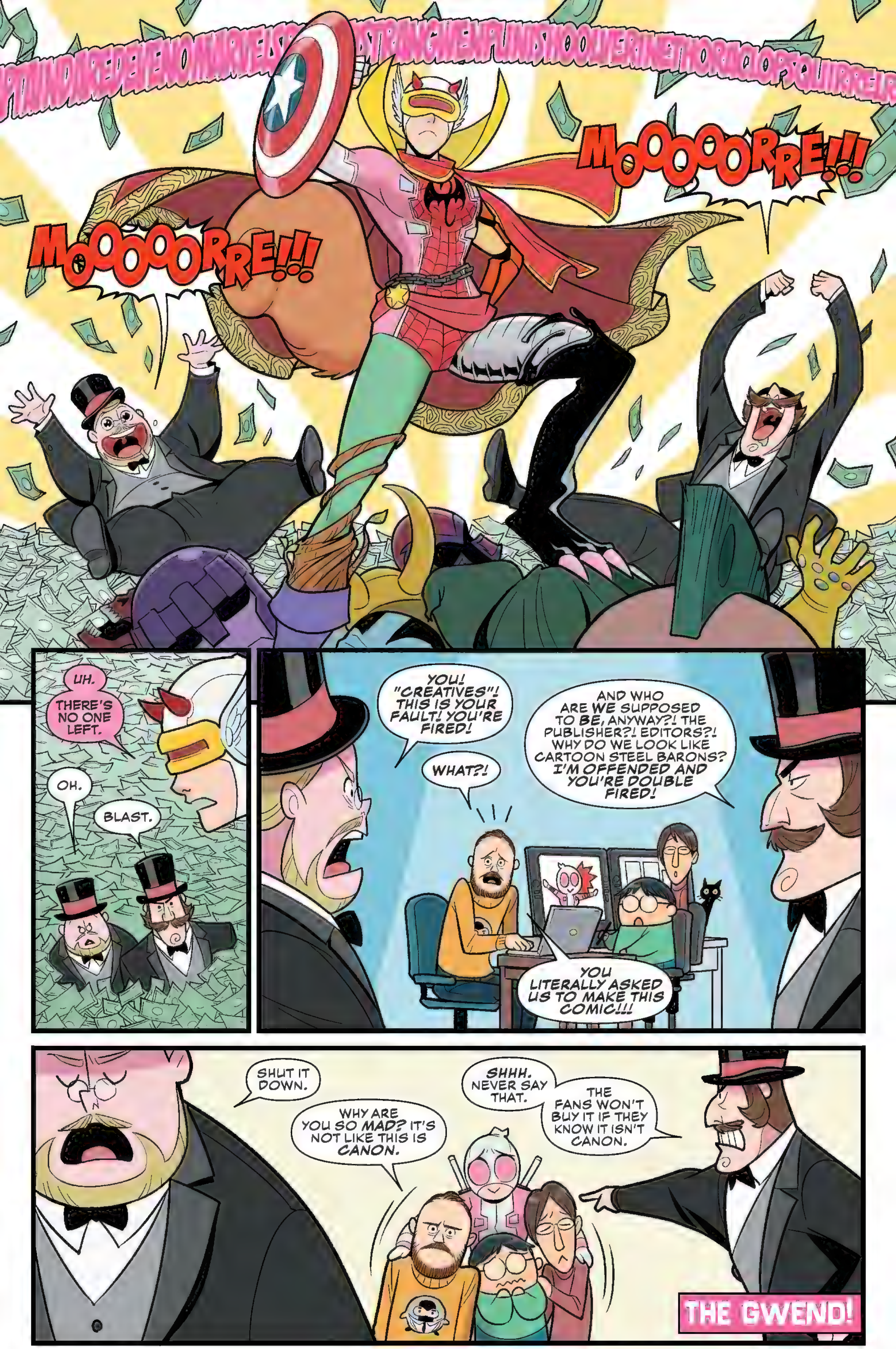
NOT BRAND ECHH #14

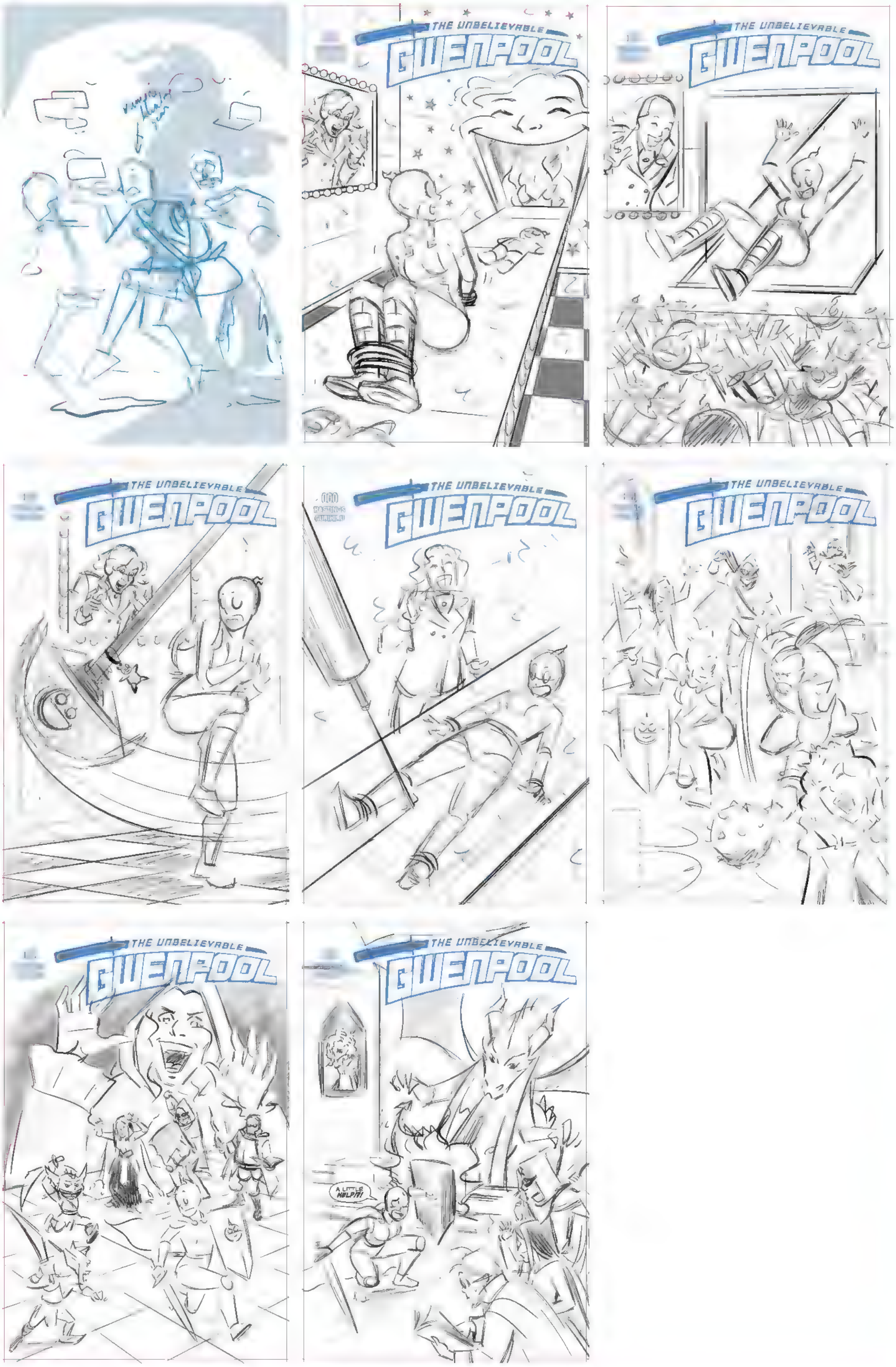
[illegible]


A 100% REAL DEPICTION OF THE MARVEL COMICS OFFICE
AH! WE KNEW PEOPLE LOVED SPIDER-POWERS--
YES. THE FAMOUS POWERS THAT A SPIDER HAS TO SHOOT GOBS OF STRING FROM ITS HANDS AND SWING THROUGH THE CITY LIKE AN URBAN TARZAN.
BUT COMBINING THAT WITH EVERYONE'S LOVE OF WOMEN NAMED GWEN?! BRILLIANT.
YES. THAT IS WHAT PEOPLE LOVE ABOUT SPIDER-GWEN. THAT HER NAME IS GWEN.
WHAT DO YOU SAY WE DO IT AGAIN?
A SECOND SUPER HERO NAMED GWEN? THAT'S CRAZY. YOU WON'T DO IT. THERE IS NO WAY.
I'LL COMBINE THIS NEW GWEN WITH MY FAVORITE PLACE TO STORE ALL MY MONEY, MY POOLE.
TA-DA!
DID I HEAR YOU PUT AN "E" ON THE END OF TH--
FWOOMPH
THAT WORKED BETTER THAN I--
ANOTHER ONE!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
AAAAH! LEGAL!
YOU ARE FORBIDDEN TO MAKE ANY NEW GWENS. IF YOU DO, YOU RISK "GWEN" BECOMING A GENERIC TERM AND WE'LL LOSE OUR GWEN TRADEMARK.
OH. YES. THAT LAW THAT IS REAL. WE KNEW THAT.
GAH! I WAS SO CLOSE TO MAKING A GWENVERINE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN GREAT!
AHERM.
I'LL DO IT.
GWENPOOL?!
SEE, THAT TIME I COULDN'T HEAR THE "E"...
YEAH, MAN. CLAW ME UP. I'LL TAKE WHATEVER. YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME POWERS, SO I'M HAPPY TO TAKE ONE OR TWO.
OH...
...KAY.

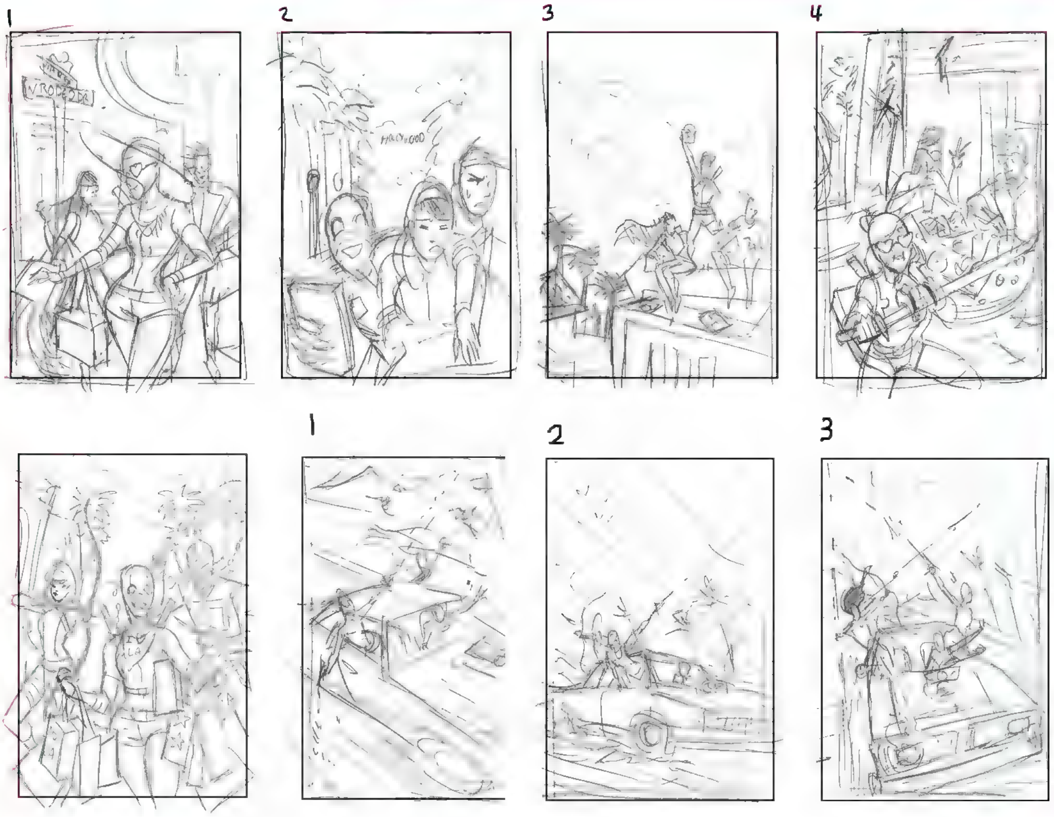
WRITER: CHRISTOPHER HASTINGS
ARTISTS: GURIHIRU

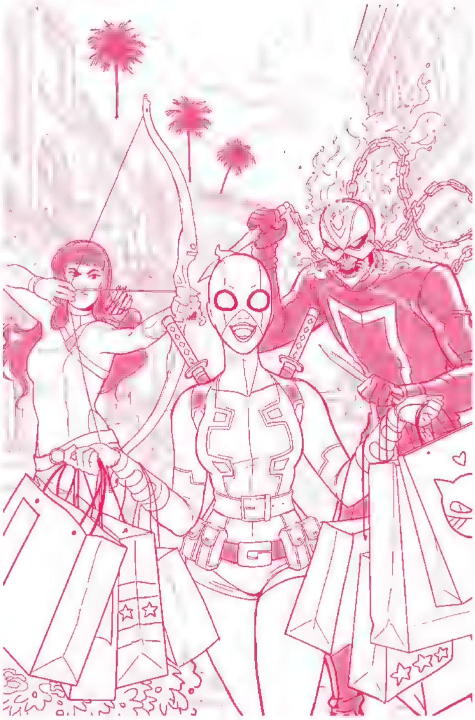

GWENPOOLVERINE!
GWIKT
THIS IS EVEN *BETTER.*
AGAIN.
GWENPOOLVERINACLOPS!
AGAIN!
BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME BY STAN LEE AND JACK KIRBY, I *BLAH BLAH BLAH* WORTHY OF THE POWER OF THOR.
BYE, JANE! *GWENPOOLVERINETHORACLOPS* HATH NO NEEDETH FOR THEE!
IT SEEMS CRUEL TIMING FOR THIS JOKE.
AGAIN!
SHRIPT
TA TA, FRANKIE! GWENPUNISHOOLVERINETHORACLOPS WILL DO THE MOPEY SHOOTIN' FROM NOW ON!
MORE! MOOOOORE!

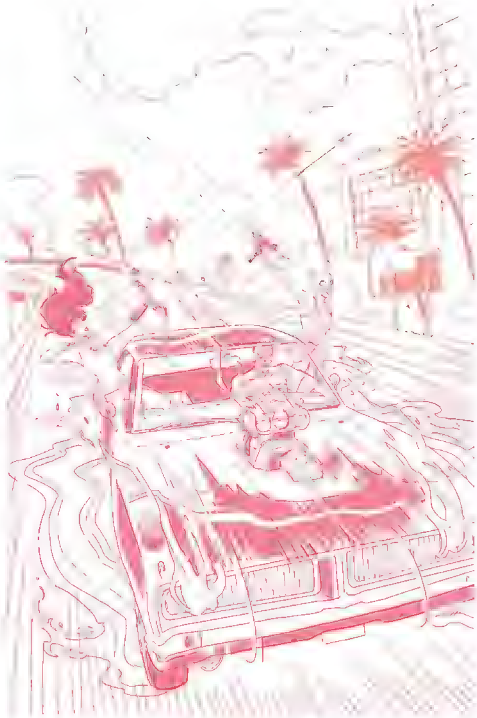

PTMUNDAREDEVENOMARVELS
STRANGWENPUNISHOOLVERINETHORACLOPSQUIRRELR
MOOOOORRE!!!
MOOOOORRE!!!
UH.
THERE'S NO ONE LEFT.
OH.
BLAST.
YOU! "CREATIVES"! THIS IS YOUR FAULT! YOU'RE FIRED!
WHAT?!
AND WHO ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE, ANYWAY?! THE PUBLISHER?! EDITORS?! WHY DO WE LOOK LIKE CARTOON STEEL BARONS? I'M OFFENDED AND YOU'RE DOUBLE FIRED!
YOU LITERALLY ASKED US TO MAKE THIS COMIC!!!
SHUT IT DOWN.
WHY ARE YOU SO MAD? IT'S NOT LIKE THIS IS CANON.
SHHH. NEVER SAY THAT.
THE FANS WON'T BUY IT IF THEY KNOW IT ISN'T CANON.
THE GWEND!


THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL
A LITTLE HELP?!

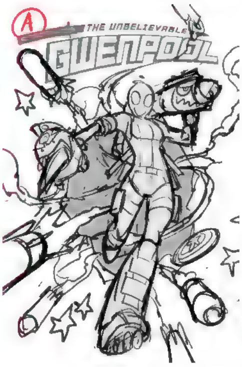
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1-15 COVER LAYOUTS
BY ELSA CHARRETIER (#1-11) & GISELE LAGACE (#12-15)

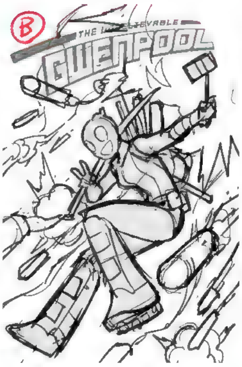


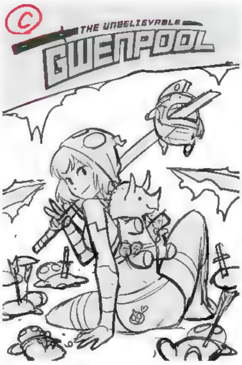


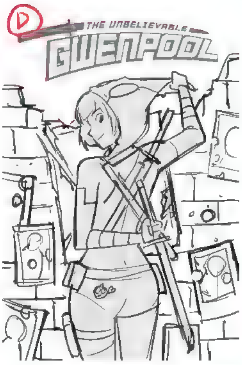


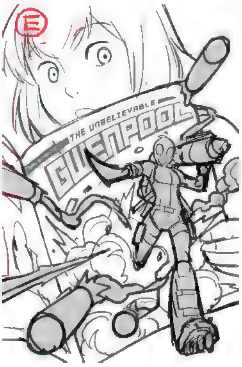
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #14-15 COVER LAYOUTS & PENCILS BY PAULINA GANUCHEAU

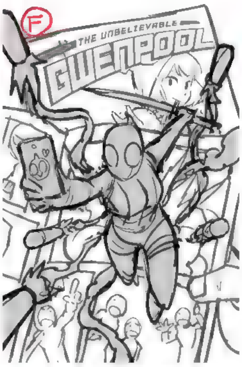

A
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL

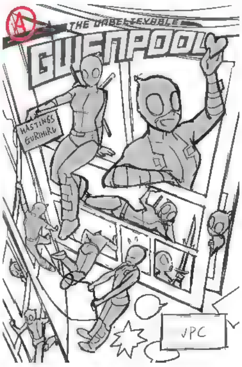

B
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL

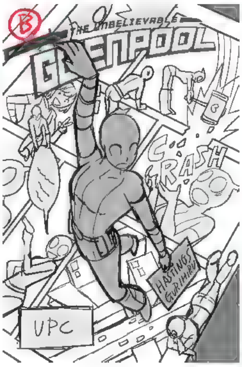

C
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL

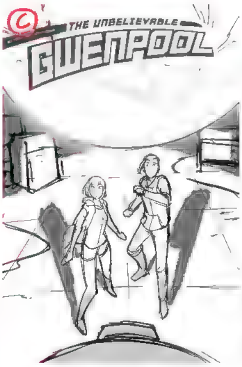

D
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL

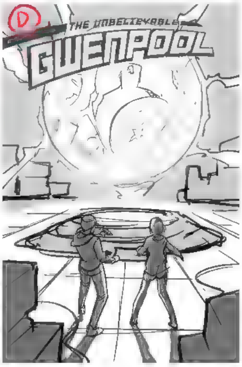

E
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL


F
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL

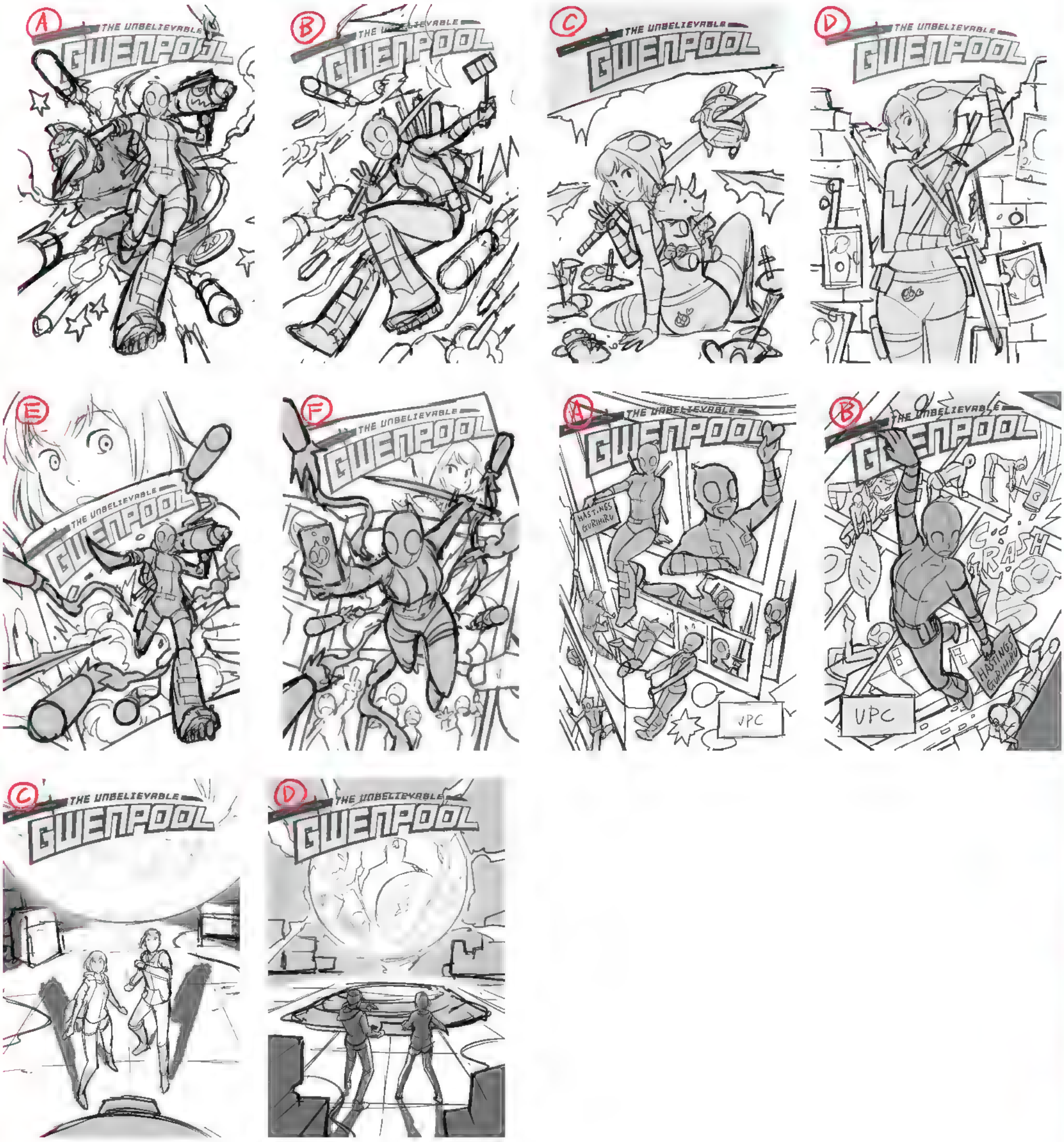

A
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL
HASTINGS GURIHIRU
UPC


B
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL
CRASH
HASTINGS GURIHIRU
UPC

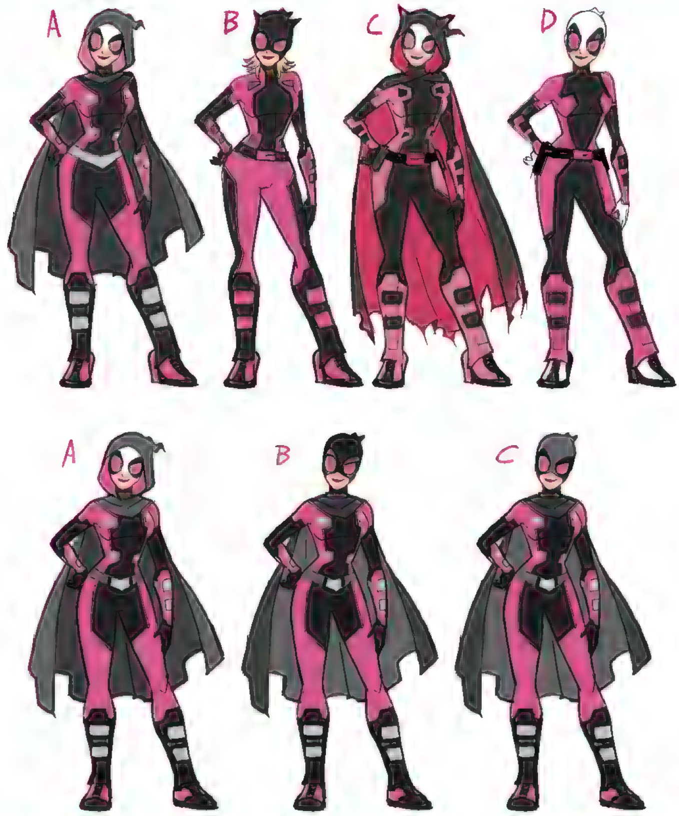

C
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL


D
THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL

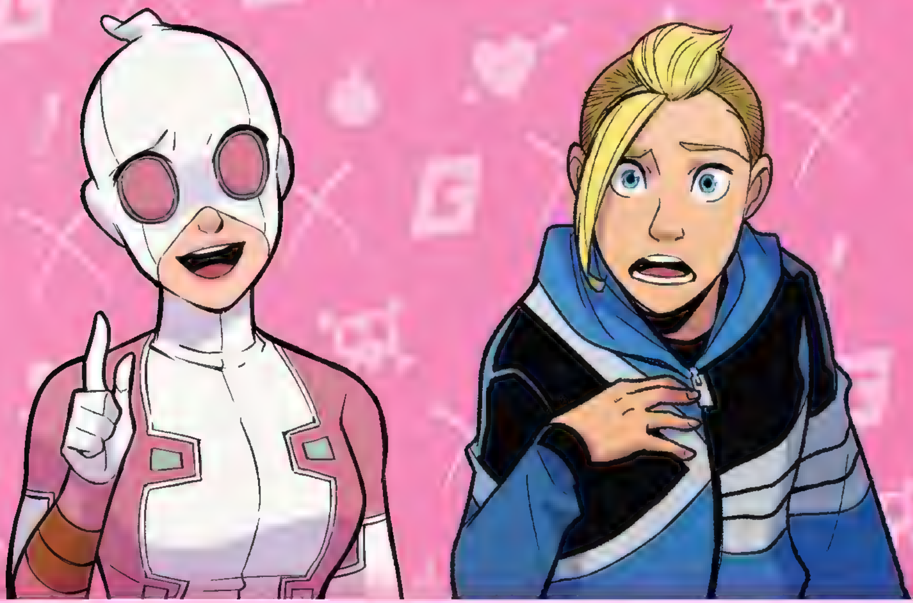
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #16-17 COVER SKETCHES
BY GURIHIRU


A
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
B
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
C
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
D
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
E
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
F
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
A
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
HASTINGS GURIHIRU
UPC
B
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
CRASH
HASTINGS GURIHIRU
UPC
C
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
D
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #18-20 COVER SKETCHES
BY GURIHIRU



EVIL GWENPOOL CHARACTER SKETCHES BY GURIHIRU



THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1 AND #18 RECAP-PAGE ART BY GURIHIRU

GWEN'S P.O.O.L.E.

(PILE OF ORDINARY LETTERS TO THE EDITORS)

There's nothing quite like procrastinating writing a final letters page for a series. I must have sat down to write this at least 20 times now. Each time it only gets harder to say goodbye.

To say that Gwen has found a special place in my heart wouldn't be a lie, but she's become so much more than that. She's become a symbol of what each of us--comic book readers--are capable of. As individuals, our fates are never fully decided, no matter how permanently inked they may seem. We have it inside each of us to go beyond expectations…in the most unbelievable ways imaginable.

I want to extend my eternal thanks to Nick Lowe and Jordan White for allowing me to be a part of Gwen's inception to the Marvel Universe. To Chris Bachalo for designing the original Gwenpool on the variant cover of DEADPOOL'S SECRET SECRET WARS #2. To Danilo Beyruth, Tamra Bonvillain, Travis Lanham and Wil Moss for working on crazy first adventures with Howard the Duck. To Clayton Cowles for proving himself time and time again why he is one of the best letterers in the comics industry to date. To Myisha Haynes, Alti Firmansyah, Irene Strychalski and Rachelle Rosenberg for their amazing contributions to Gwen's escapades and team-ups with your favorite classic Marvel heroes.

But most of all, I extend every ounce of gratitude to Christopher Hastings and the ladies of Gurihiru and their translator Aki Yanagi. These amazing human beings are the heart and soul of Gwendolyn Poole--every letter typed, every drop of ink and color placed was the breath and energy that brought something magical to life in comic book form. Their contributions made us believe in the unbelievable.

Goodbyes are never easy. Endings are never fun. But I think it's moments like these where we can all learn something from the *Good* Future Gwen: No one ever said *anything* about being *done.*

Here's to all of Gwen's future adventures--and here's to you for making them possible!

-Heather Antos <3

You might wonder who I am, but I have been helping Gurihiru for the past ten years or more. The ladies only speak and read Japanese, so I translate for them. I want to thank Marvel, Jordan, Heather, Chris and C.B. for letting me be a part of this wonderful book. I will miss Gwenpool, but if you love Marvel, she is you. So I guess this is not a goodbye. Thanks for reading GWENPOOL and my little message.

-Aki

Thank you for reading GWENPOOL! We were not sure if we would fit the series when the book started, but the more we worked on the book, the more fun we had. We could not wait to read the next script from Chris each time we finished the last. Our past two years were spent with Gwen, so it is sad to say goodbye to her, but who knows? Gwenpool is capricious, she might appear in another comic book soon. We will be happy if you won't forget Gwenpool as one of your favorite characters.

-Gurihiru

Since everyone else wrote to the fans and their fellow collaborators, my letter is for the other member of the team.

Gwen, you're tippity tops and you taught me something new every day. Your journey brought me great joy and sometimes great sadness, like every journey should. I like your book way more than *The Pagemaster.* I hope we can collaborate again sometime.

-Clayton Cowles

I never explained the mechanics of how Gwen crossed into the Marvel Universe from the "real" one, and that was a deliberate choice. You see, while anything can happen in a fictional universe, we have a pretty good idea of the limits of what can happen in ours. Any sci-fi or fantasy device that we'd declare capable of hauling a human being into a world of make-believe would be instantly silly and incredulous. But now that the page has turned on that fictional universe, and we're firmly back in the real one, I will tell you how Gwenpool entered the Marvel Universe.

You put her there.

I mean it! Not you alone, exactly. The collective you. Gwenpool was just a joke at first. Her name and costume were meant to be a goof, a fun variant cover to collect. Except you didn't allow it to stop there. You made fan art. You cosplayed as her. Gwenpool took root across thousands of minds, and it was that collective force that pried open the walls to the Marvel Universe and shoved Gwen inside. And now she will live there forever. You might not see her for stretches of time. She won't always act exactly the same as you know her now. She might occasionally forget older adventures. But she'll be there. Gwen has officially entered the modern pantheon, and she's just waiting in that kind little time loop until the next person comes along to tell you more stories about her.

I'd like to thank Jordan D. White for calling me up a couple years ago and asking me to come up with a story about why someone might be named Gwenpool, and why she might look the way she does. Thanks for being a guiding hand, especially in the earlier, shakier times in Gwen's germination. Thanks to Wil Moss for helping Gwen's first story work in a HOWARD THE DUCK backup. And a huge thank you to Heather Antos for the countless ways she has made THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL be everything it could be.

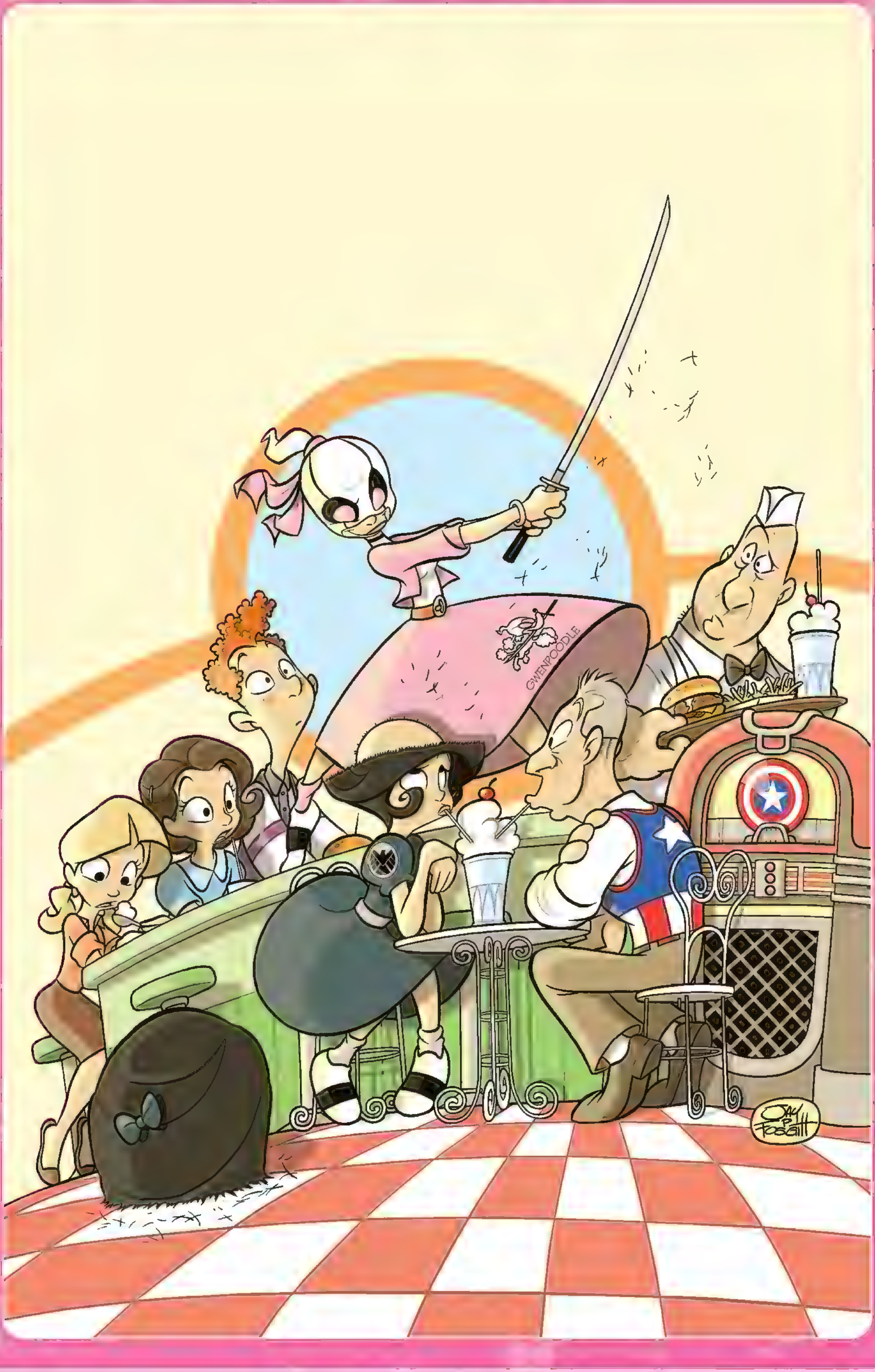
Clayton Cowles is one of the best letterers in the business, and I am honored for all the great work he did on this title. Thanks to Danilo Beyruth, Tamra Bonvillain, Irene Strychalski, Myisha Haynes, Alti Firmansyah and Rachelle Rosenberg, the artists who made every page of GWENPOOL funnier, cooler and just more entertaining than I could ever communicate with just a script. Thanks to Chris Bachalo for designing Gwenpool, for capturing the fans' imagination in just a single cover image.

Most of all I'd like to thank the main series artist team, Gurihiru. Working with them has been one of the greatest things to happen in my career, and I will miss them terribly. I don't have to tell you how incredible their work is. You've seen it. What I can tell you is that I've never felt more in sync with a collaborator than I have with them, and we don't even speak the same language. To that end, thanks to their translator, Aki Yanagi, who is surely doing something magical in the Japanese versions of my English scripts.

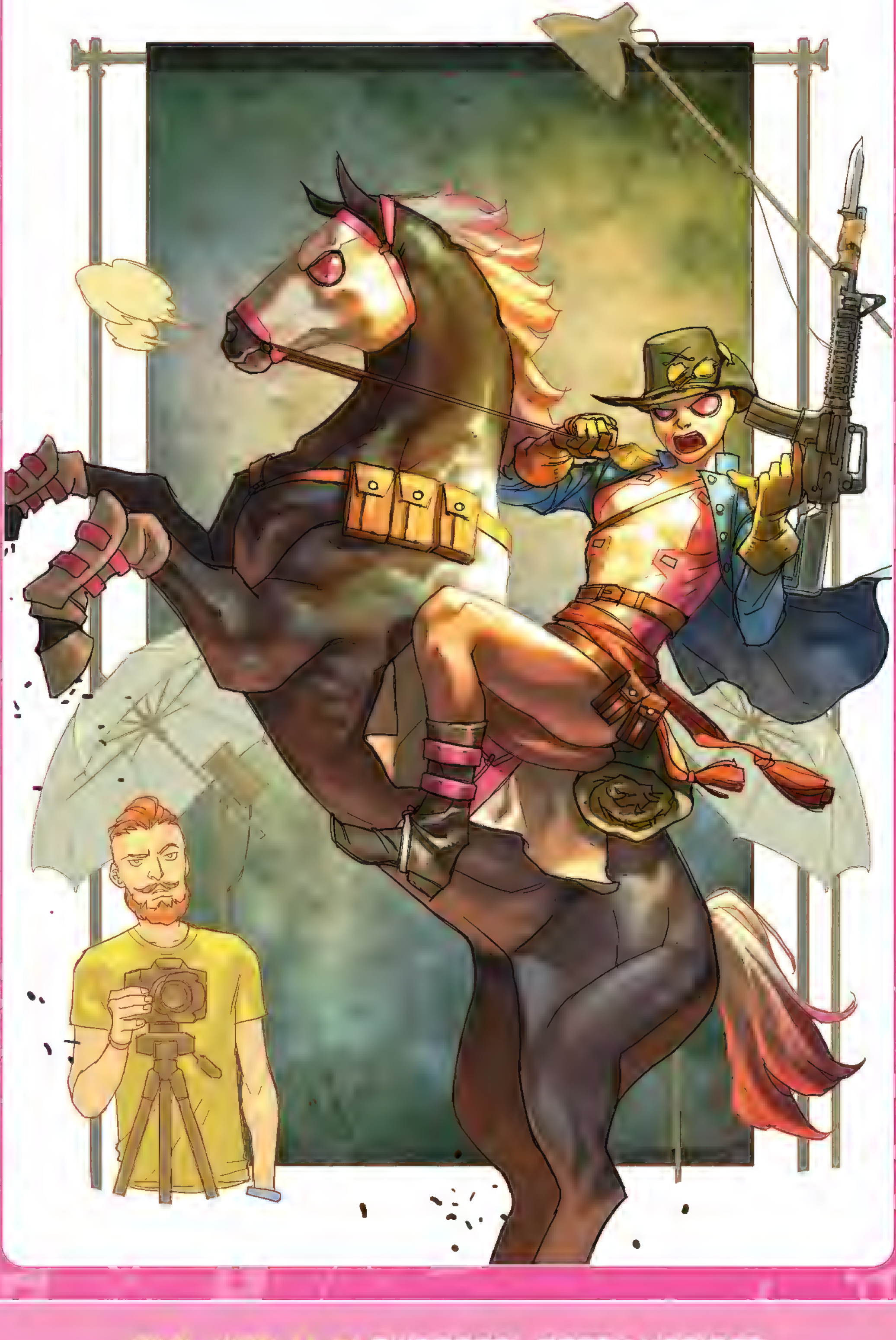
And thanks to you for making Gwenpool real.

-Christopher Hastings

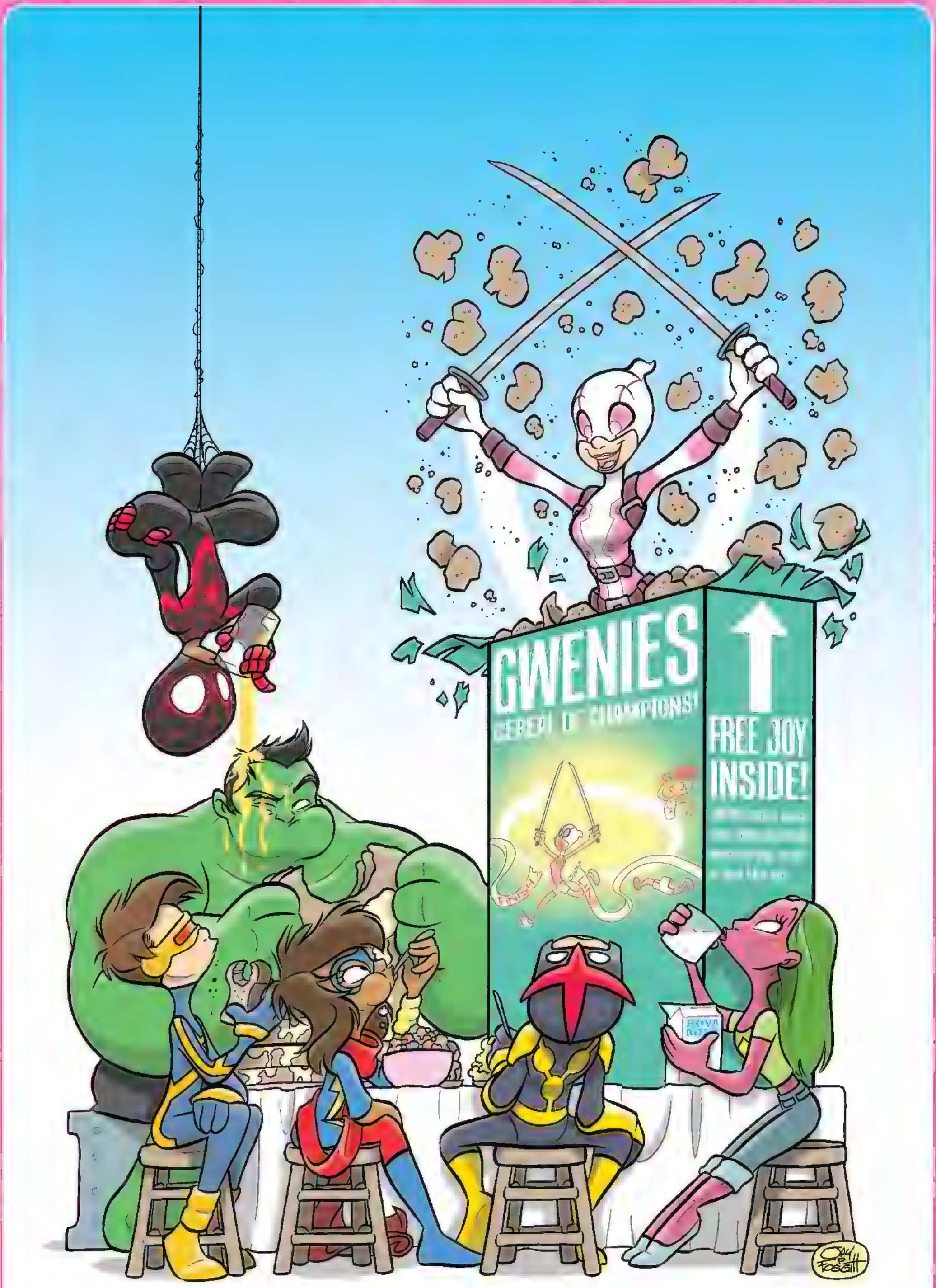
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #25 AFTERWORD


GWENPOODLE

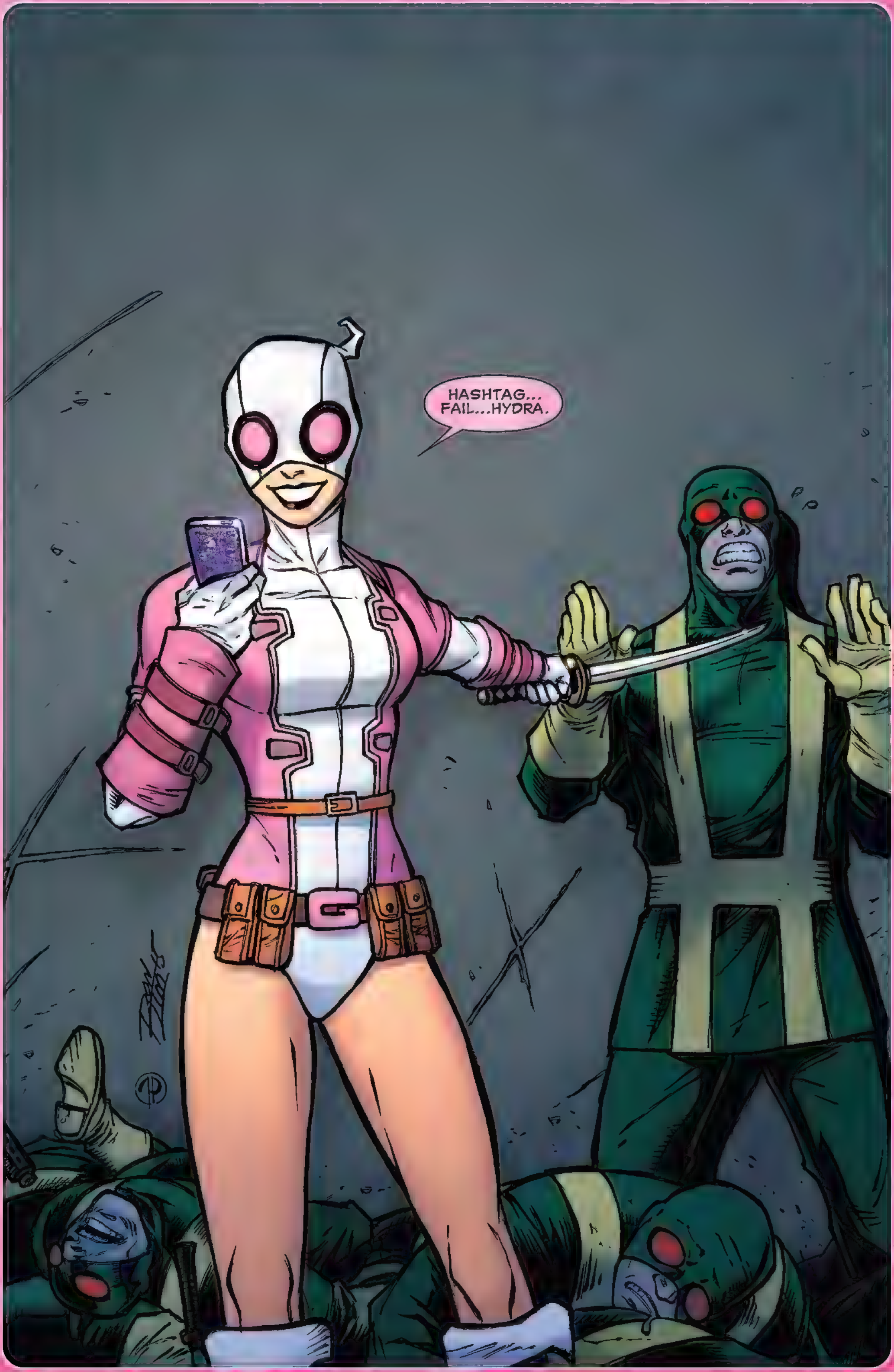
AVENGERS STANDOFF: ASSAULT ON PLEASANT HILL ALPHA
GWENPOOL PARTY VARIANT BY JAY FOSGITT



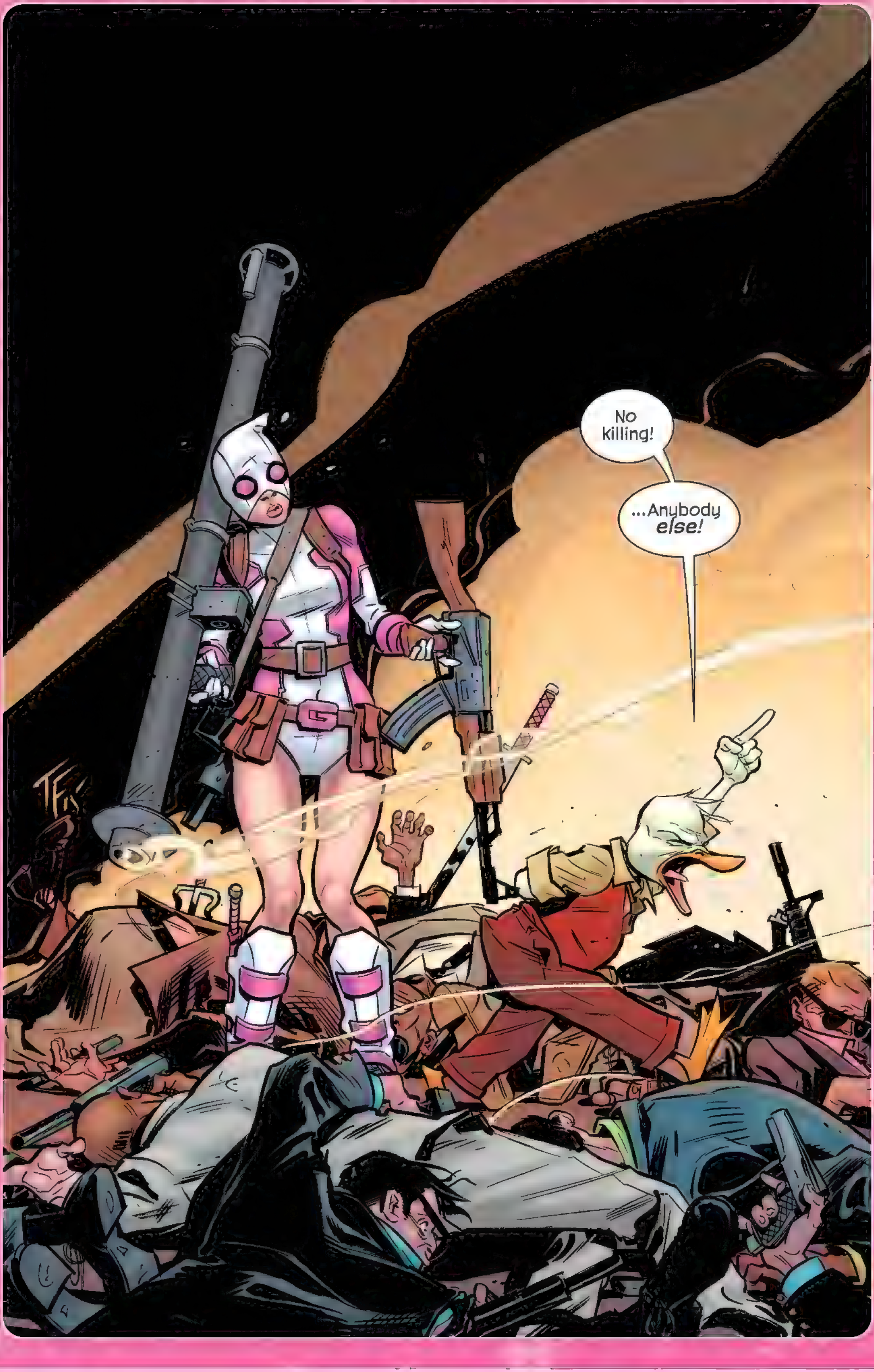
CIVIL WAR II #1 GWENPOOL PARTY VARIANT
BY YASMINE PUTRI


GWENIES
CEREAL OF CHAMPIONS!
FREE JOY INSIDE!
FINISH

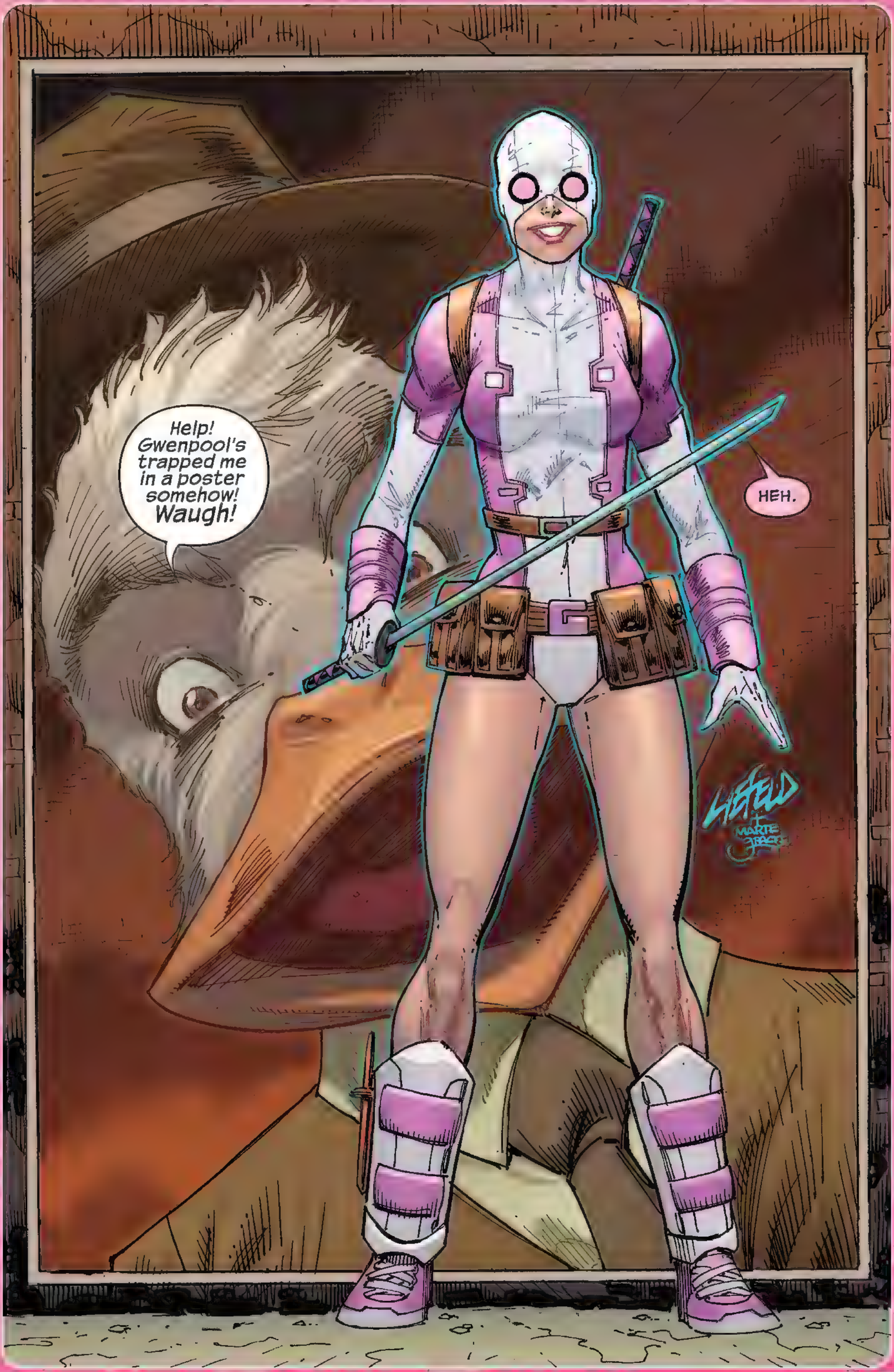
CHAMPIONS #1 GWENPOOL PARTY VARIANT
BY JAY FOSGITT


HASHTAG... FAIL...HYDRA.

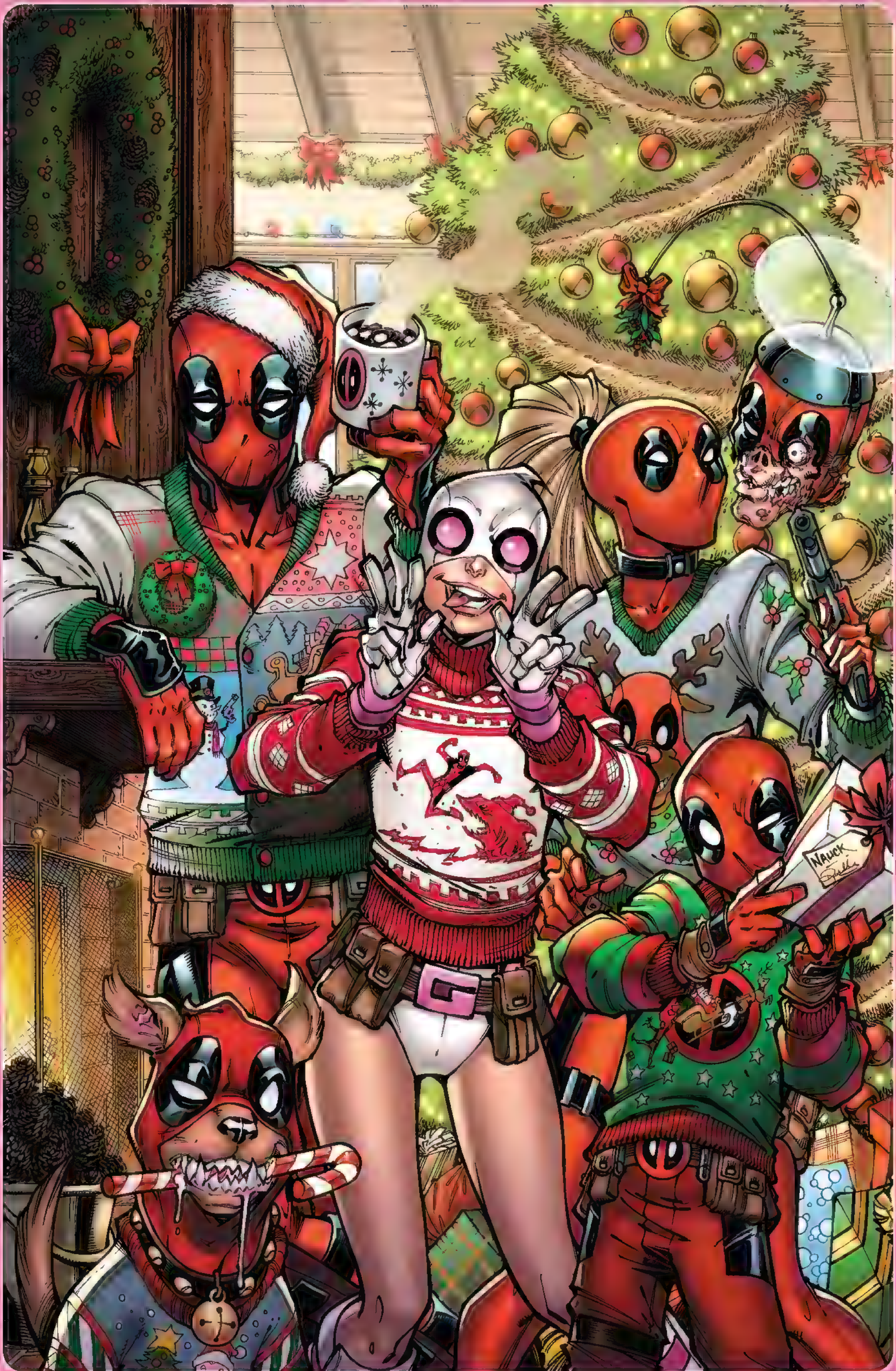
HOWARD THE DUCK #1 GWENPOOL VARIANT
BY RON LIM, TOM PALMER & JASON KEITH


No killing!
...Anybody *else!*

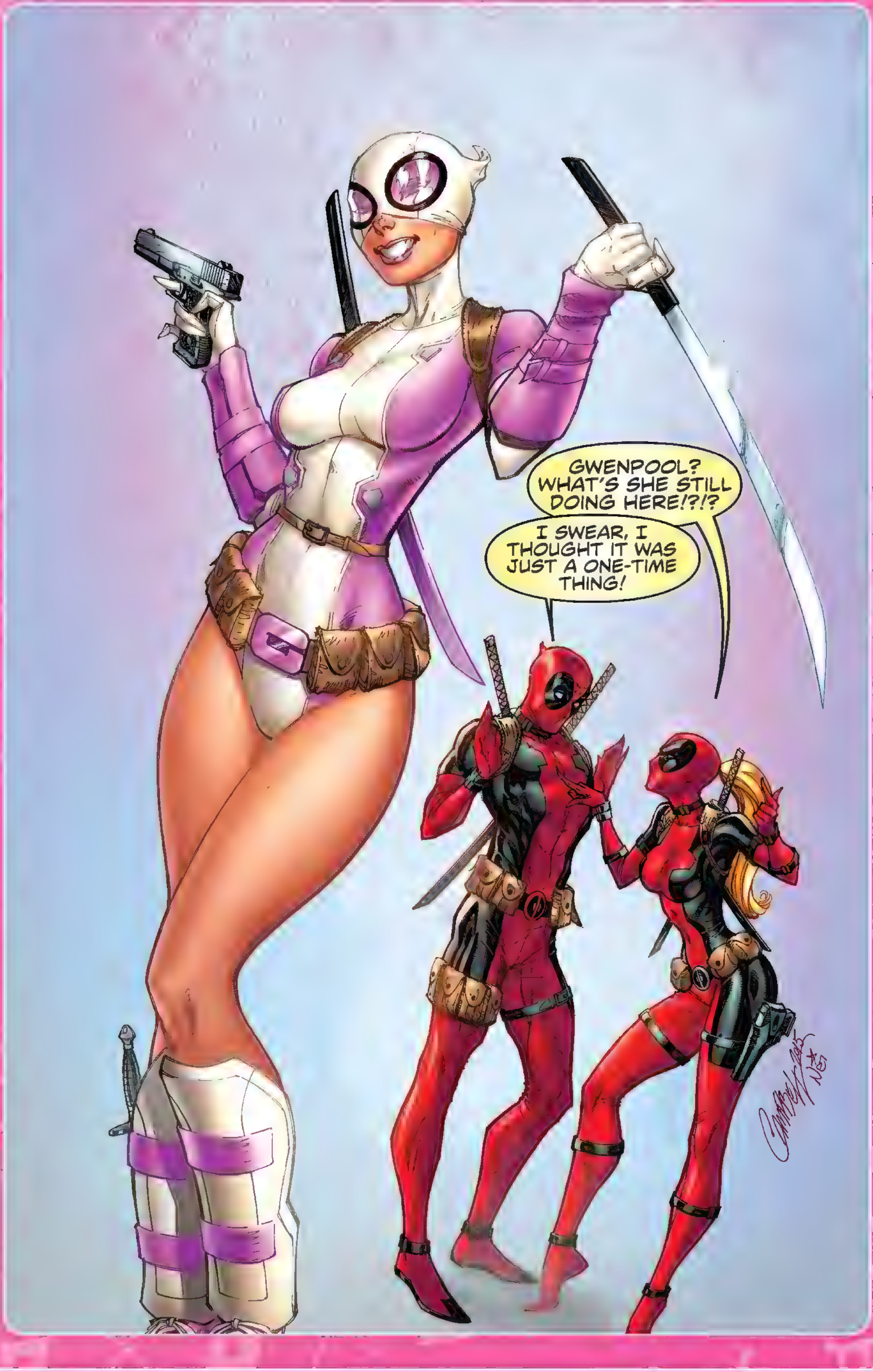
HOWARD THE DUCK #2 GWENPOOL VARIANT
BY TOM FOWLER & NATHAN FAIRBAIRN


Help! Gwenpool's trapped me in a poster somehow! Waugh!
HEH.
LIEFELD
MARTE GRACIA

HOWARD THE DUCK #3 GWENPOOL VARIANT
BY ROB LIEFELD & MARTE GRACIA

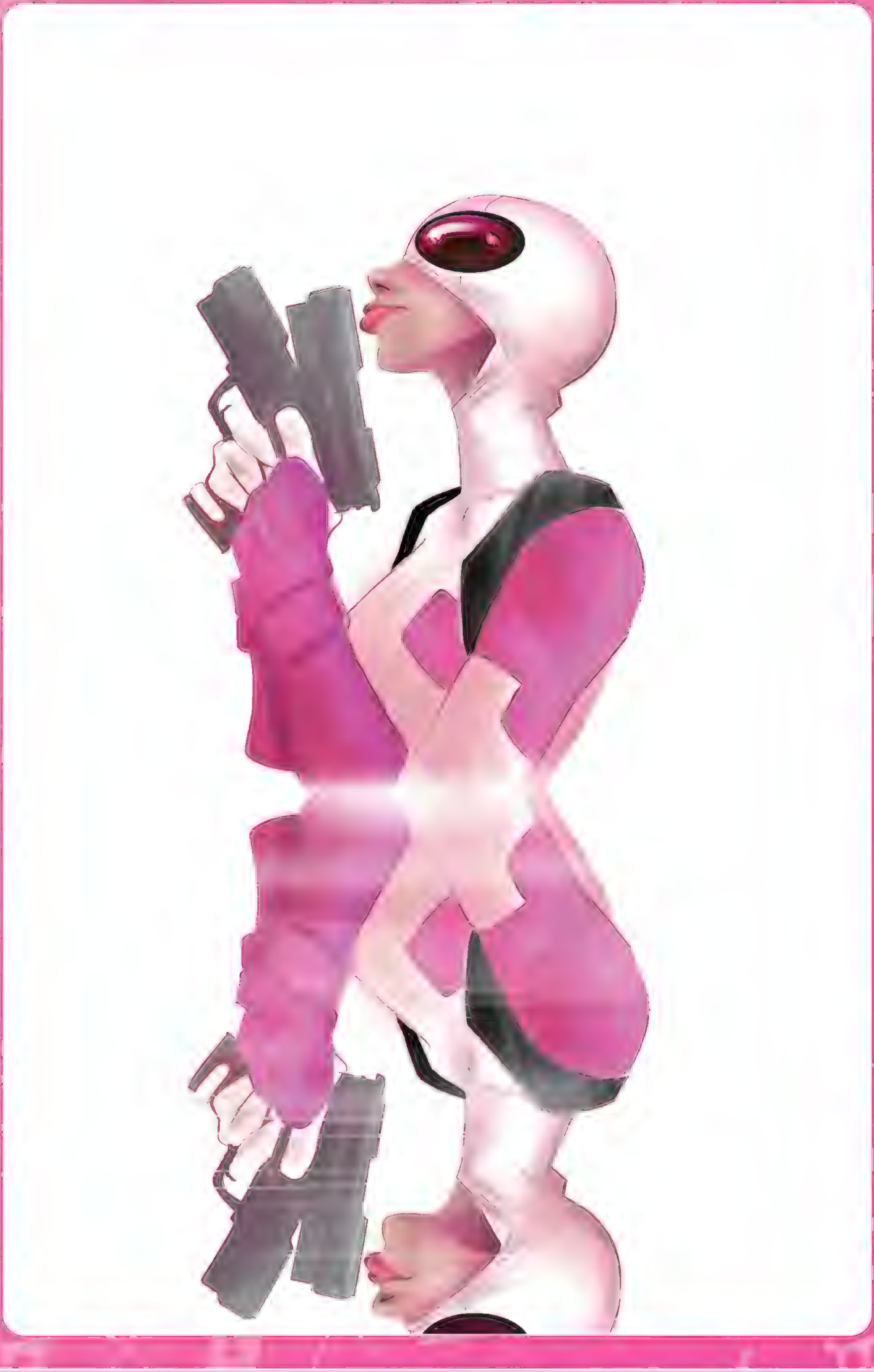


GWENPOOL SPECIAL #1 VARIANT
BY TODD NAUCK & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

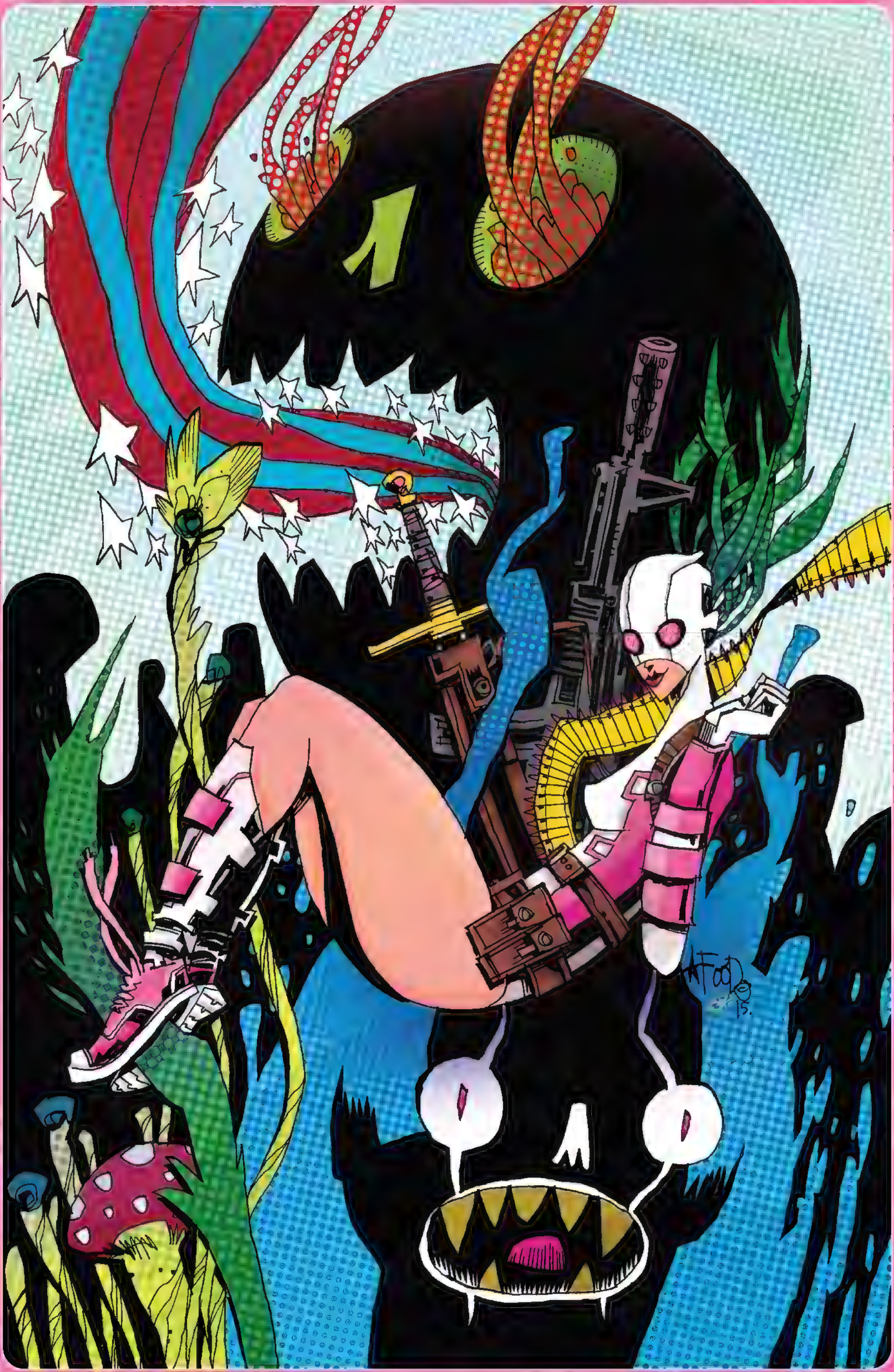

GWENPOOL? WHAT'S SHE STILL DOING HERE!?!?
I SWEAR, I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A ONE-TIME THING!

GWENPOOL SPECIAL #1 VARIANT
BY J. SCOTT CAMPBELL & NEI RUFFINO

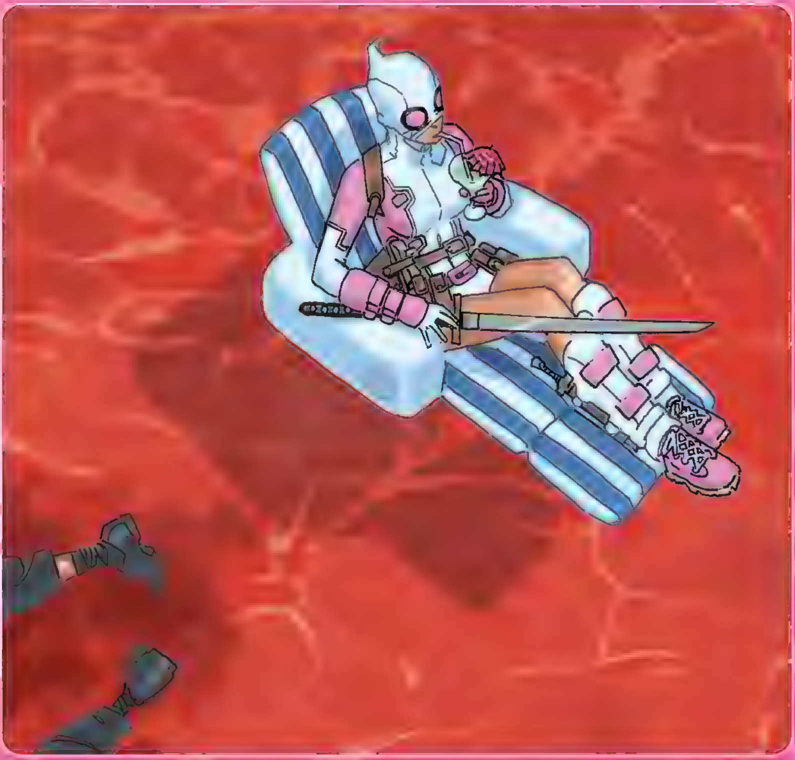
GWENPOOL SPECIAL #1 VARIANT
BY PASQUAL FERRY & DAVE McCAIG



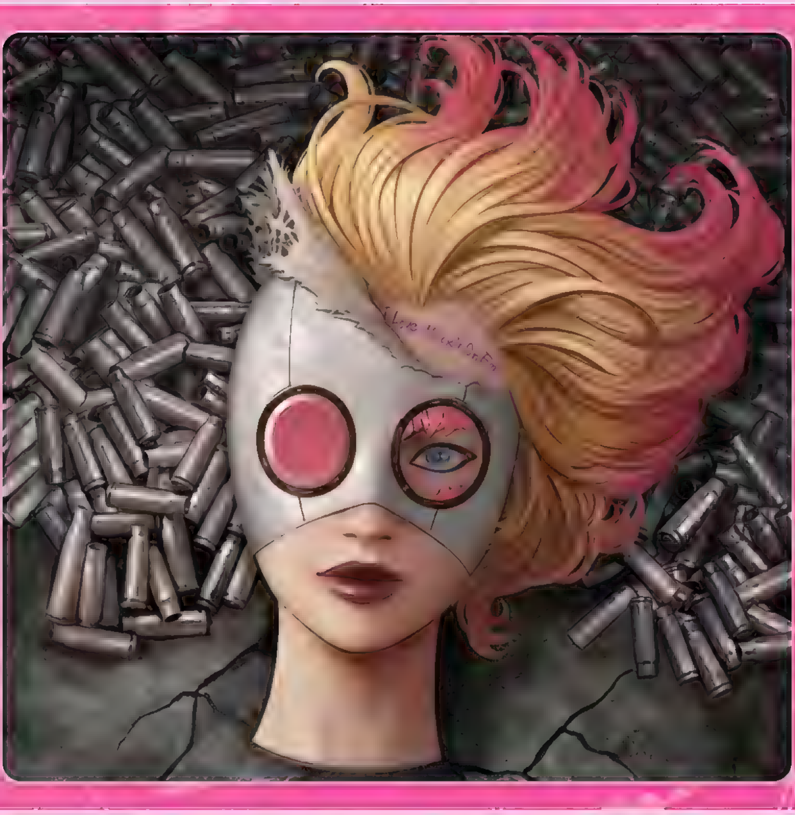
GWENPOOL SPECIAL #1 VARIANT
BY ROBBI RODRIGUEZ



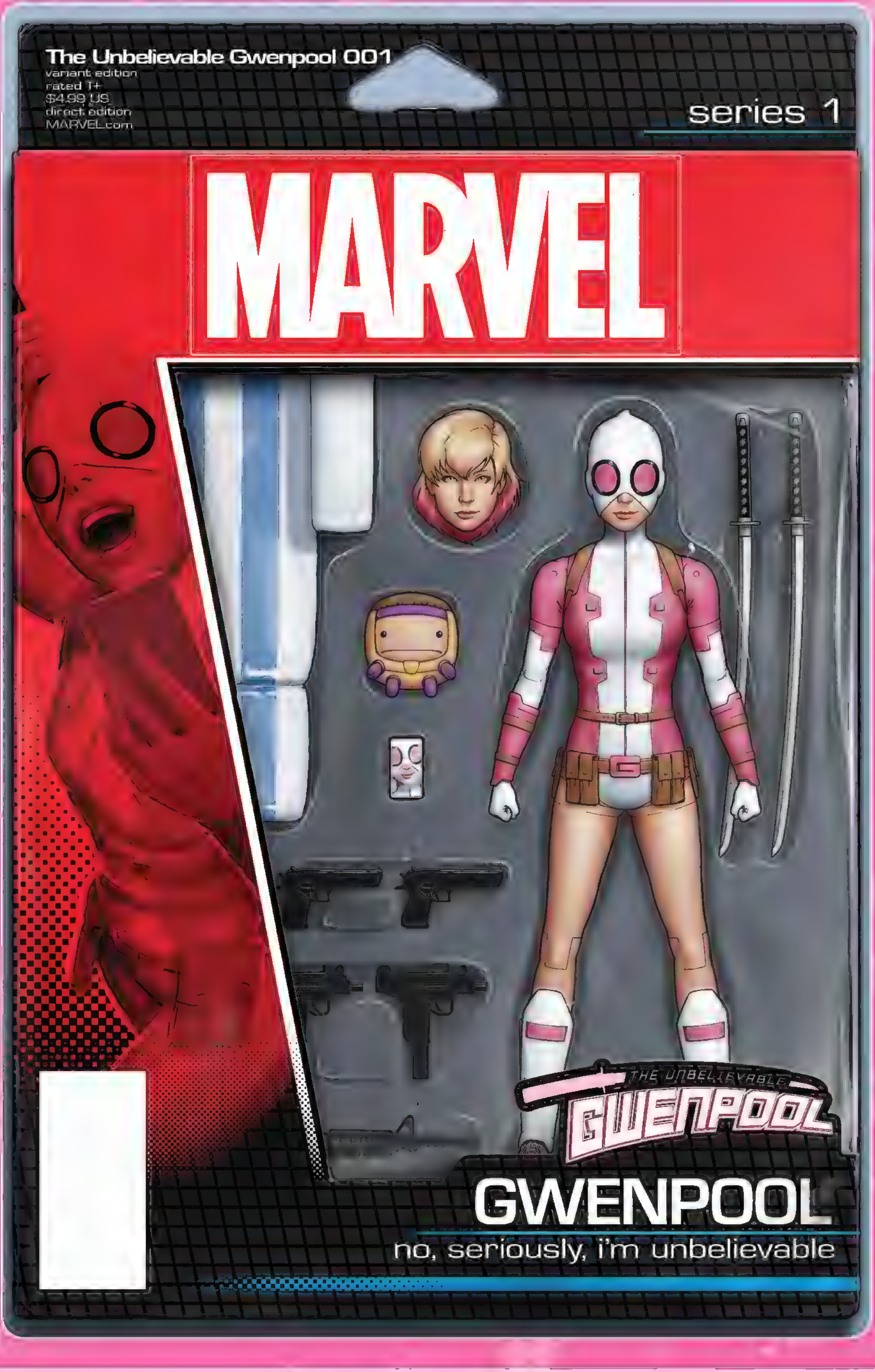
GWENPOOL SPECIAL #1 VARIANT
BY JIM MAHFOOD



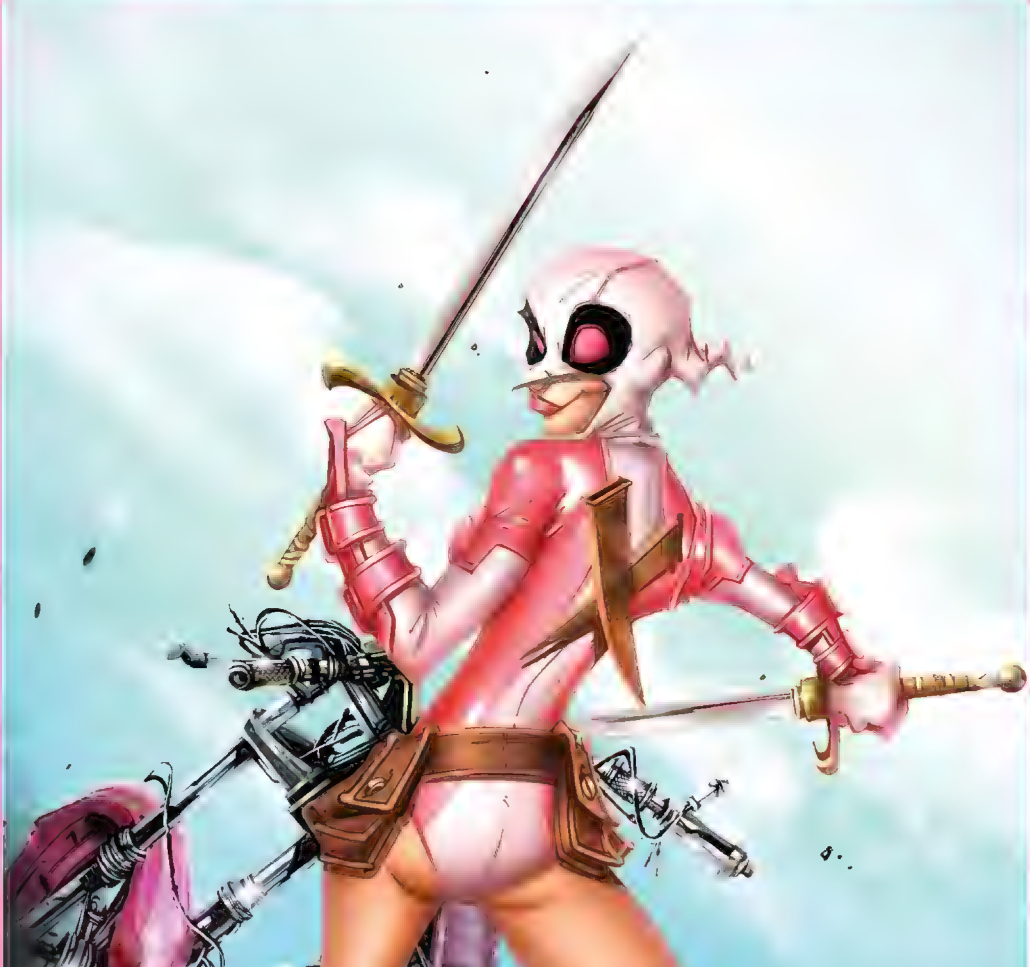
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #0 VARIANT
BY CHRIS BACHALO



THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1 HIP-HOP VARIANT
BY WOO DAE SHIM

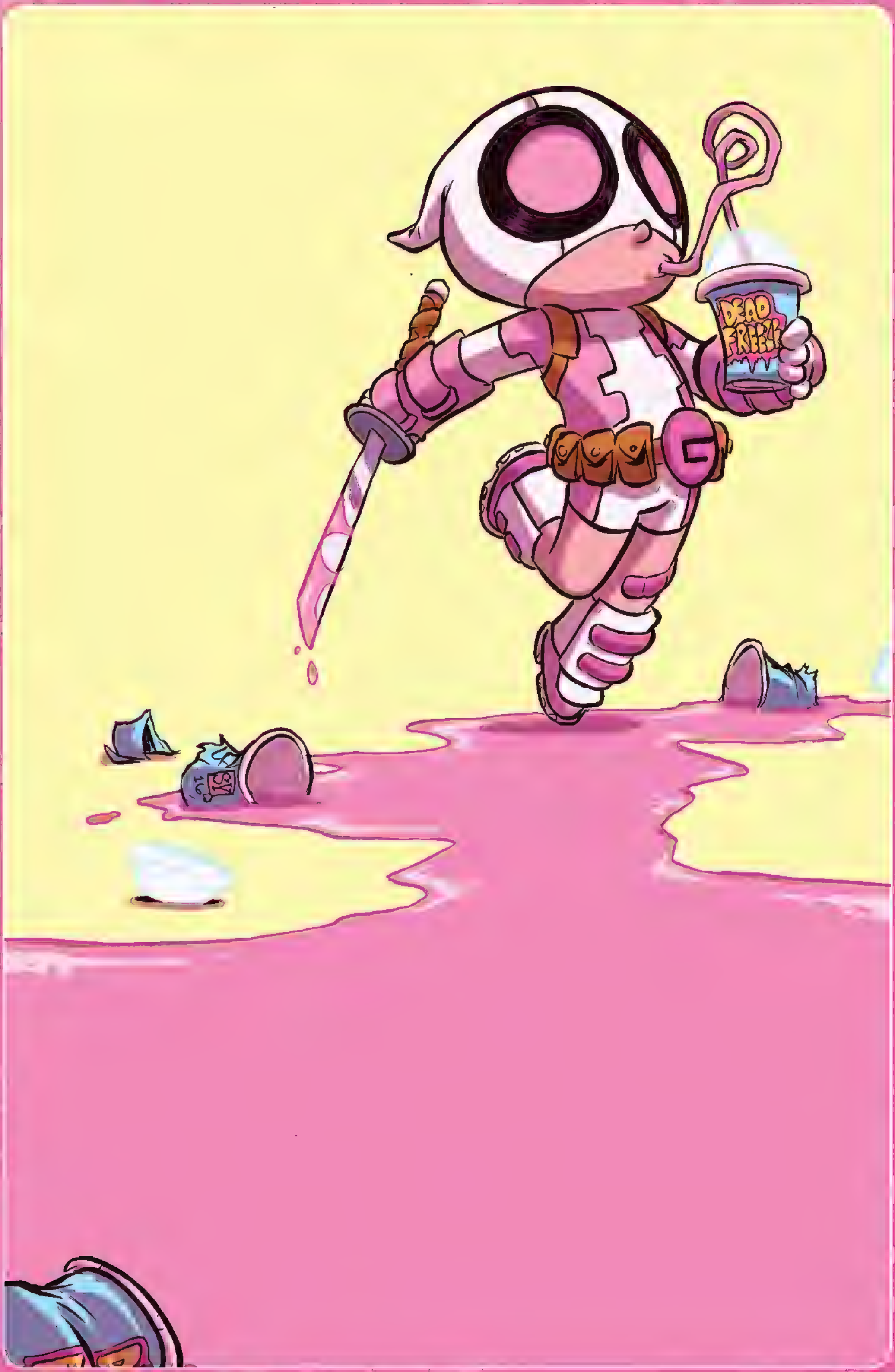

The Unbelievable Gwenpool 001
variant edition
rated T+
$4.99 US
direct edition
MARVEL.com
series 1
MARVEL
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
GWENPOOL
no, seriously, i'm unbelievable

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1 ACTION FIGURE VARIANT
BY JOHN TYLER CHRISTOPHER

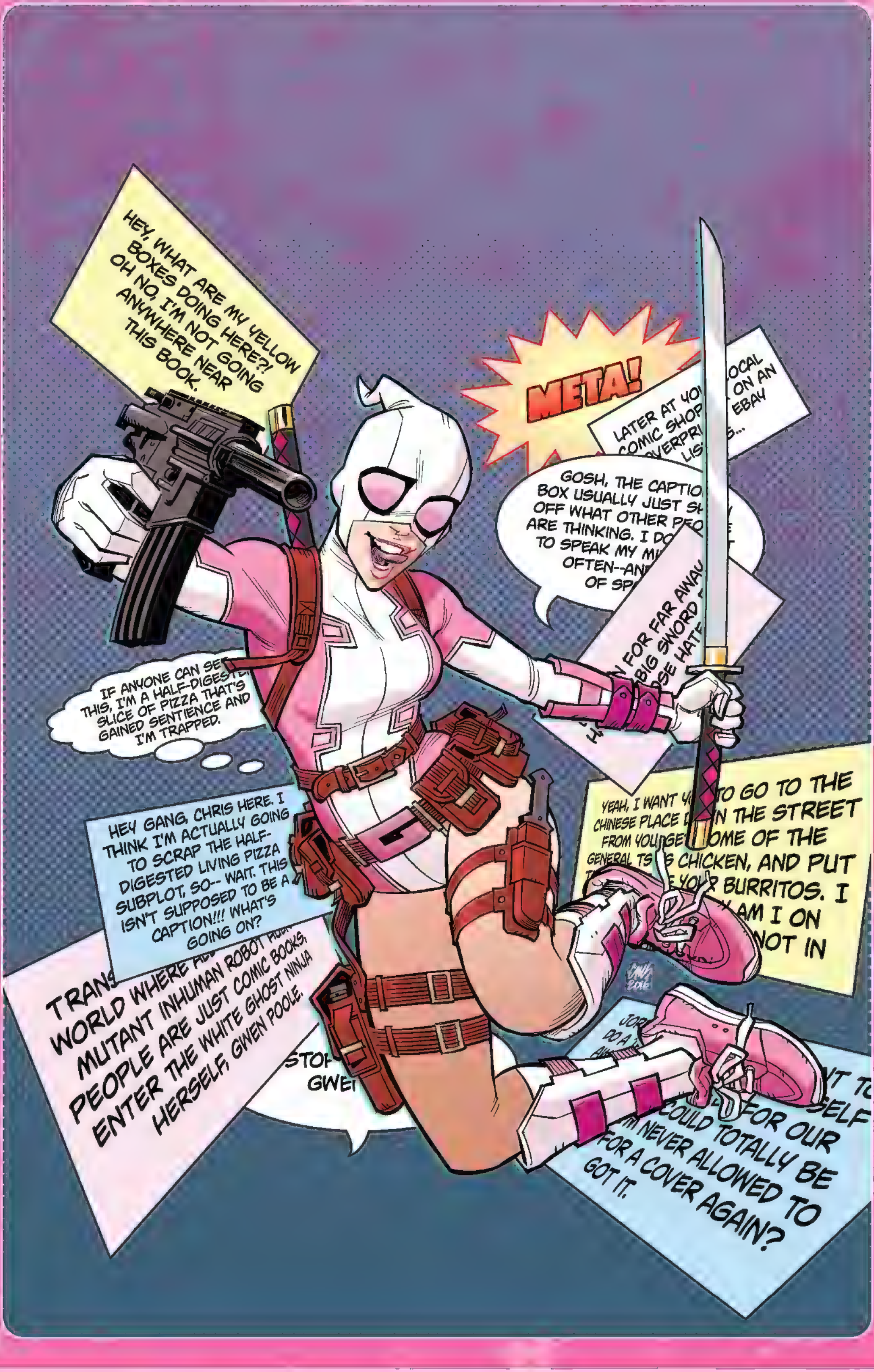


THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1 VARIANT
BY FRANCISCO HERRERA & FERNANDA RIZO

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1 VARIANT
BY STACEY LEE

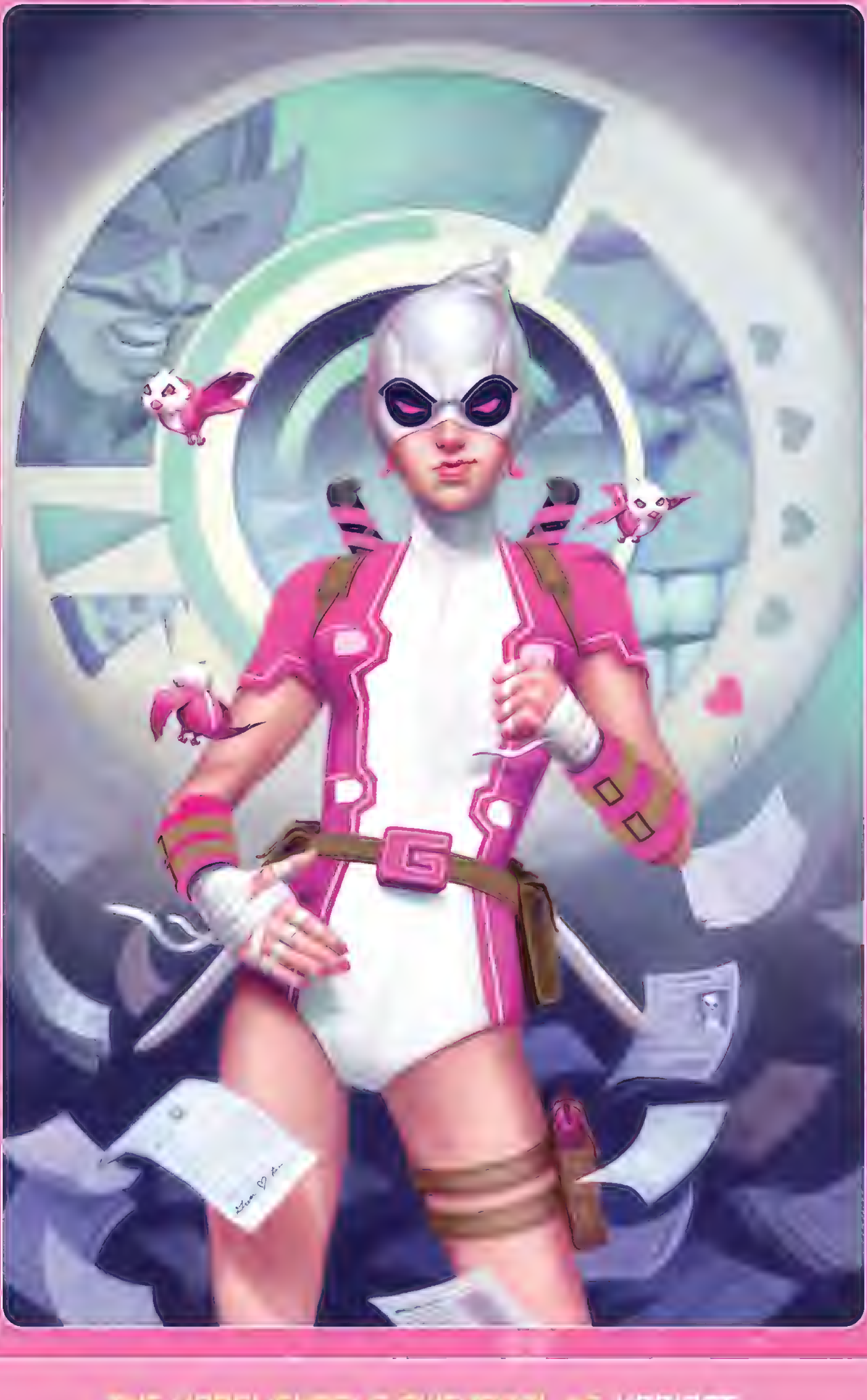

DEAD FREEZE

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1 VARIANT
BY SKOTTIE YOUNG


HEY, WHAT ARE MY YELLOW BOXES DOING HERE?! OH NO, I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE NEAR THIS BOOK.
META!
LATER AT YO LOCAL COMIC SHOP ON AN OVERPRI EBAY LIS S...
GOSH, THE CAPTIO BOX USUALLY JUST SH OFF WHAT OTHER PEO ARE THINKING. I DO TO SPEAK MY MI OFTEN--AN OF SP
N FOR FAR AWAY BIG SWORD SE HATE
IF ANYONE CAN SEE THIS, I'M A HALF-DIGESTED SLICE OF PIZZA THAT'S GAINED SENTIENCE AND I'M TRAPPED.
HEY GANG, CHRIS HERE. I THINK I'M ACTUALLY GOING TO SCRAP THE HALF-DIGESTED LIVING PIZZA SUBPLOT, SO-- WAIT. THIS ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE A CAPTION!!! WHAT'S GOING ON?
YEAH, I WANT YO TO GO TO THE CHINESE PLACE D N THE STREET FROM YOU GET OME OF THE GENERAL TS S CHICKEN, AND PUT YOUR BURRITOS. I AM I ON NOT IN
TRANS WORLD WHERE ROBOT MUTANT INHUMAN PEOPLE ARE JUST COMIC BOOKS. ENTER THE WHITE GHOST NINJA HERSELF, GWEN POOLE.
STOP GWE
JOR DO A
NT TO SELF FOR OUR COULD TOTALLY BE NEVER ALLOWED TO FOR A COVER AGAIN? GOT IT.
CMS 2016

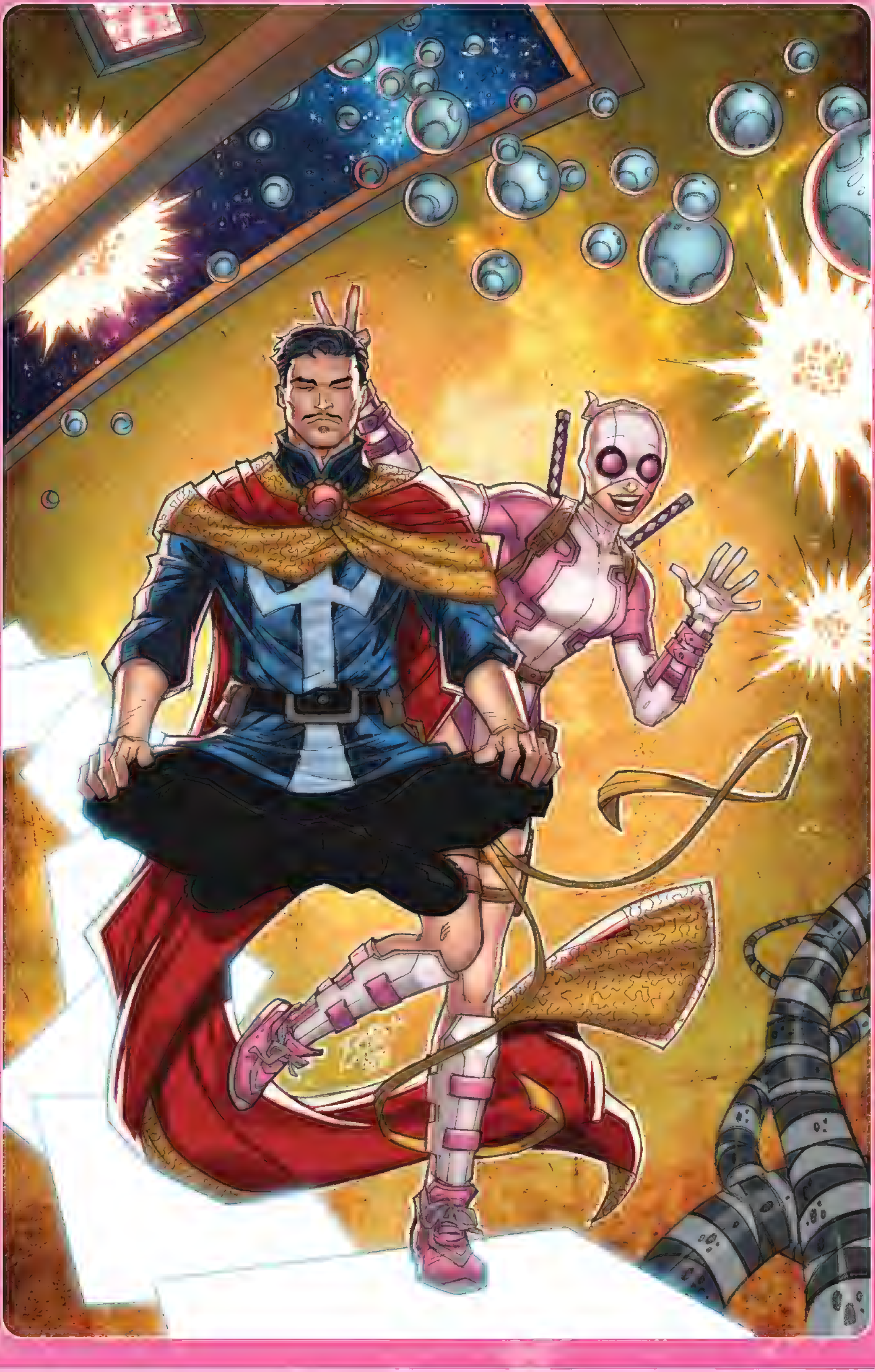
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1 VARIANT
BY CAMERON STEWART

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #2 VARIANT
BY REILLY BROWN & JIM CHARALAMPIDIS

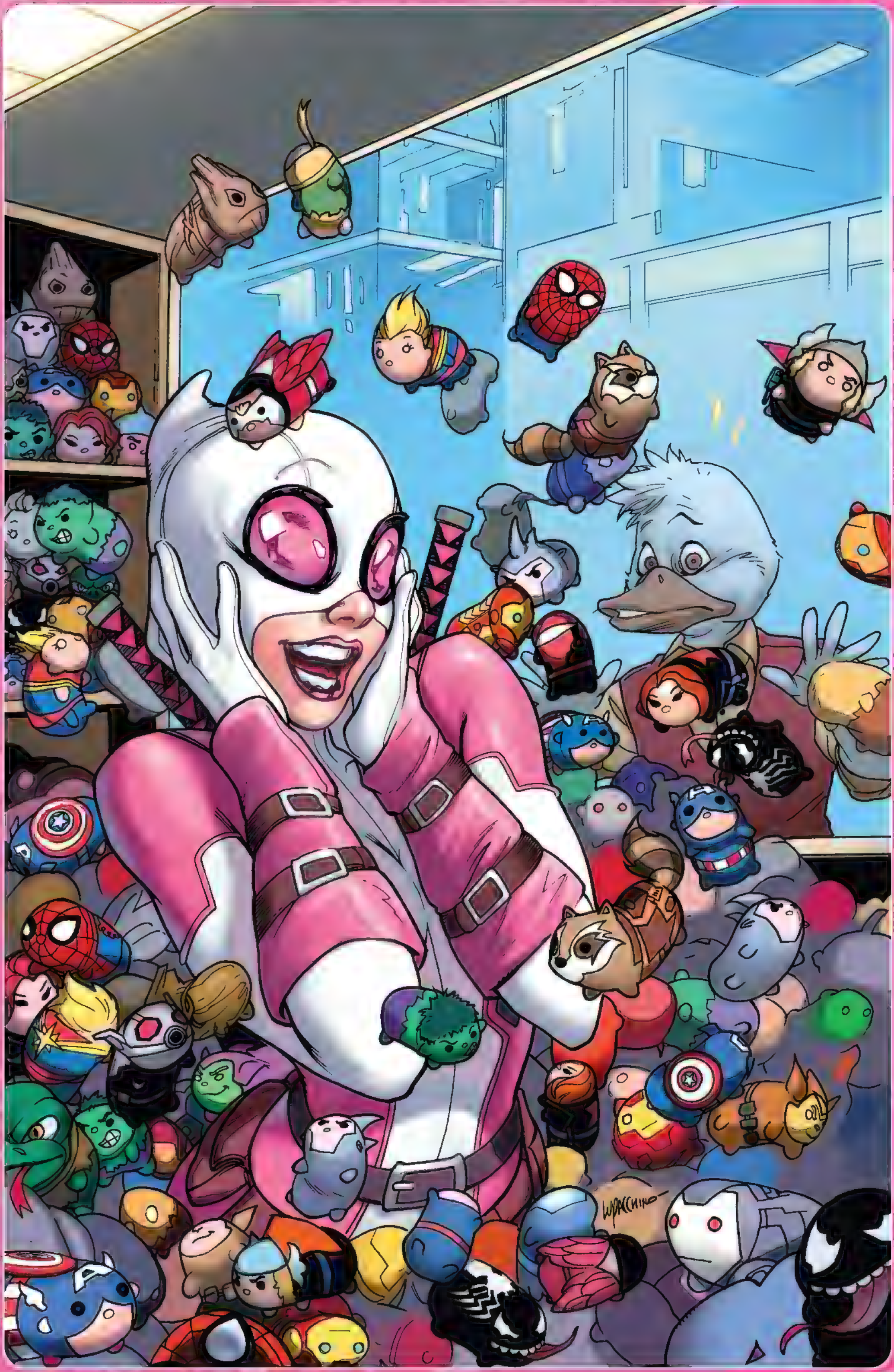


THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #3 VARIANT
BY KIRBI FAGAN

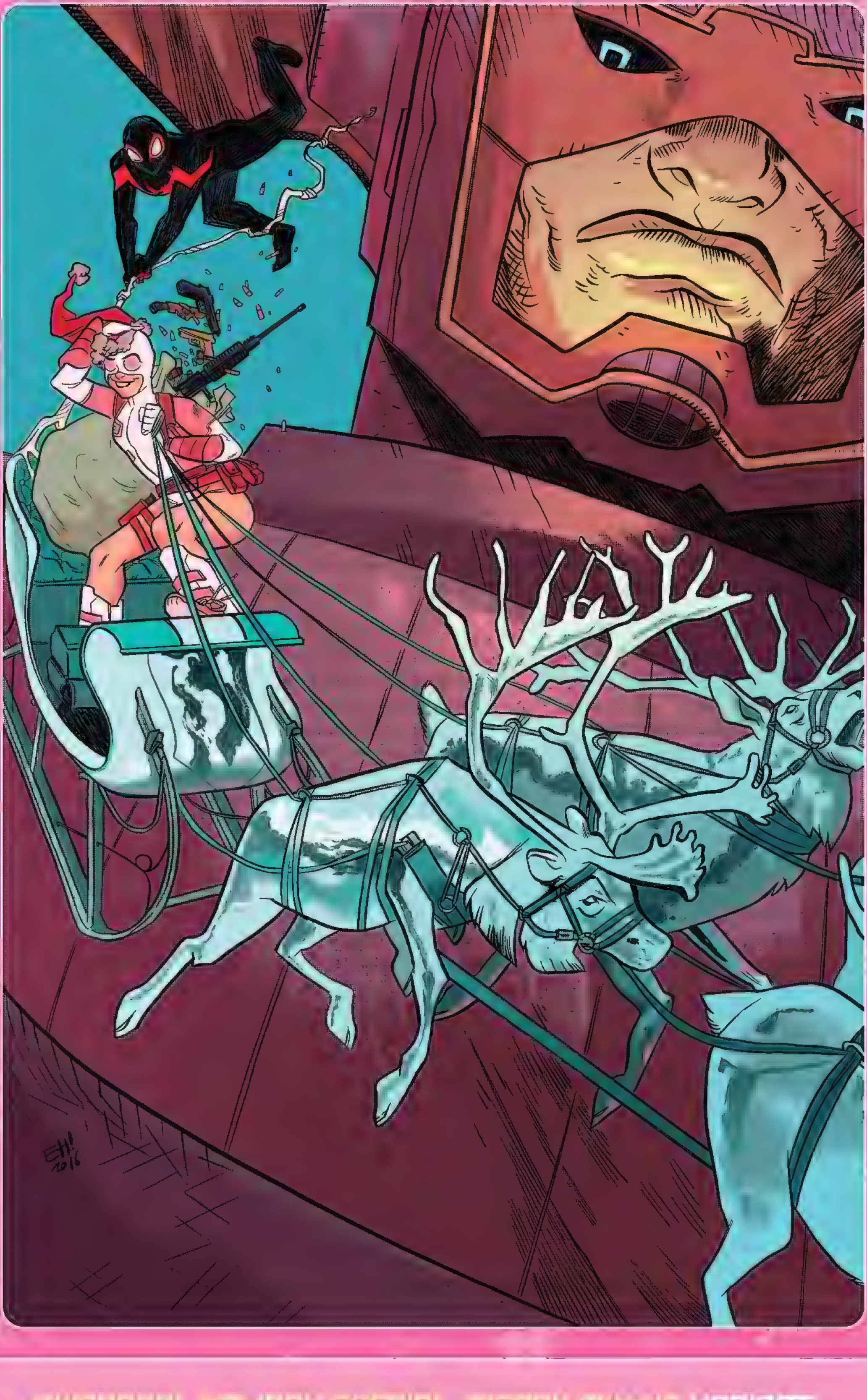
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #1 VARIANT
BY ANNIE WU



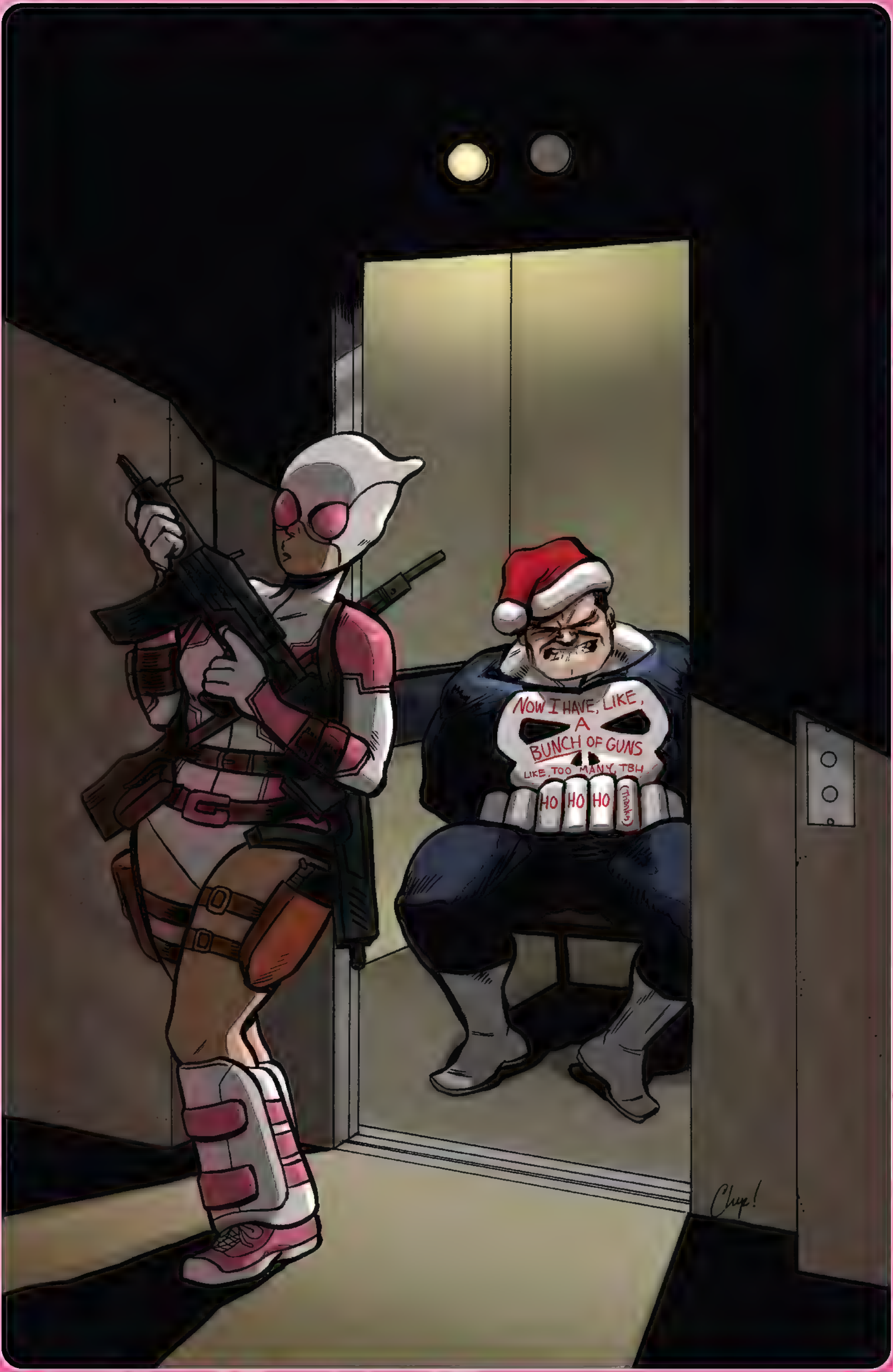
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL [illegible] VARIANT
BY RON LIM & ISRAEL SILVA


LUPACCHINO

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #5 MARVEL TSUM TSUM TAKEOVER VARIANT BY EMA LUPACCHINO & JASON KEITH

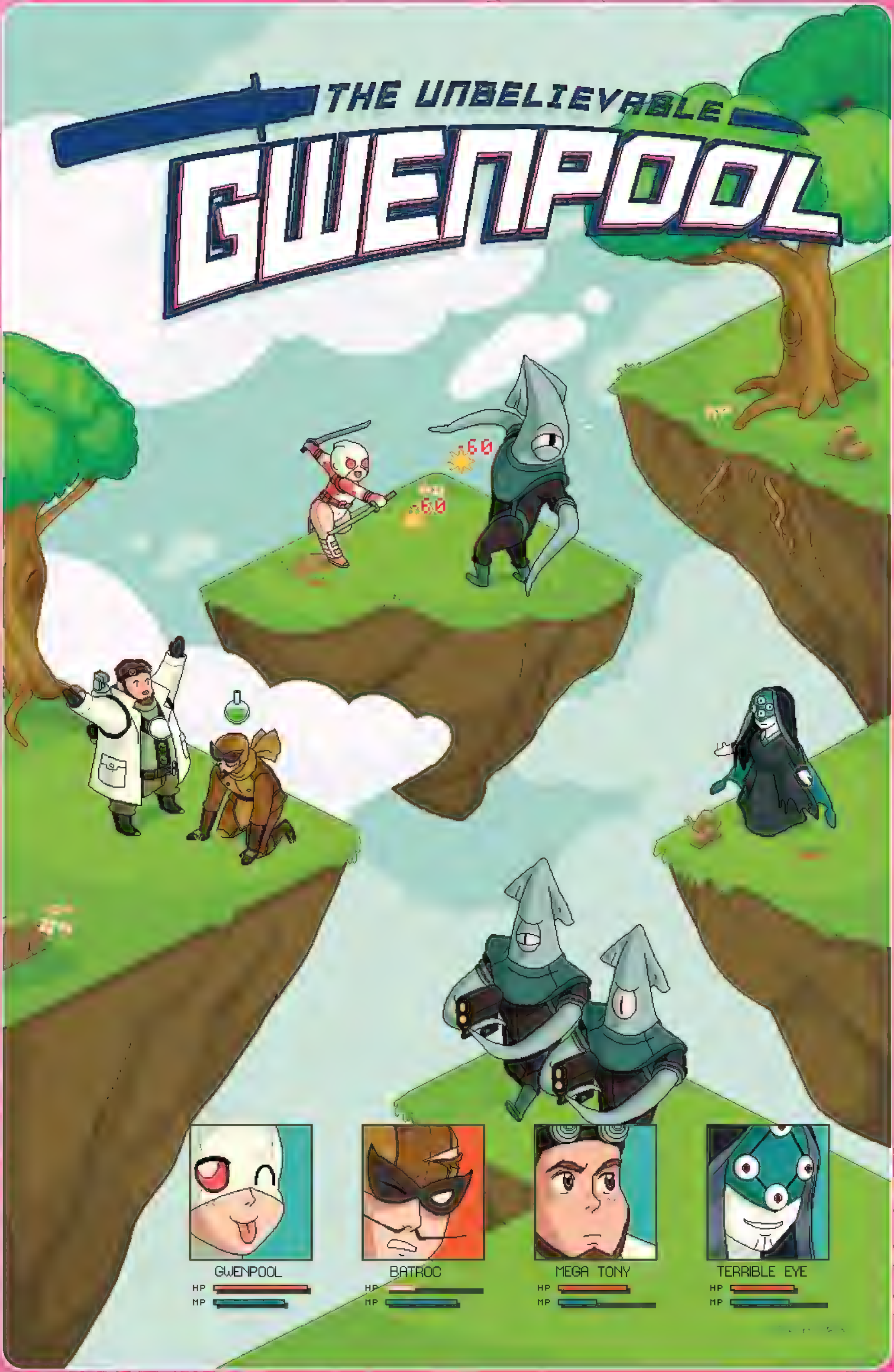


GWENPOOL HOLIDAY SPECIAL: MERRY MIX-UP VARIANT
BY ERICA HENDERSON

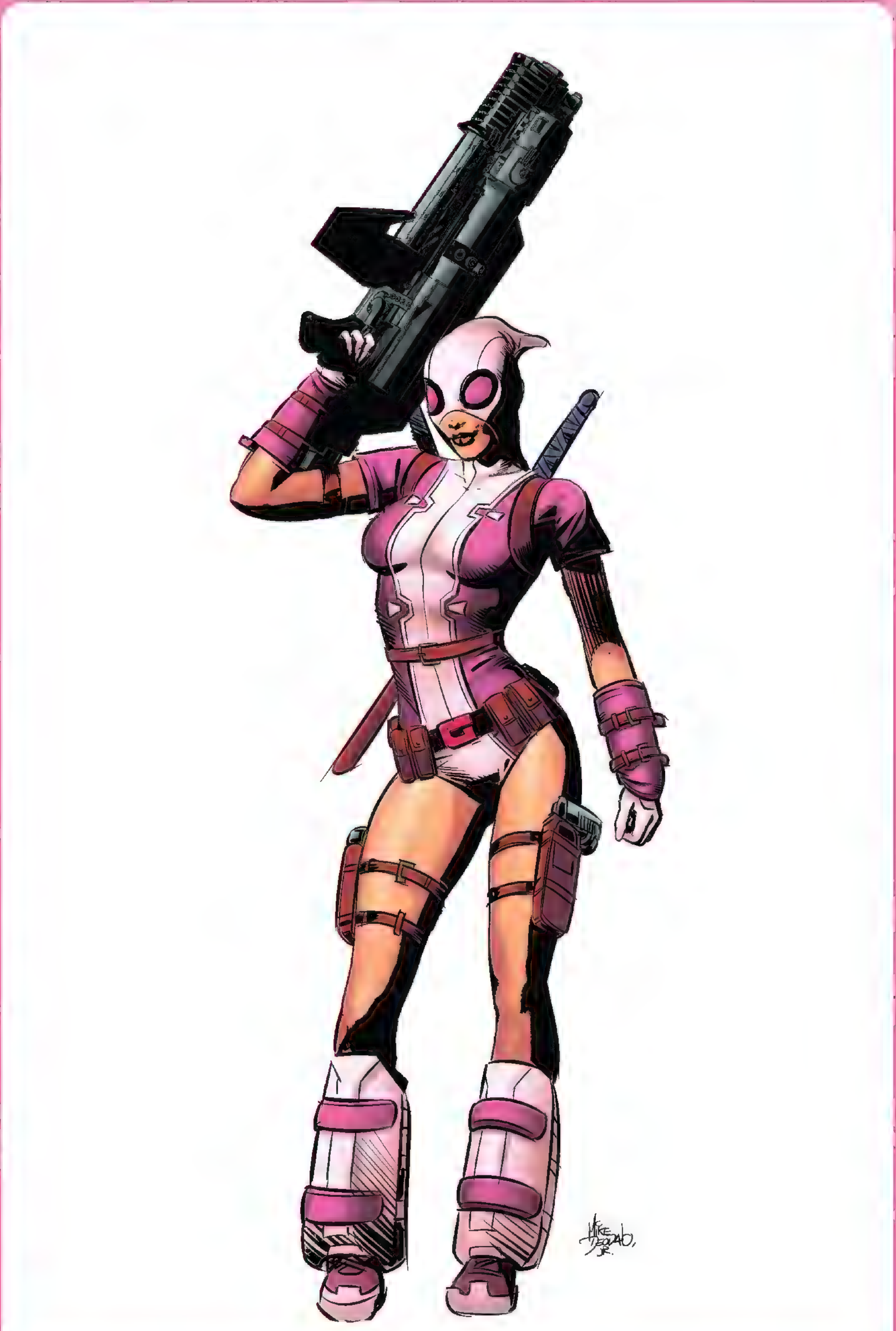

NOW I HAVE, LIKE, A BUNCH OF GUNS
LIKE, TOO MANY, TBH
HO HO HO
(thanks)
Chip!

GWENPOOL HOLIDAY SPECIAL MERRY MIX-UP VARIANT
BY CHIP ZDARSKY

GWENPOOL HOLIDAY SPECIAL MERRY MIX-UP VARIANT
BY RON LIM & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

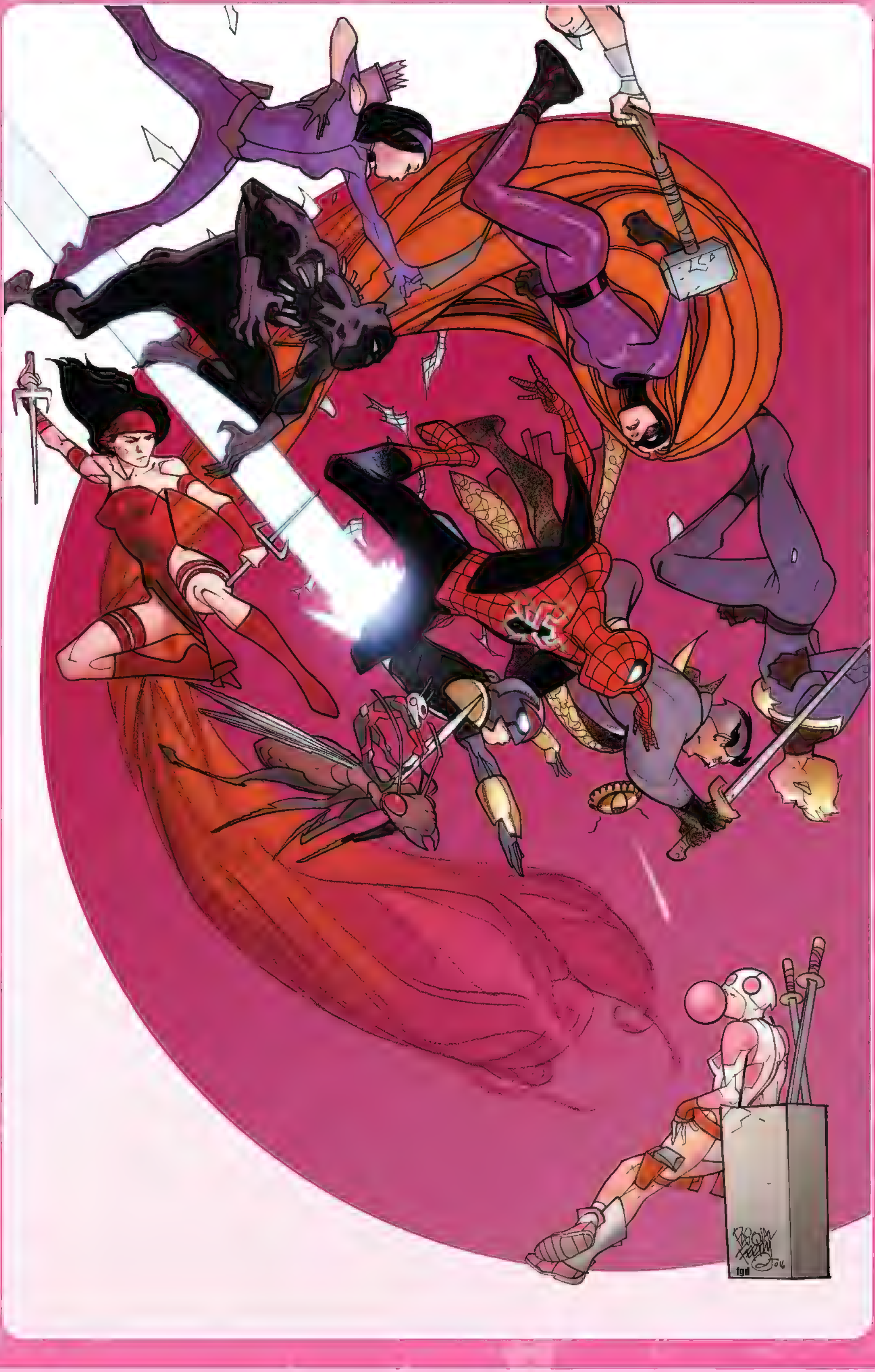

THE UNBELIEVABLE
GWENPOOL
-60
-60
GWENPOOL
HP
MP
BATROC
HP
MP
MEGA TONY
HP
MP
TERRIBLE EYE
HP
MP

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #7 VARIANT
BY CARLY MONARDO

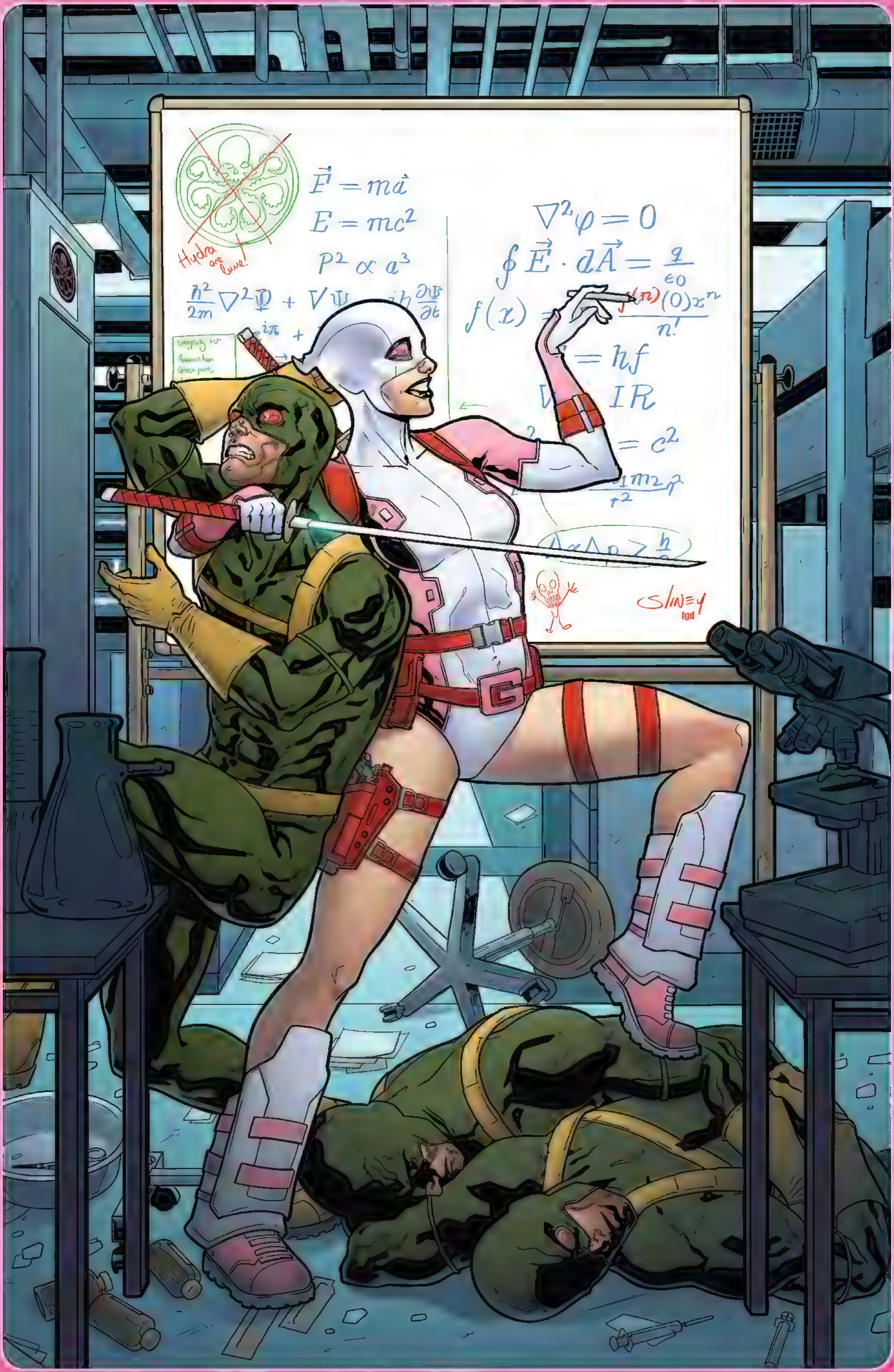


THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #7 TEASER VARIANT
BY MIKE DEODATO JR. & FRANK MARTIN

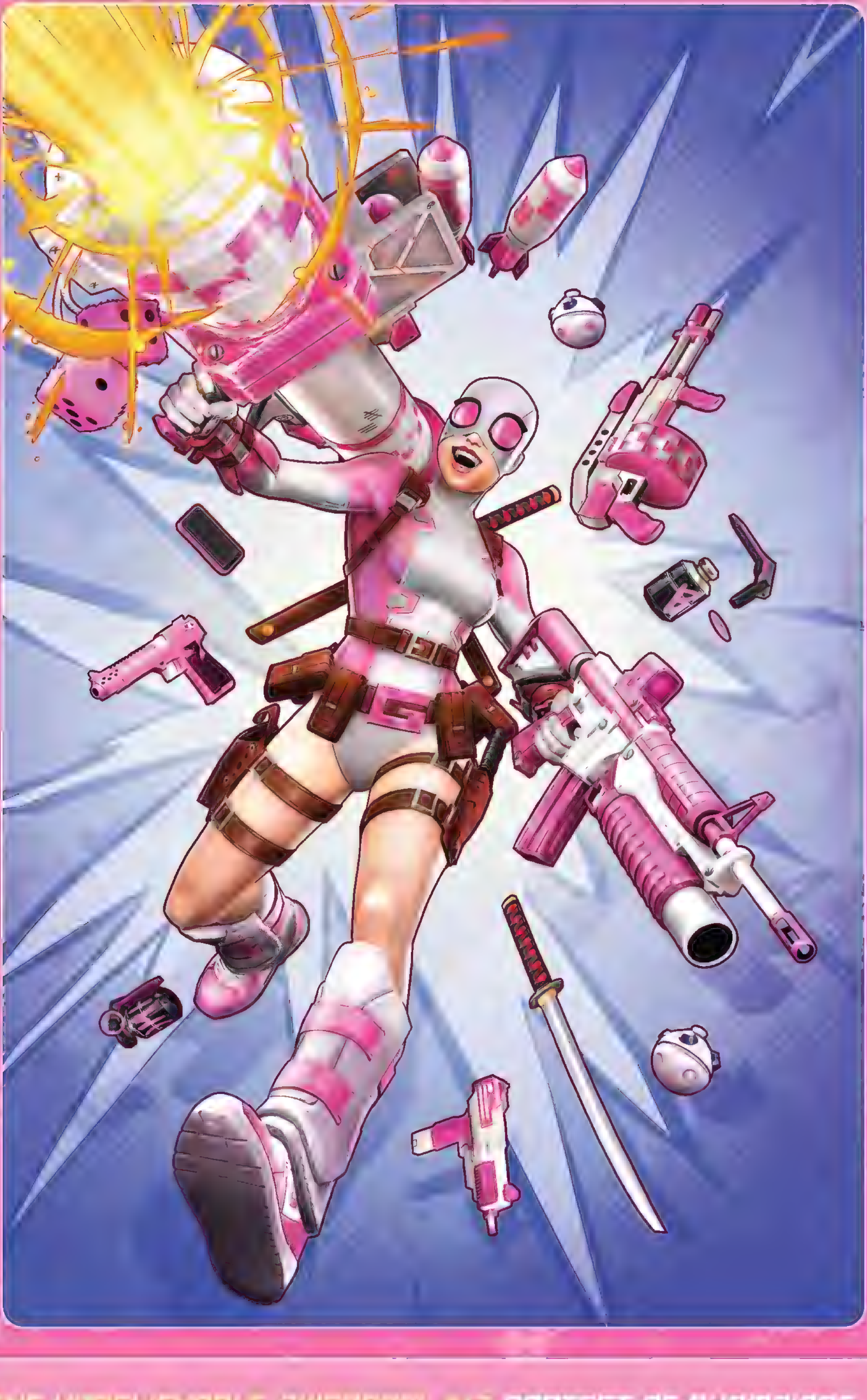
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #7 M.O.D.O.K. VARIANT
BY MICHAEL WALSH



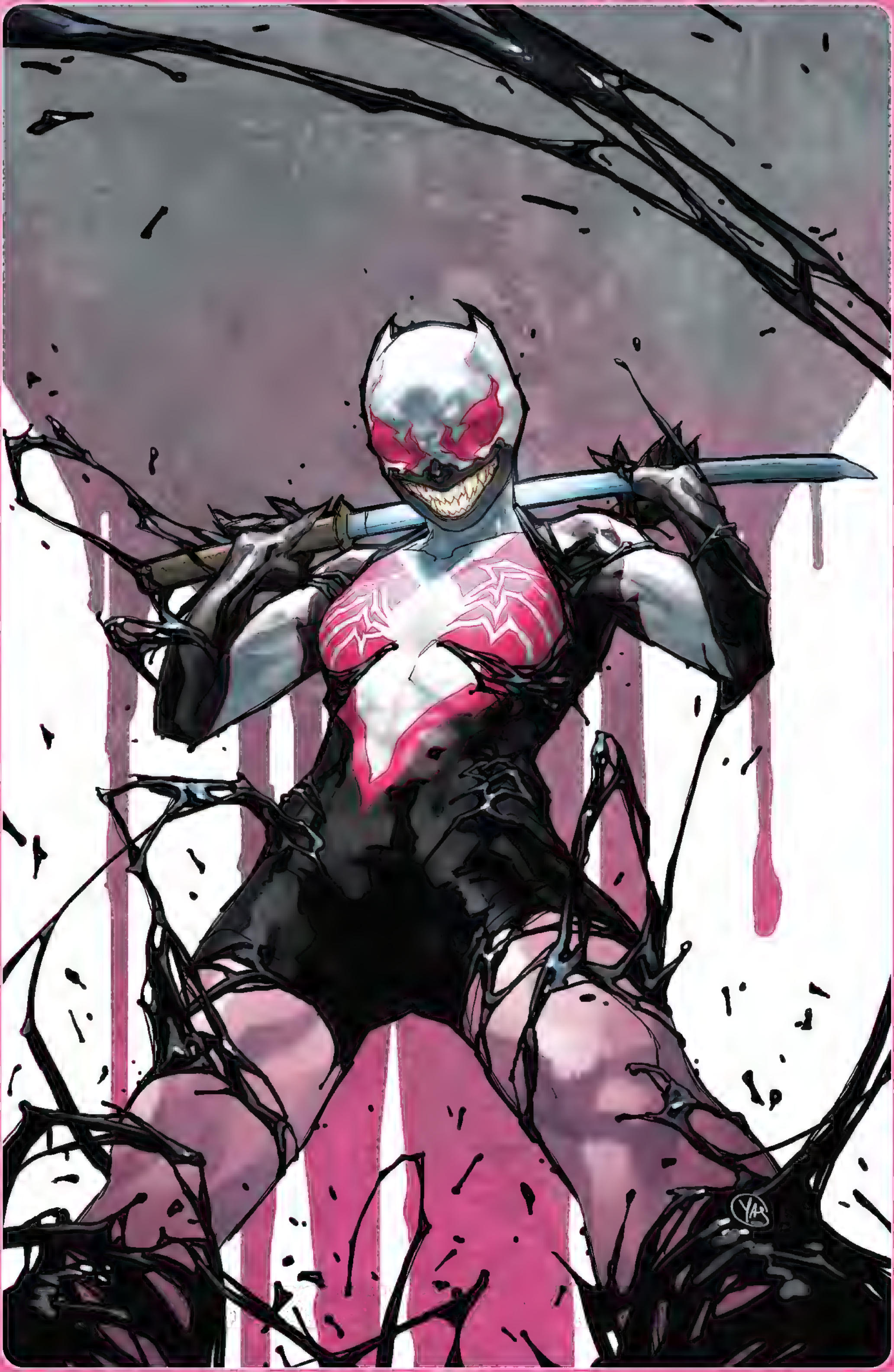
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #8 DIVIDED WE STAND VARIANT
BY PASQUAL FERRY & FRANK D'ARMATA


Hydra are lame!
$\vec{F} = m\vec{a}$
$E = mc^2$
$P^2 \propto a^3$
$\nabla^2 \varphi = 0$
$\oint \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{A} = \frac{q}{\epsilon_0}$
SLINEY
fgd

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #3 S.T.E.A.M.
(SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART & MATH) VARIANT
BY WILL SLINEY & FRANK D'ARMATA

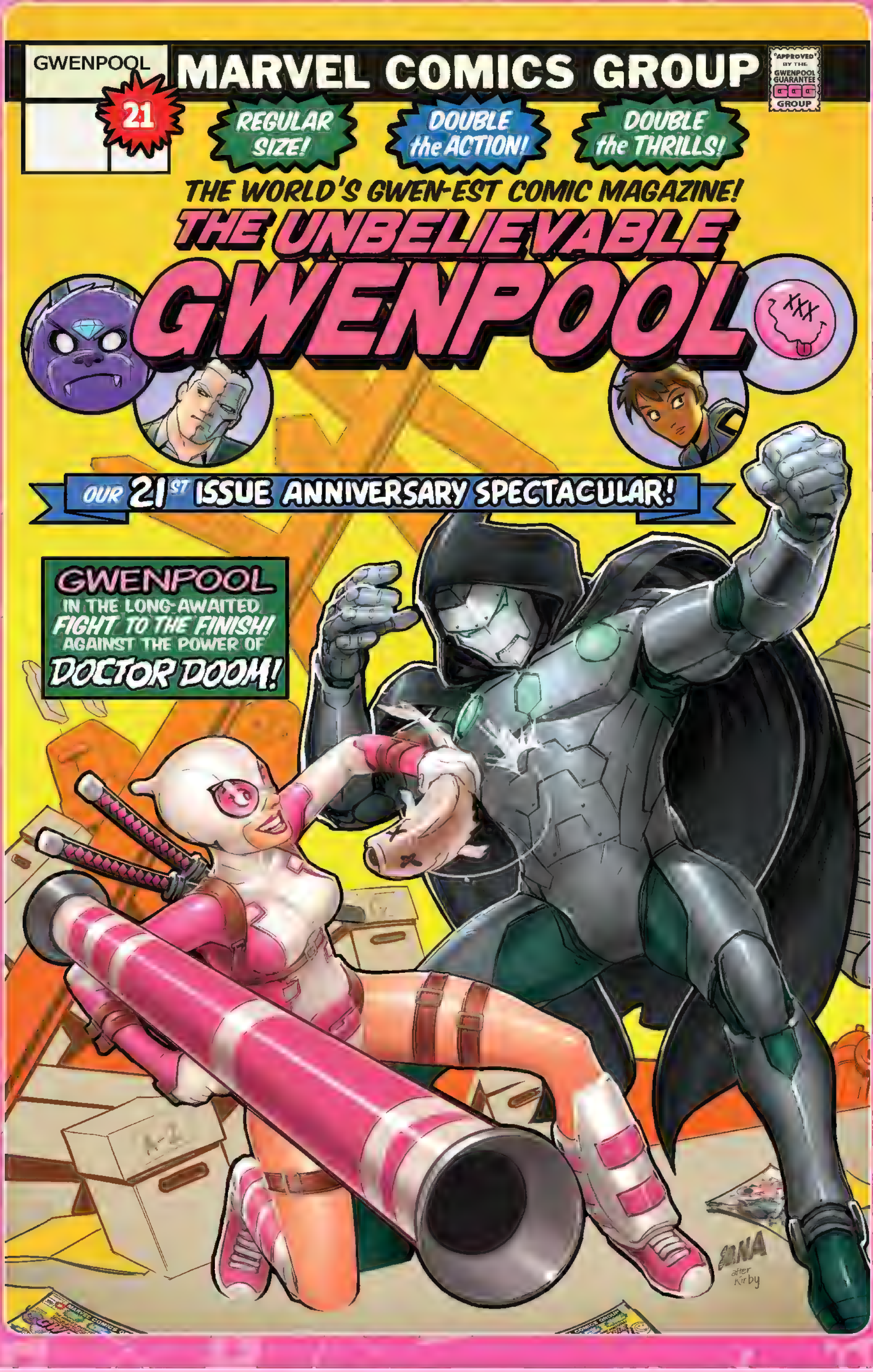


THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #13 CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS
VARIANT BY GENE CAMPBELL & KABAM GAMES

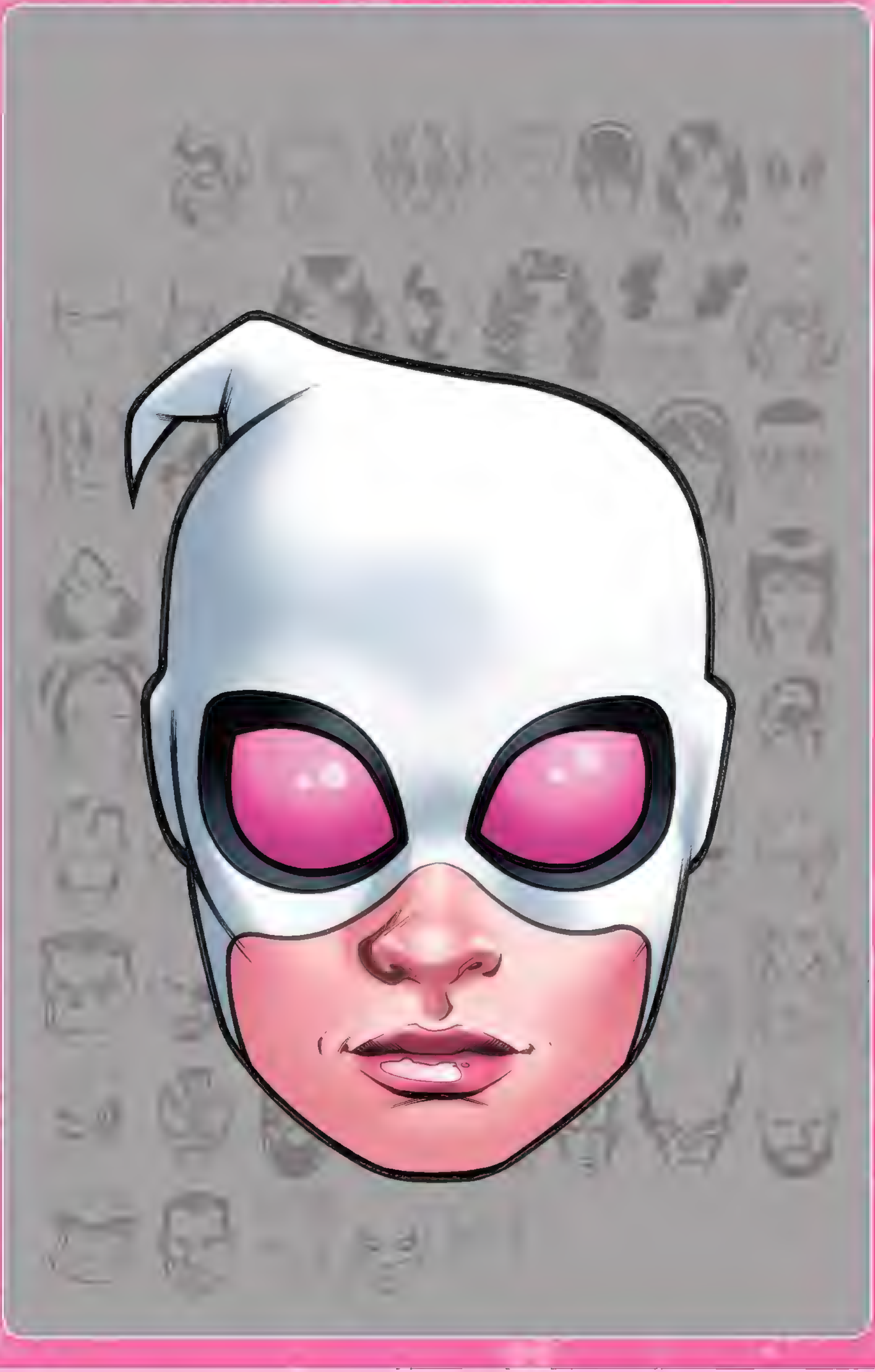


THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #13 VENOMIZED VARIANT
BY YASMINE PUTRI

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #17 MARY JANE VARIANT
BY DAVID NAKAYAMA


GWENPOOL
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
"APPROVED" BY THE GWENPOOL GUARANTEE GGG GROUP
21
REGULAR SIZE!
DOUBLE the ACTION!
DOUBLE the THRILLS!
THE WORLD'S GWEN-EST COMIC MAGAZINE!
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL
OUR 21ST ISSUE ANNIVERSARY SPECTACULAR!
GWENPOOL IN THE LONG-AWAITED FIGHT TO THE FINISH! AGAINST THE POWER OF DOCTOR DOOM!
NA after Kirby
A-Z

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #21 LEGACY HOMAGE VARIANT
BY DAVID NAKAYAMA (BASED ON FANTASTIC FOUR #200
BY JACK KIRBY & JOE SINNOTT)



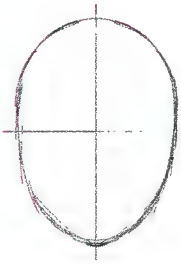
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #21 LEGACY HEADSHOT VARIANT BY MIKE McKONE & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

HOW TO DRAW GWENPOOL
IN SIX EASY STEPS!

BY CHIP "GWENOMPOOL" ZDARSKY

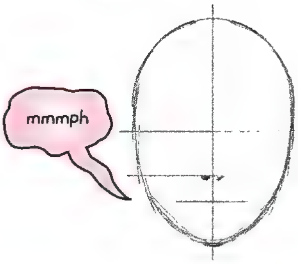
Wow! A "sketch variant cover"! The simplest drawing will techincally damage it and reduce its pristine valuability! Oh well! To prepare you to draw your very own GWEN BUT NOT THAT GWEN OR THE OTHER GWEN, here's a fun and informative step-by-step guide!

1



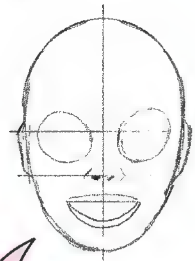
Start with an oval shape, a little pointier toward the bottom than the top! Bisect it twice (quadsect?) with straight lines.

2



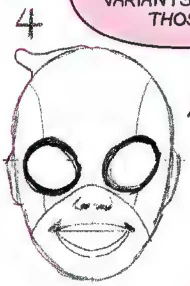
Another line bisecting the bottom half will help you position her nose, and ro halfway down will be her m

3


OH MAN! MOUTHS! NEVER TAKE THEM FOR GRANTED, LET ME TELL Y—

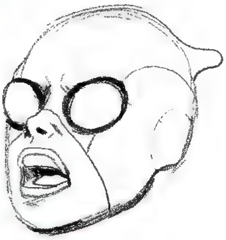
Gwenpool should be go ahead and make it outh! You'll have to hin to accomodate mouth shape! Slightly upturned ovals should be used for her eyes!

4


—HEY! IS THIS ONE OF THOSE "HOW TO DRAW" SKETCH VARIANTS! I *LOVE* THOSE!

Darken the lines around eyes and add the other features!

5

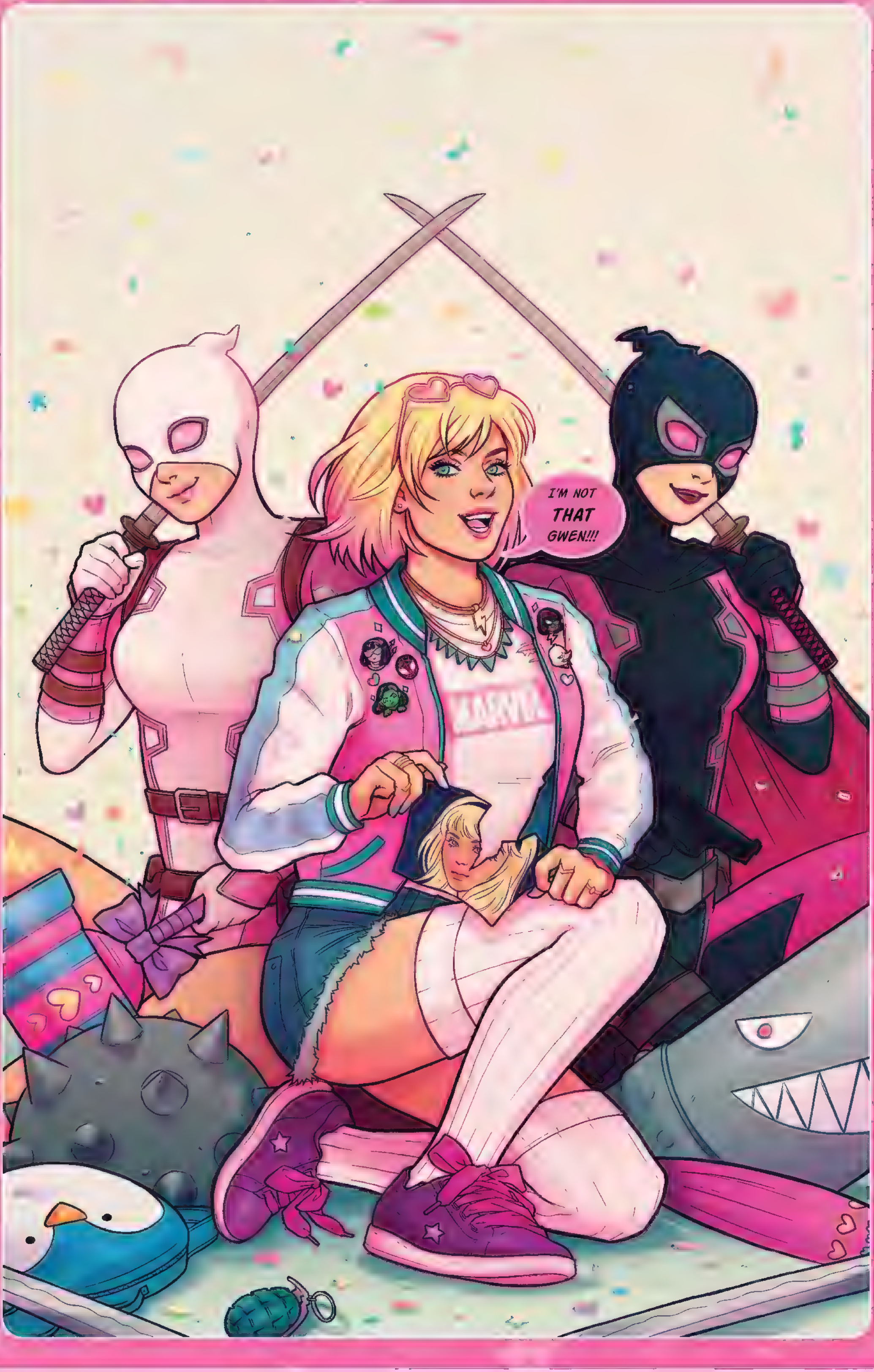

WAIT! WHY AM I DRAWN SO POORLY? ARE YOU TELLING ME MARVEL HIRED A *WRITER* TO DR—

ery animated el free to try om different

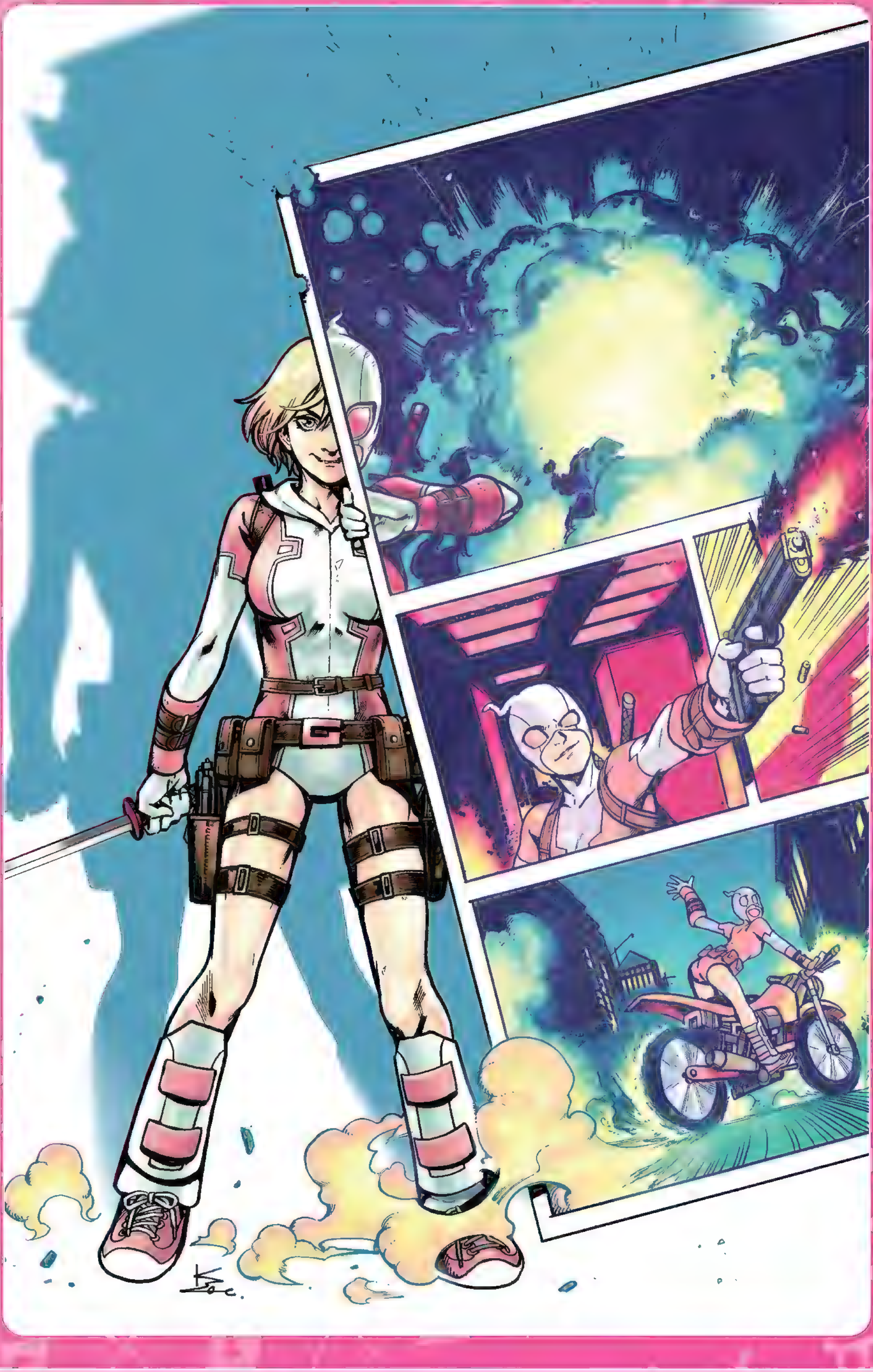
6

Remember, if you're not happy with your drawing, that's what erasers are for!

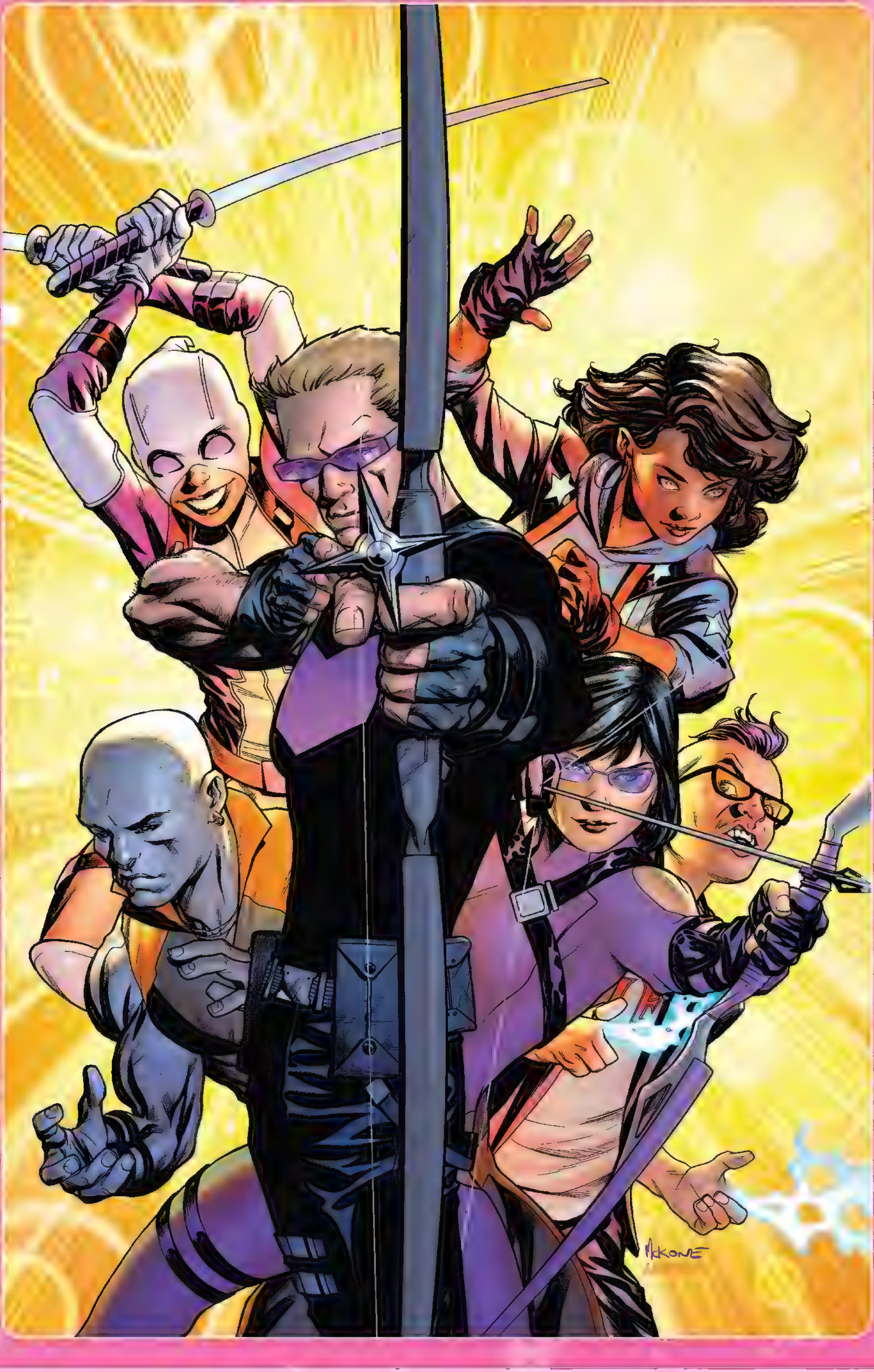
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #21 HOW TO DRAW VARIANT
BY CHIP ZDARSKY


I'M NOT THAT GWEN!!!
MARVEL

THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #25 VARIANT
BY JEN BARTEL

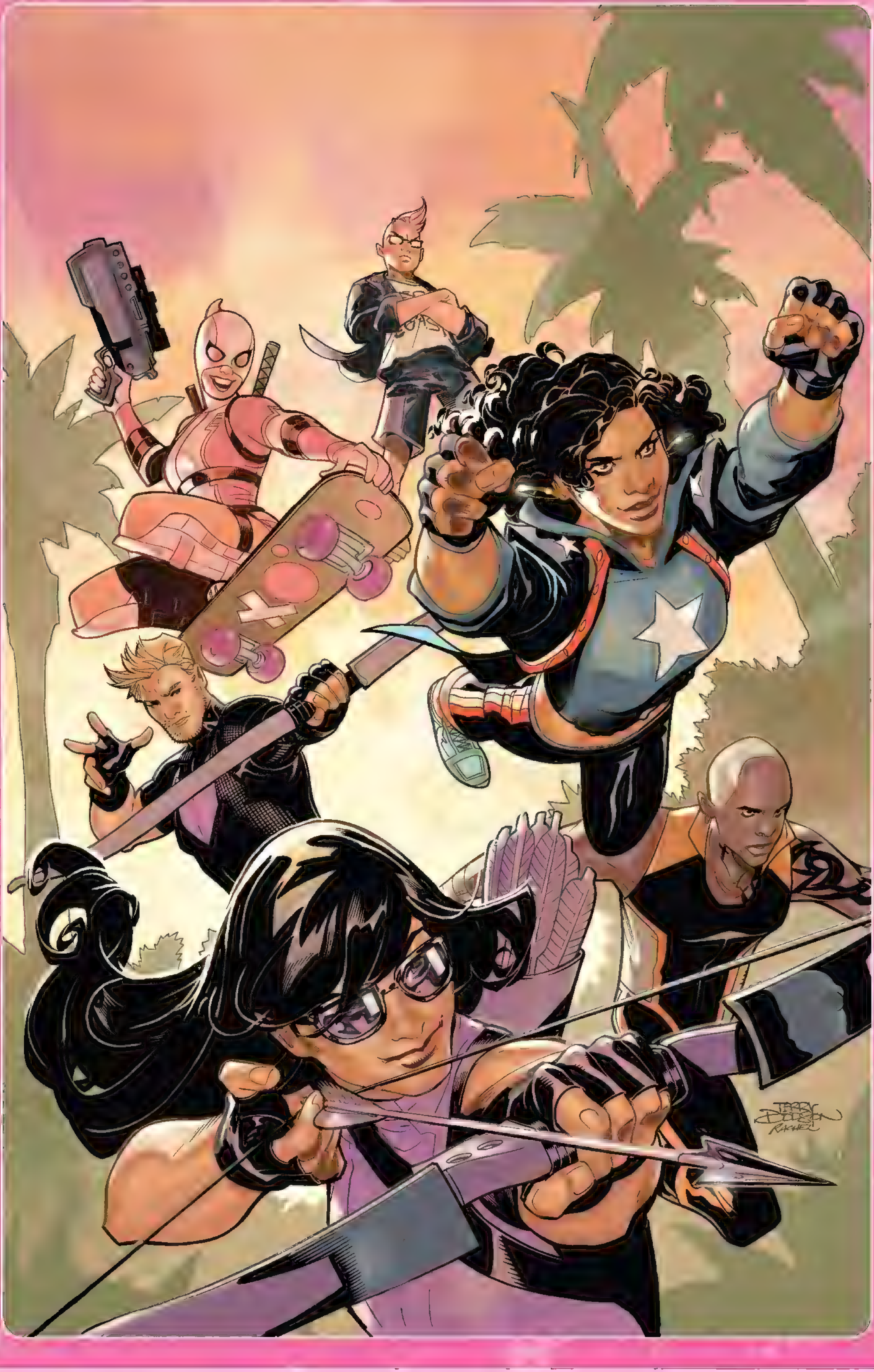


THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL #25 VARIANT
BY KAMOME SHIRAHAMA



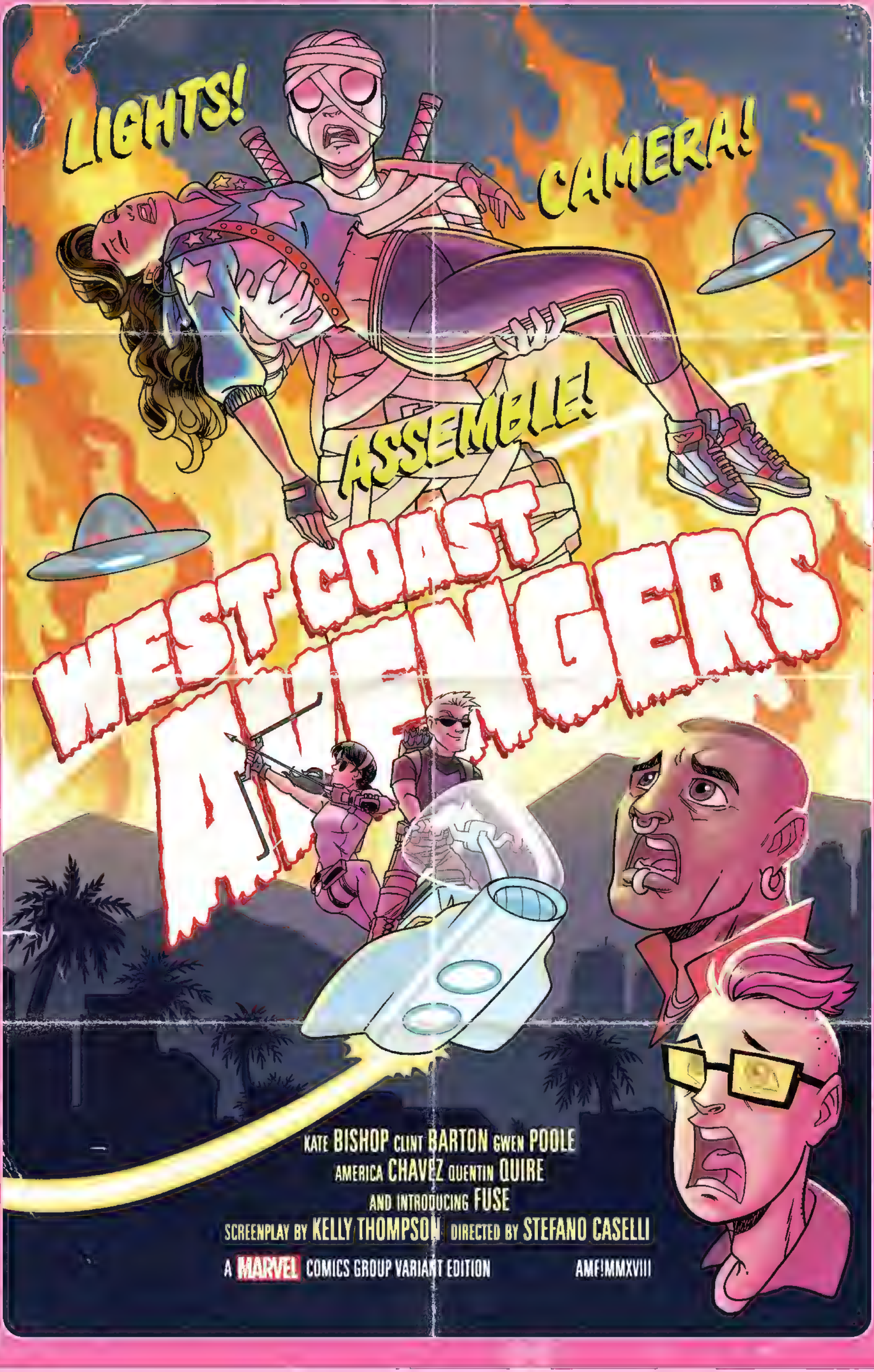
WEST COAST AVENGERS #1 VARIANT
BY MIKE McKONE & JESUS ABURTOV

WEST COAST AVENGERS #1 VARIANT
BY PAUL RENAUD

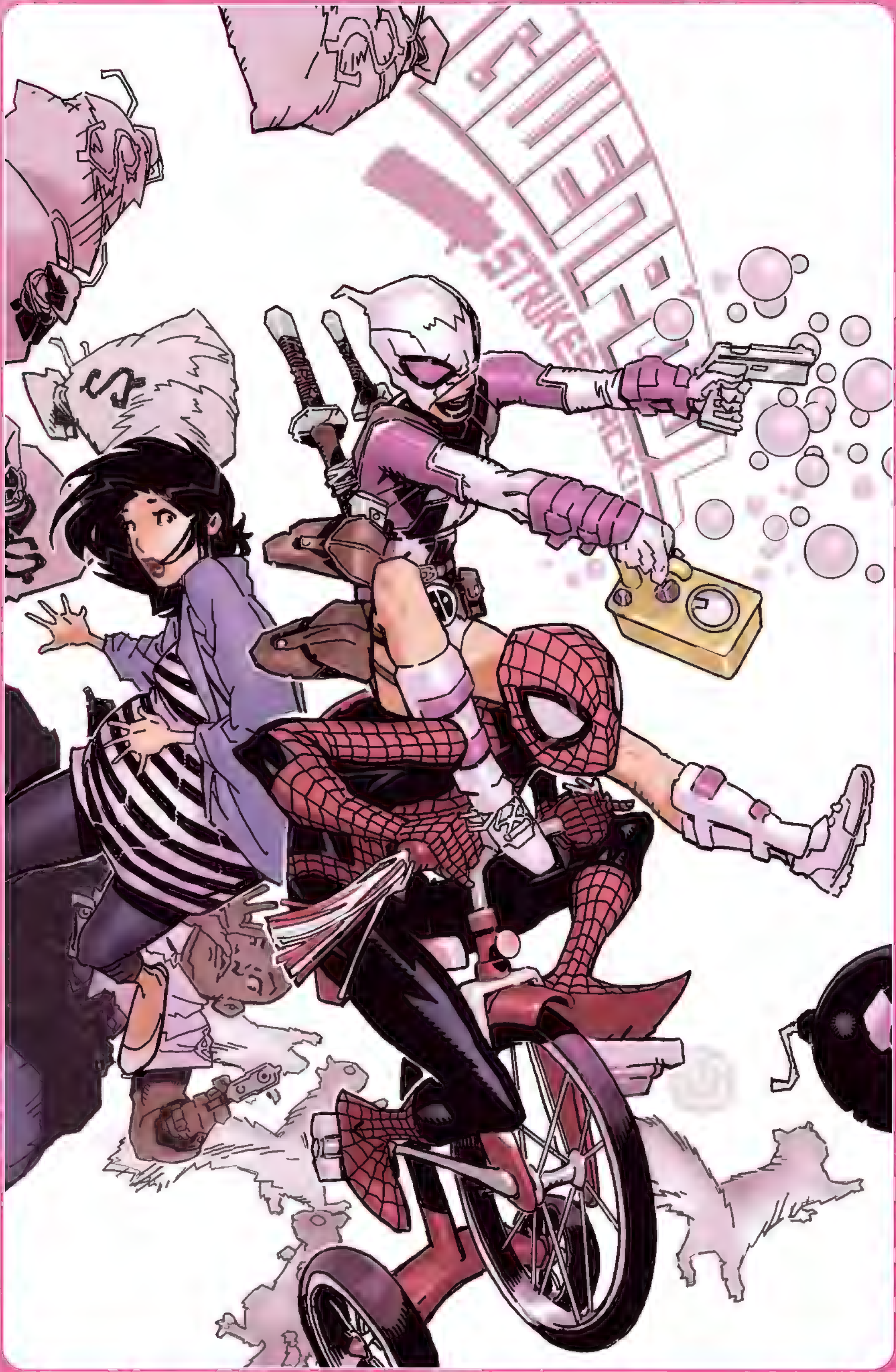

TERRY DODSON RACHEL

WEST COAST AVENGERS #1 VARIANT
BY TERRY DODSON & RACHEL DODSON

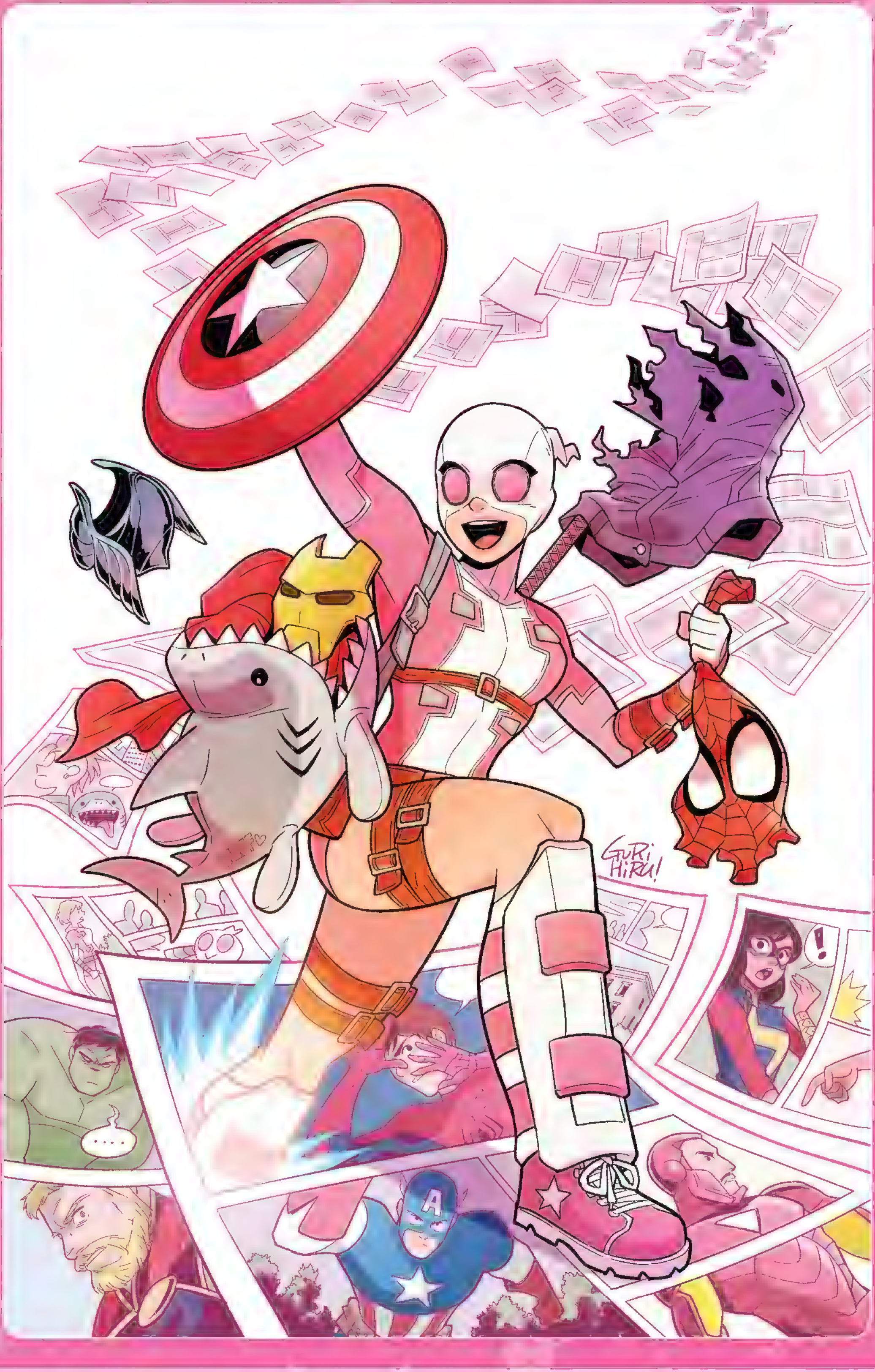
WEST COAST AVENGERS #1 VARIANT
BY LAUREN TSAI


LIGHTS!
CAMERA!
ASSEMBLE!
WEST COAST AVENGERS
KATE BISHOP CLINT BARTON GWEN POOLE
AMERICA CHAVEZ QUENTIN QUIRE
AND INTRODUCING FUSE
SCREENPLAY BY KELLY THOMPSON DIRECTED BY STEFANO CASELLI
A MARVEL COMICS GROUP VARIANT EDITION
AMF!MMXVIII

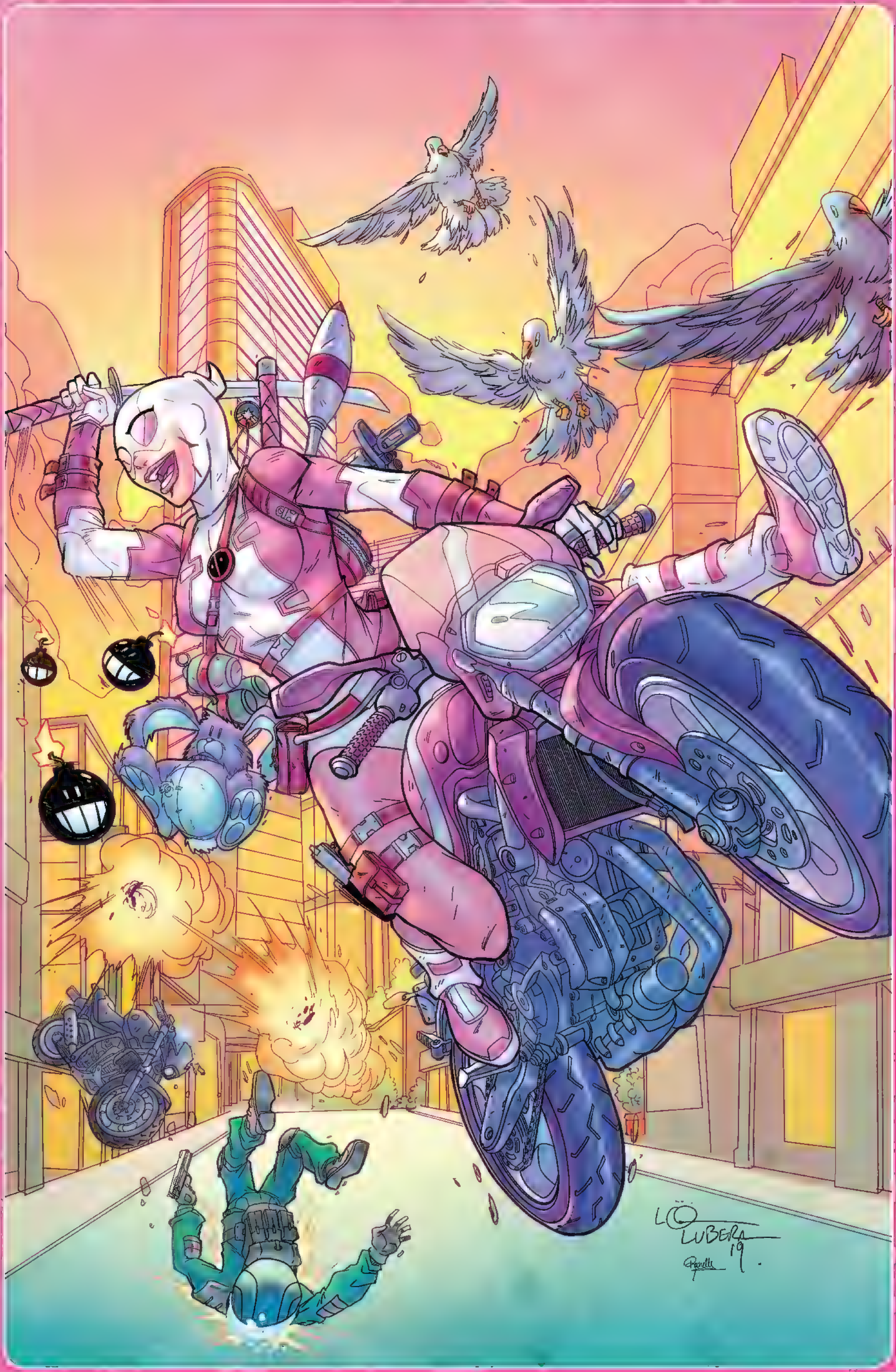
WEST COAST AVENGERS #2 VARIANT
BY TONY FLEECS


GWENPOOL
STRIKES BACK
$

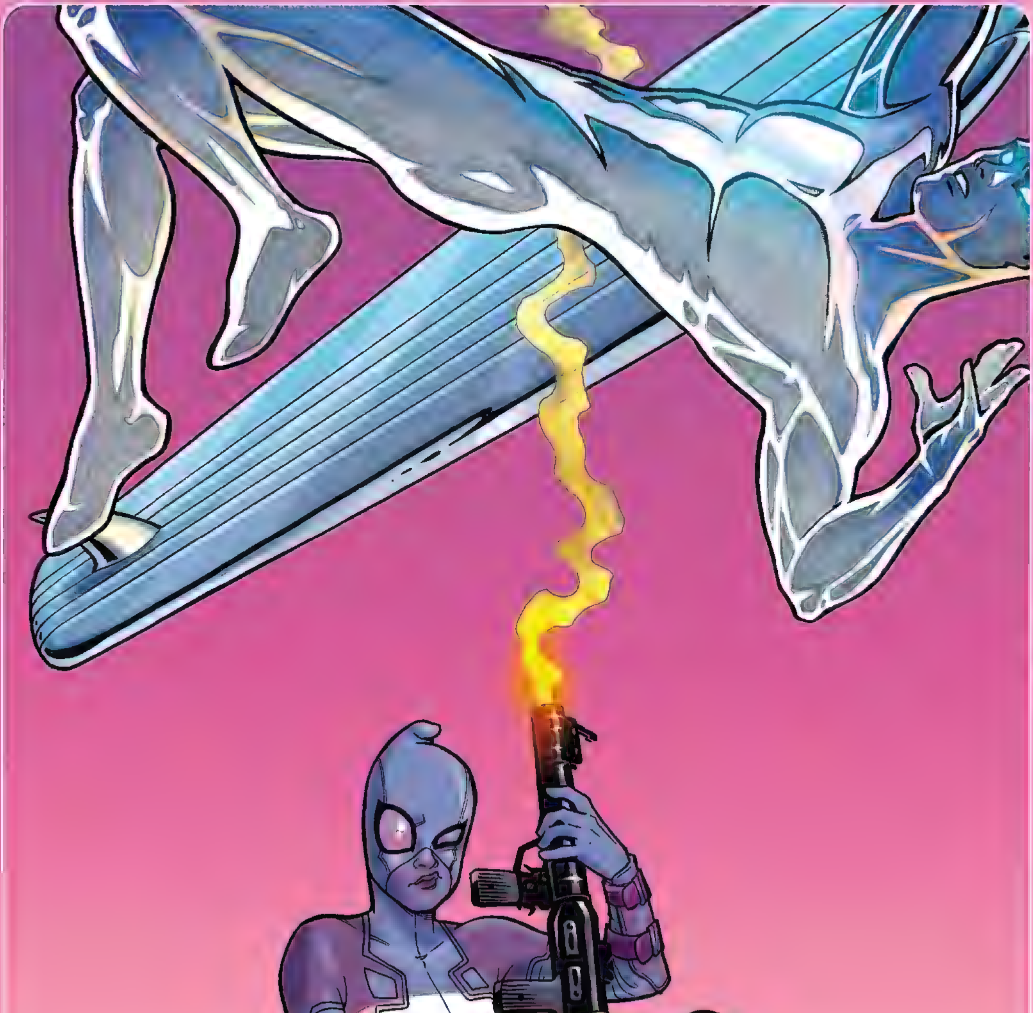
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #1 VARIANT
BY CHRIS BACHALO



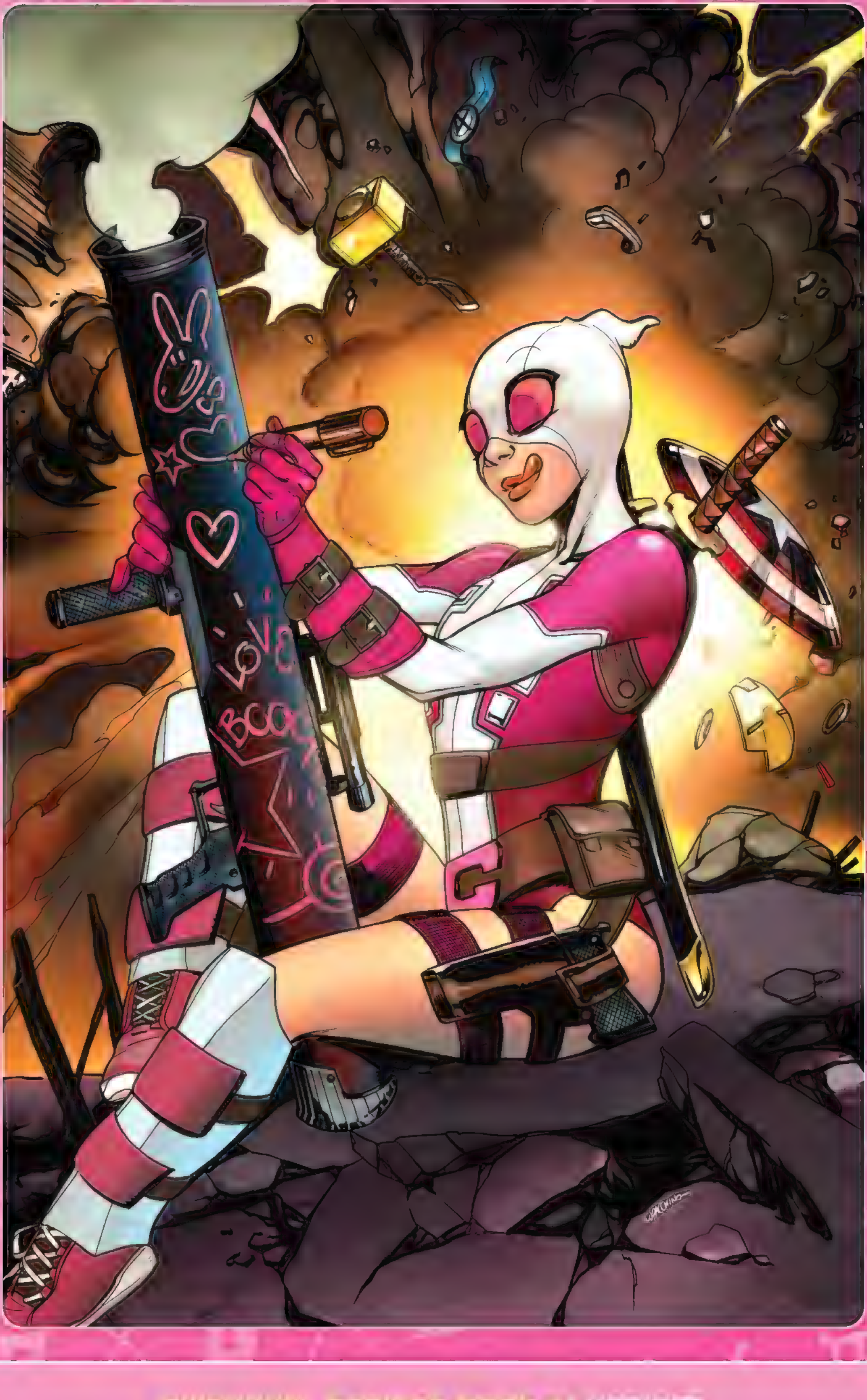
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #1 VARIANT
BY GURIHIRU



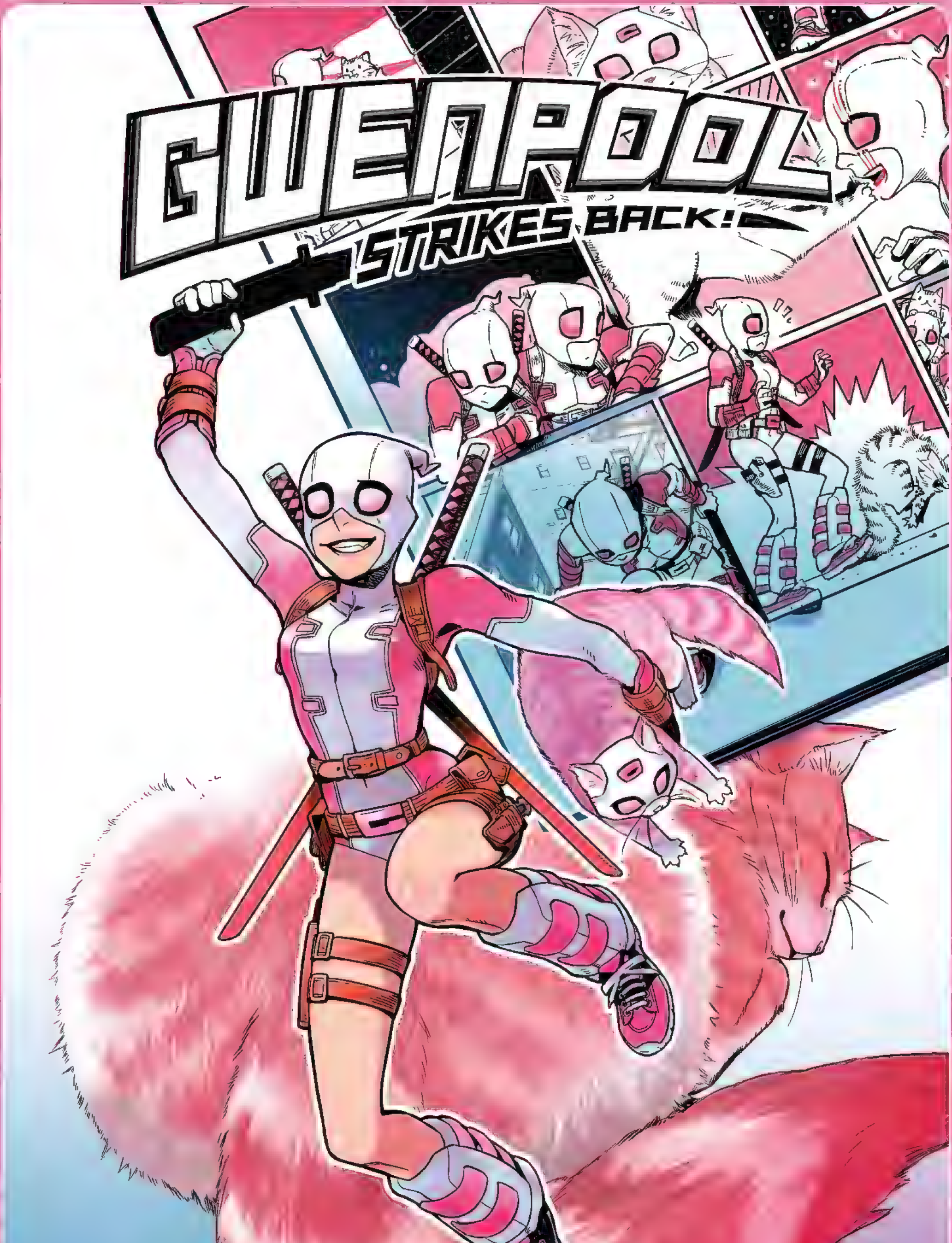
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #1 VARIANT
BY LOGAN LUBERA & RACHELLE ROSENBERG


CONNER
MOUNTS

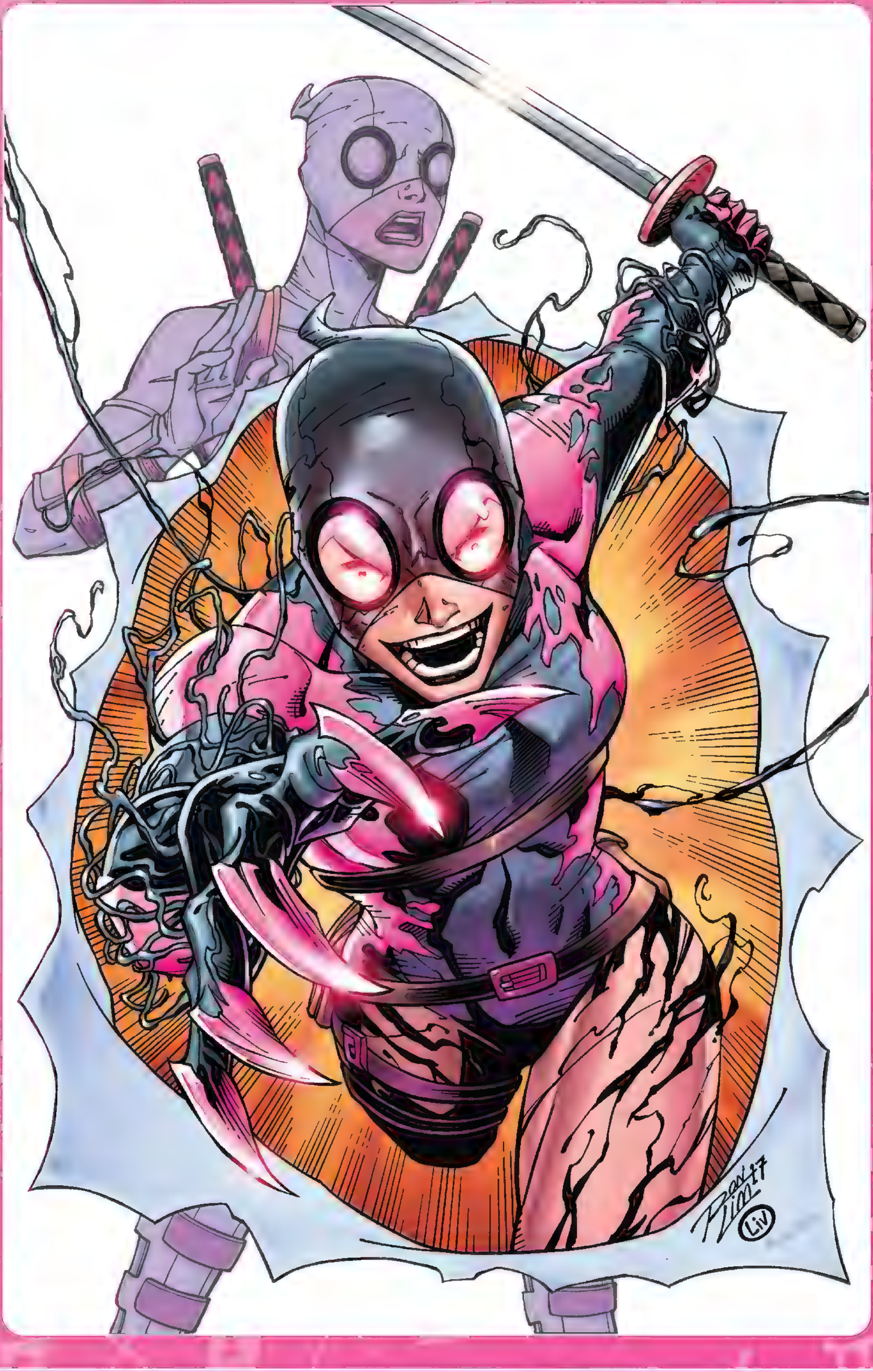
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #1 VARIANT
BY AMANDA CONNER & PAUL MOUNTS


I LOVE BOOM
LUPACCHINO

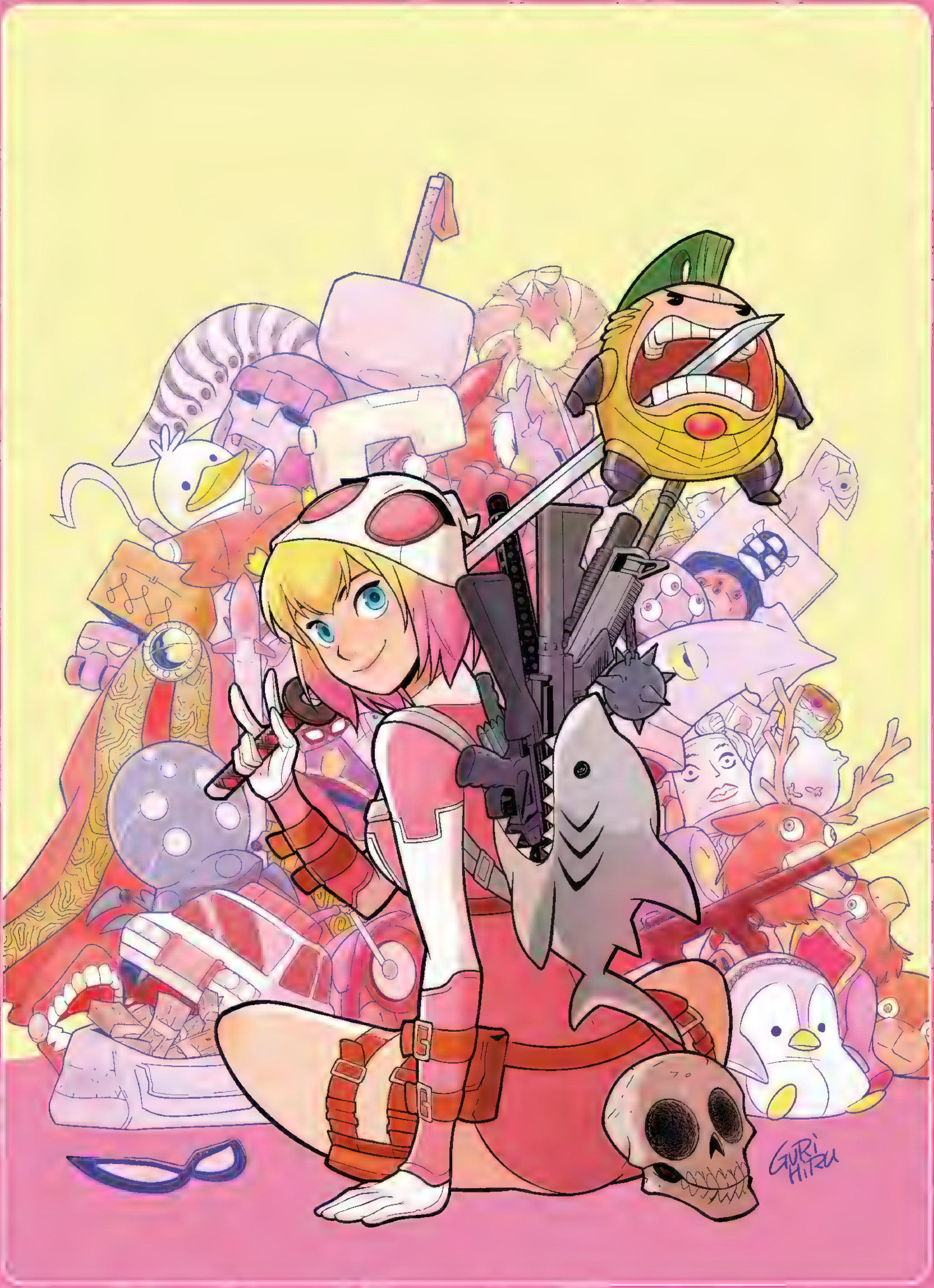
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #1 VARIANT
BY EMA LUPACCHINO & DAVID CURIEL


GWENPOOL
STRIKES BACK!

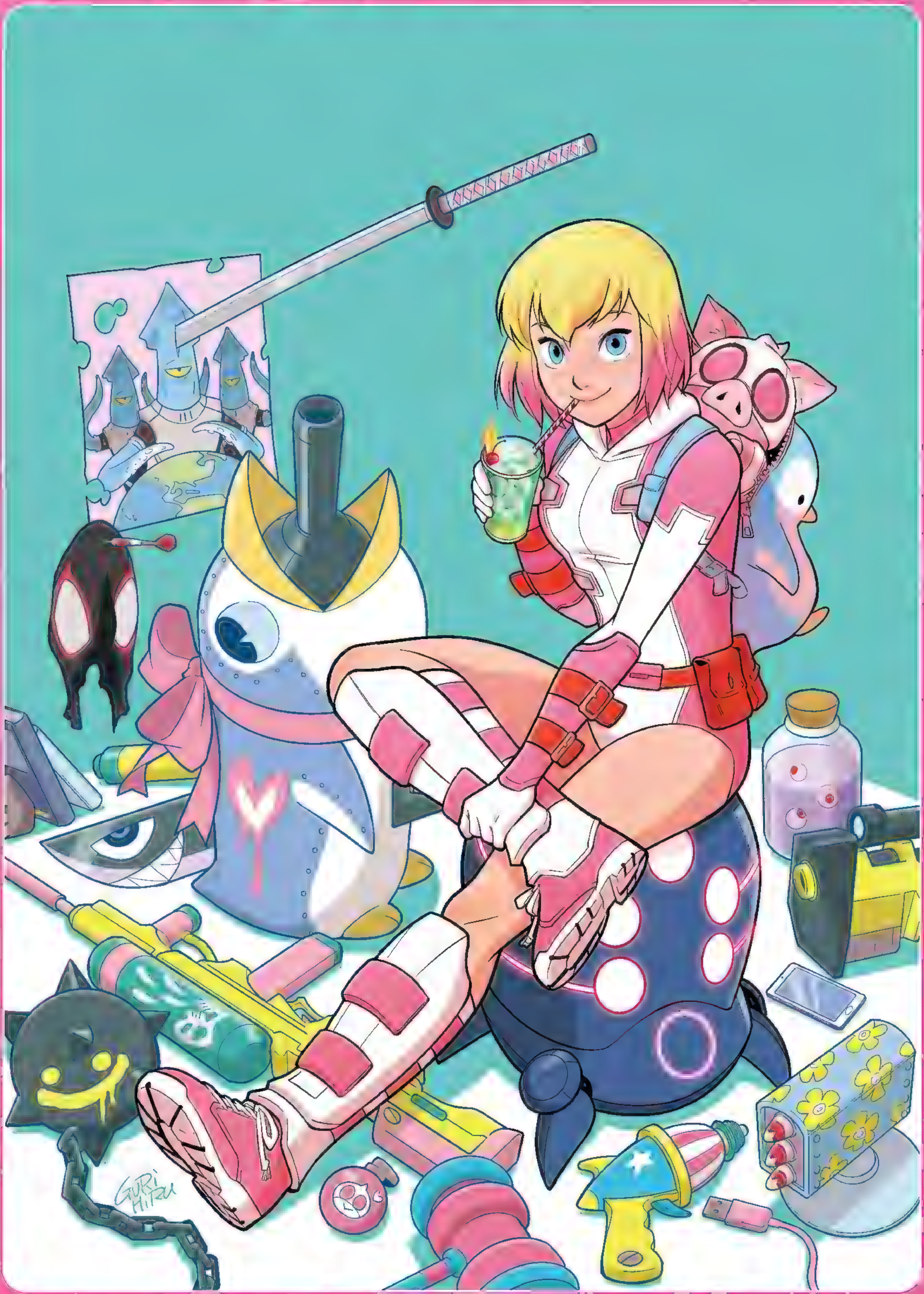
GWENPOOL STRIKES BACK #2 VARIANT
BY NAO FUJI


Ron Lim '17
LIV

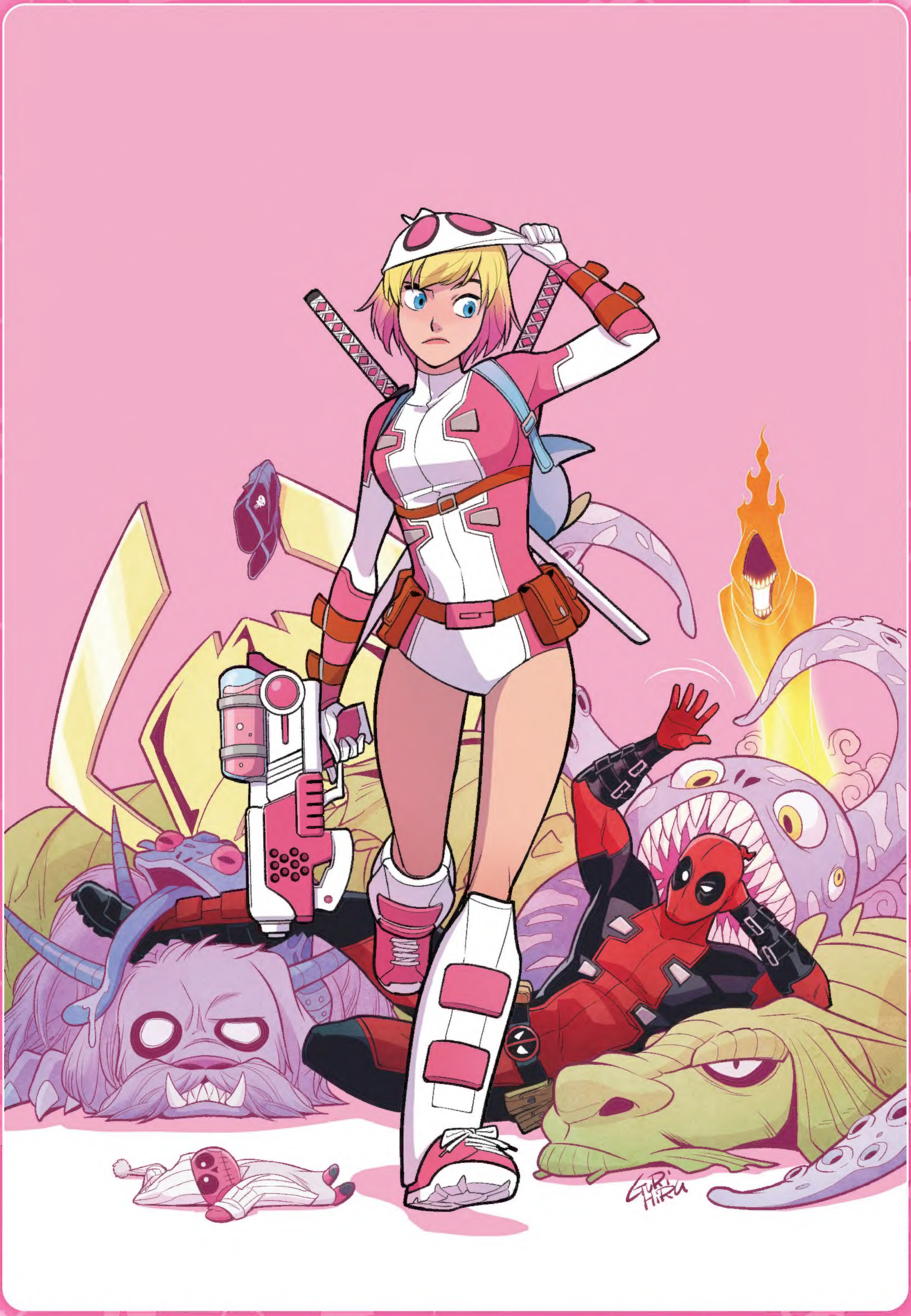
EDGE OF VENOMVERSE #2 VARIANT
BY RON LIM, LIVESAY & ANDREW CROSSLEY



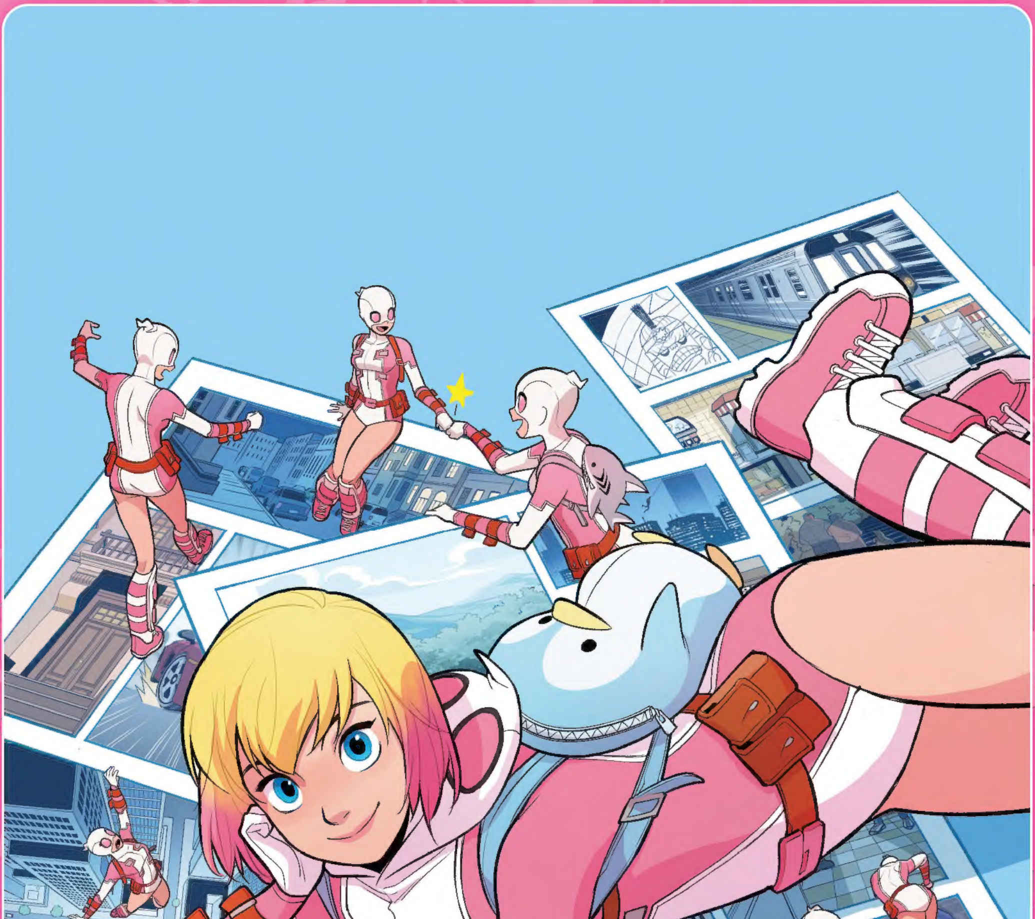
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL VOL. 1 TPB
JAPANESE EDITION COVER BY GURIHIRU



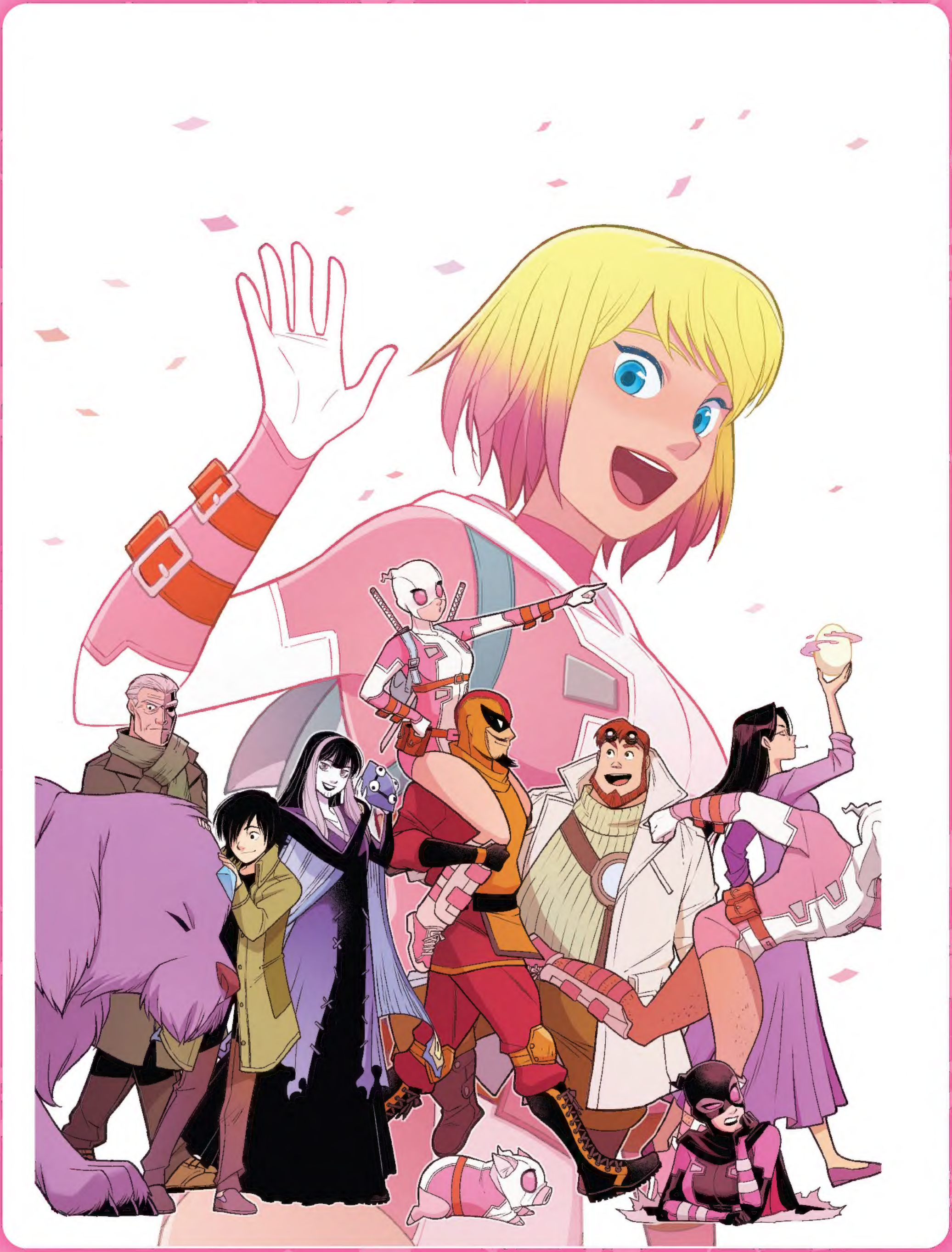
THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL VOL. 2 TPB
JAPANESE EDITION COVER BY GURIHIRU



THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL VOL. 3 TPB
JAPANESE EDITION COVER BY GURIHIRU



THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL VOL. 4 TPB
JAPANESE EDITION COVER BY GURIHIRU

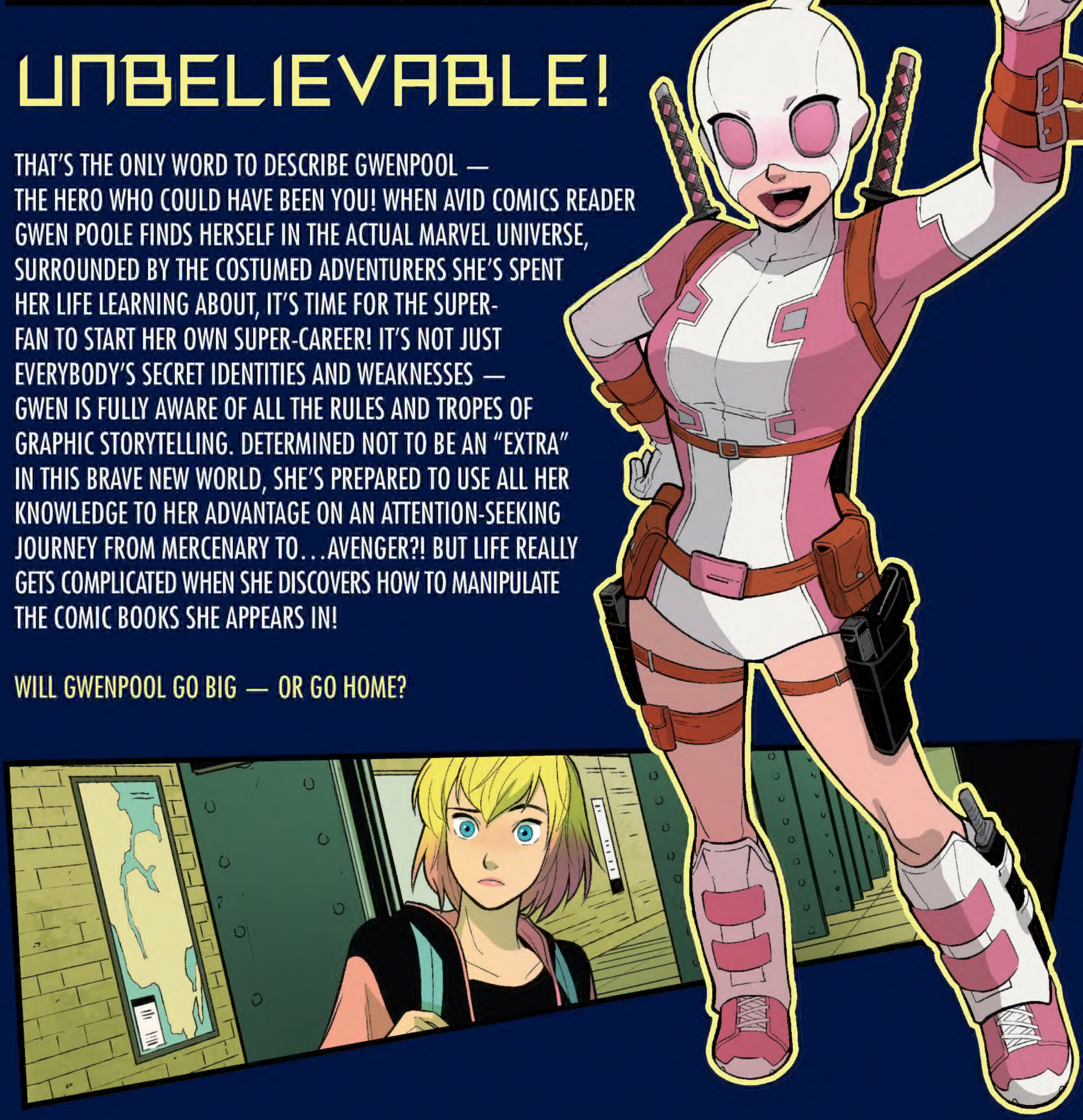


THE UNBELIEVABLE GWENPOOL VOL. 5 TPB
JAPANESE EDITION COVER BY GURIHIRU

UNBELIEVABLE!

THAT'S THE ONLY WORD TO DESCRIBE GWENPOOL — THE HERO WHO COULD HAVE BEEN YOU! WHEN AVID COMICS READER GWEN POOLE FINDS HERSELF IN THE ACTUAL MARVEL UNIVERSE, SURROUNDED BY THE COSTUMED ADVENTURERS SHE'S SPENT HER LIFE LEARNING ABOUT, IT'S TIME FOR THE SUPER-FAN TO START HER OWN SUPER-CAREER! IT'S NOT JUST EVERYBODY'S SECRET IDENTITIES AND WEAKNESSES — GWEN IS FULLY AWARE OF ALL THE RULES AND TROPES OF GRAPHIC STORYTELLING. DETERMINED NOT TO BE AN "EXTRA" IN THIS BRAVE NEW WORLD, SHE'S PREPARED TO USE ALL HER KNOWLEDGE TO HER ADVANTAGE ON AN ATTENTION-SEEKING JOURNEY FROM MERCENARY TO…AVENGER?! BUT LIFE REALLY GETS COMPLICATED WHEN SHE DISCOVERS HOW TO MANIPULATE THE COMIC BOOKS SHE APPEARS IN!

WILL GWENPOOL GO BIG — OR GO HOME?



Collecting *The Unbelievable Gwenpool #1-25; Rocket Raccoon and Groot #8-10; Champions (2016) #5; Edge of Venomverse #2; West Coast Avengers (2018) #1-10; Superior Spider-Man (2018) #7-8; Gwenpool Strikes Back #1-5;* and material from *Howard the Duck (2015B) #1-3, Gwenpool Special #1, Gwenpool Holiday Special: Merry Mix-Up,* - and *Secret Empire: Brave New World, Not Brand Echh (2018) #14* — by Christopher Hastings, Nick Kocher, Mark Waid, Kelly Thompson, Christos Gage, Leah Williams, Danilo S. Beyruth, Gurihiru, Irene Strychalski, Myisha Haynes, Alti Firmansyah, Michael Walsh, Humberto Ramos, Stefano Caselli, Daniele Di Nicuolo, GangHyuk Lim, Moy R., Lan Medina, David Baldeón, Tana Ford, John Hixson, Victor Olazaba, Cam Smith, Tamra Bonvillain, Rachelle Rosenberg, Michael Garland, Edgar Delgado, Java Tartaglia, Triona Tree Farrell, Andy Troy, Erick Arciniega, Jesus Aburtov and GURU-eFX.

T+ MARVEL